

Memorandum

CDP26-19

DATE: August 28, 2026

TO: Children's Division and Foster Care Case Management

FROM: Sara Smith, Children's Division Director

SUBJECT: 2026 Legislative Memo

OVERVIEW:

The bills enacted this session which affect Children's Division include [HOUSE BILL NOS. 2273, 1946, 1814, 2551](#) and [HOUSE BILL NO. 2292](#). This memorandum is an overview of the new or amended statutes relevant to the work of Children's Division. Relevant changes to statute, policy and practice will take effect on August 28, 2026, with delayed implementation as specified in the bills described below. Additional information will be provided through training and appropriate policy changes. Provisions of the following legislative summaries are included below.

House Bill 2273 ("Evie and Sophie's Law") — Child Exploitation & Sex Trafficking Protections

"Evie and Sophie's Law" modernizes child protection statutes targeting digital exploitation, enticement, and child sex trafficking in the following ways:

- Starting August 28, 2026, "**child sexual abuse material**" (**CSAM**) replaces "child pornography" in numerous criminal and civil statutes. "**Child sexual abuse material**" (**CSAM**) is a more expansive term that includes sexually explicit materials previously defined as "child pornography" as well as sexually explicit depictions that appear to be of or include a minor. This aligns statutory language with clinical and federal standards.
- Creates civil causes of action for victims of criminal child sex or labor trafficking who suffered an injury or illness as a result of the trafficking and requires restitution awards for victims of trafficking offenses.
- Criminalizes the disclosure of intimate digital depictions and sadistic online exploitation; replaces the crime of enticement of a minor with the criminal offense of grooming or enticement of a minor; and amends the offenses of nonconsensual dissemination of private sexual images and threatening to do so to include minor victims. It establishes severe criminal penalties for possession or dissemination of digitally manipulated, altered, or deep-fake intimate images involving anyone who is or appears to be a minor.
- Requires expanded training regarding child sex trafficking for clinical social workers, juvenile officers, law enforcement, prosecutors, and emergency medical responders.
- Establishes a statewide council and designated funding framework to oversee anti-trafficking efforts, community education, and direct victim support services.
- Authorizes local prosecuting and circuit attorneys to formally request investigative and prosecutorial resources from the Attorney General when prosecuting cross-jurisdictional CSAM offenses.

House Bill 2292 — Companion Animal Abuse & Cross-Reporting Protocols

HB 2292 introduces a mandatory cross-reporting framework linking animal cruelty and vulnerable population abuse or neglect. The new law requires mental health professionals, social workers, school professionals, juvenile officers, law enforcement, home health aides, adult and child protective service workers, and community service and advocacy program personnel to report suspected companion animal abuse, while simultaneously placing a reciprocal duty on animal control officers and certified animal cruelty investigators to report suspected child or eligible person abuse or neglect.

Companion animals as referred to in this memo are defined as dogs, cats, rabbits, and domesticated birds. The law requires the enumerated personnel to report suspected companion animal abuse or neglect within one day of observation. However, this duty to report and any associated penalties for failure to report shall not be in effect during any period in which the hotline established and operated by the Missouri Animal Control Association (MACA), or a successor entity, has yet to begin or has otherwise ceased operation and shall resume when the hotline is operational. Until MACA's hotline is established and operational, reports of suspected companion animal abuse or neglect can be made to the Humane Society of Missouri's Animal Cruelty Taskforce at (314) 647-4400.

Beginning January 1, 2028, animal control officers and certified animal cruelty investigators who have reasonable cause to suspect a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect must report the situation immediately to the Children's Division Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline.

There are mandatory cross-training requirements. Children's Division employees and contractors for children's services who have direct contact with children through the state's child protection and welfare system, and all persons providing protective services to eligible adults must complete 1.5 hours of training by December 31, 2027 (or within 60 days of beginning employment) covering:

1. Statutory reporting duties and penalties;
2. Identifiers of animal abuse and neglect;
3. Reporting animal abuse or neglect procedures; and
4. The relationship between companion animal abuse or neglect and child or eligible person abuse or neglect.

The Missouri Animal Control Association, in collaboration with the Children's Division and Department of Health and Senior Services, must submit an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly.

For questions or comments, please contact:

Scott Montgomery at Scott.B.Montgomery@dss.mo.gov

CHILD WELFARE MANUAL POLICY AND/OR COLLATERAL DOCUMENTATION:

NEXT STEPS FOR HOUSE BILL 2273:

Effective immediately, Children's Division team members will see "Child Sexual Abuse Material" (CSAM) incorporated into our information system (FACES). Over the next few months, team members will continue seeing the term "Child Sexual Abuse Material" (CSAM) incorporated into the following Child Welfare Manual sections:

[CWM 1.9 Safety Planning](#)

[CWM 2.2 Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline Unit](#)

[CWM 2.5 Child Abuse and Neglect \(CA/N\) Reports](#)

[CWM 4.4 Working with Children](#)

[CWM 4.9 Adoption and Guardianship Process](#)

NEXT STEPS FOR HOUSE BILL 2292:

Children's Division will announce updates to the information system (FACES) and the Child Welfare Manual when the MACA hotline is established and the operative provisions of the law take effect.

NECESSARY ACTION:

1. *Review this memorandum with all Children's Division and Foster Care Case Management team members.*
2. *Review Child Welfare Manual chapters and forms as indicated above.*