

Subject Child neglect; language access and acquisition

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Summary

This bill modifies the definition of “neglect” under section 260E.03, subdivision 15 (governing the reporting of maltreatment of minors) in various ways related to the provision of language access and acquisition. It adds language access and acquisition, specifically teaching American Sign Language to a deaf child, to the criteria for neglect in paragraph (a), clause (1), related to failure to supply a child with necessary care required for the child’s physical or mental health. The bill adds similar language in paragraph (a), clause (4), related to failure to ensure that the child is educated.

The bill adds three clauses to the definition of neglect. Clause (9) adds failure to teach a deaf child sign language as an act constituting neglect. Clause (10) adds caregiver failure to provide a child with a language-rich environment as an act constituting neglect, and describes the importance of a language-rich environment. Finally, clause (11) adds obstruction or deprivation of a child's access to the child’s cultural language as an act constituting neglect.