

**House Bill 5418**  
**Sponsor: Rep. Lauren Hager**  
**Committee: Family and Children**  
**Services**

**Complete to 1-27-04**

**A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5418 AS INTRODUCED 1-22-04**

The Child Protection Law requires the Family Independence Agency to submit a child abuse-related report to the appropriate legislative standing committees and appropriations subcommittees regarding “category III” families. The report is to include information on the number of families, the number and percentage that have voluntarily participated or did not participate in services, the number of families for which the FIA made a determination that there was evidence of child abuse or neglect, and the number of families reclassified as “category II”. The report was to be issued annually for fiscal years 2000 through 2002. The bill would require the report to be filed for fiscal years 2003 through 2005.

The FIA categorizes child abuse allegations based on available evidence, perceived risk level, and a safety assessment utilizing “structured decision making” (SDM). The FIA categorizes a child abuse allegation as “category III” if there is a preponderance of evidence of child abuse or neglect, and the risk assessment indicates a low or moderate risk of future harm to the child. For these cases, the FIA must assist the child’s family in receiving community-based services appropriate to the level of risk. If the family does not voluntarily participate in the services or fails to make progress in reducing the risk of further harm to the child, the FIA could classify the case as “category II” when concern for the child’s safety warrants such an action. The alleged perpetrator is not listed in the central registry, unless he or she is a non-household member and the abuse or neglect is the suspected cause of the child's death, the child is the victim of suspected sexual abuse or sexual exploitation, or the abuse or neglect results in severe physical injury to the child and requires medical treatment or hospitalization.

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