



# NEWS

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**From the Illinois Senate**

***State Senator Dave Koehler***

**For immediate release**

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**Further information:**

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**New Help Available for Families Struggling with Developmental Disorders**

PEORIA, IL—Illinois has a new law directing the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to develop and advertise a program to help families cope with the extreme hardships that can be caused by a child with a pervasive developmental disorder.

“Having a child with a developmental disorder can place an intense burden on a family,” said State Sen. David Koehler (D-Peoria), the legislation’s sponsor in the Illinois Senate. “In the most extreme cases it can endanger the health of the child or the cohesiveness of the family unit—through no fault of the parents. In these situations, I believe we should offer some extra help.”

Under the terms of House Bill 30, DCFS will create a new program or tailor existing programs to help families deal with the stresses of caring for a child with a pervasive developmental disability, such as Autism or Asperger’s Syndrome. The goals of this program will be to protect the health and safety of the child.

Families need not be participants in any other DCFS program to be able to qualify, and participation in this program will be strictly voluntary. Any family that believes the health or safety of their developmentally disabled child is at risk can apply.

The law also requires DCFS to organize a public awareness campaign alerting the general public and health and social service providers about this new program.

“It’s important to make sure people know this service is available,” Koehler said. “Too often, families struggle alone because they don’t know where they can go to get help.”

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