

~~providers~~, shall conduct a Differential Response System Study on the implementation of a research-based differential response system for allegations of child abuse and neglect in the State.

(b) The Differential Response System Study shall:

(1) define levels of safety concerns associated with allegations of child abuse and neglect in relation to a differential response system, including low safety concerns and high safety concerns;

(2) determine specific responses and time frames for initiating and completing responses for varying allegations of child abuse and neglect;

(3) develop a database of child welfare programs within local departments and community resources in the State to assist the Department in responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect by providing ongoing family preservation services, when appropriate;

(4) determine existing capacity outside the child protective services system to meet the needs of lower risk families and identify services and funding to fill service gaps as part of an effective differential response system;

(4) (5) develop a plan to implement and evaluate a differential response system for allegations of child abuse and neglect in the State, including consideration of:

(i) workload standards;

(ii) multidisciplinary responses relating to mental health, substance abuse assessment and treatment, domestic violence services, and services for abused and neglected children;

(iii) the role of law enforcement;

(iv) staff training requirements and cost; and

(v) implications for reporting statistics on child abuse and neglect;

and

~~(5) (6)~~ recommend specific statutory changes necessary to implement a differential response system for allegations of child abuse and neglect in the State.

(c) On or before December 1, 2006, the Department shall submit a report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the Senate Finance Committee, the House Appropriations Committee, and the House Judiciary Committee, on the findings and statutory recommendations of the Differential Response System Study.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2006. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of May 31, 2007, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.