

ACT 409: UNDERSTANDING ITS IMPACT ON LOUISIANA'S CHILD WELFARE LAW

LEGISLATION

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November 20, 2025 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Act 409 (Senate Bill 41) represents a significant shift in Louisiana's child welfare legislation, with direct implications for how agencies, courts, and stakeholders engage with children and families. This session will provide an in-depth overview of the changes introduced by the act, including investigating incidents of abuse/neglect in schools and early learning centers, addressing child-on-child sexual abuse, and clarifying mandatory reporter duties. Our speakers will explain updated definitions, procedural modifications, and new expectations for collaboration and documentation. They will break down the practical implications for frontline professionals and offer guidance on aligning practice with the new legal framework. Whether you are a judge, attorney, caseworker, CASA, or service provider, this session will help you navigate the evolving landscape of child welfare with confidence and clarity.

Our speakers are Bret Hanemann, who was appointed Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare in June 2025, and Lacy Simms, LCSW, BACS, who is a DCFS Child Welfare Manager II, overseeing CPS, Clearance, and PSRT.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Describe the key provisions and intent of Act 409 (SB 41) and how they revise existing child welfare statutes and practices in Louisiana.
- Analyze how Act 409 impacts case planning, stakeholder roles, and court expectations across the child welfare continuum.
- Apply strategies to ensure compliance and effective collaboration with stakeholders under the new legislative framework.

AGENDA

- 12:00pm Act 409 Background
12:10pm Act 409 Provisions and Impact
12:50pm Questions and Discussion

SPEAKERS



Bret Hanemann, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare, Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

Bret Hanemann was appointed DCFS Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare in June 2025. He previously served as Director of Governmental Affairs. He joined the Department from Jesuit High School, where he served as the Director of Admissions and teacher of public speaking and radio/tv production for more than a decade. Hanemann previously served as an adjunct professor at Tulane University, as well as Assistant Principal/Dean of Students at Jefferson Community School, Louisiana's first charter school serving the needs of at-risk students in Jefferson Parish. He is a past board member for the Krewe of Orpheus and volunteer for Special Olympics of Louisiana.

A New Orleans native and Jesuit High alum, Hanemann holds a Master's degree in Education, with a concentration in Supervision/Evaluation, from Our Lady of Holy Cross College in New Orleans, and a Bachelor of Communication Arts from Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama. He and his wife have six children.

Lacy Simms, LCSW, BACS , Child Welfare Manager II, Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

Lacy Simms, LCSW, BACS is a dedicated Child Welfare Manager II with the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, overseeing CPS, Clearance, and PSRT. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Southeastern Louisiana University as a Title IV-E recipient and went on to receive her Master's in Social Work from Louisiana State University. Lacy also holds an Advanced Leadership Certification from Grambling State University. With extensive experience in management, family services, due process, frontline supervision, and foster care, she brings a wealth of knowledge and leadership to the field of child welfare.



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