

By Mrs. Cleven of Chelmsford, petition of Carol C. Cleven and other members of the General Court for legislation to regulate services for adolescent parents and children of such parents. Human Services and Elderly Affairs.

---

---

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

---

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-Seven.

---

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO ADOLESCENT PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 Section 51B(1) of Chapter 119 of the Mass. General Laws is  
2 hereby amended by adding, after the first paragraph, the following  
3 paragraph: —

4 If the child who is the subject of a report under section 51A of  
5 this chapter is the child of a parent(s) under 18 years of age, the  
6 Department shall immediately conduct an intensive and extended  
7 family assessment, evaluation and home study, in order to develop  
8 and implement a service plan, or other appropriate measures,  
9 based on the specific needs, special circumstances, and factors  
10 contributing to problems that are unique to the family composition  
11 and structure.

12 The service plan, or other intermediary measures determined to  
13 be required, shall be the first option by the Department, unless  
14 emergency conditions exist, and shall be targeted towards family  
15 preservation. The Department shall take all appropriate interven-  
16 tive measures available within its agency, or shall access needed  
17 services from other state agencies or resources, to prevent the  
18 removal of the child from the home and subsequent placement in  
19 foster care. Such measures or services, or interventive actions,  
20 may be extraordinary, given the unique nature of the family com-  
21 position and needs.

22 The service plan, or other required actions to be taken by the  
23 Department shall include, but not be limited to: — effort to access  
24 available support and assistance from extended family members,  
25 including an absent parent of the child; access to health care or  
26 medical assistance, or treatment or counseling that may be  
27 needed; access to welfare benefits, housing or other public assis-  
28 tance for which the family may be eligible; access to child care,  
29 educational programs, respite care, job training, or other such pro-  
30 gram; access to parent aide resources, or other in-home services;  
31 access to support services that would aid in the preservation of the  
32 family unit;.

33 Nothing in this section shall be construed as preventing the  
34 Department from taking actions that may be required for the care  
35 and protection of the child, or children, who is the subject of the  
36 report.