

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 896

Short Title: Jesse's Law.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Paré and Cervania (Primary Sponsors).

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Judiciary 2, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 14, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ENSURE INDIVIDUALS THAT ARE INVOLVED IN CHILD CUSTODY
PROCEEDINGS RECEIVE APPROPRIATE TRAINING.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 50 of the General Statutes is amended by adding the following new Article to read:

"Article 6.

"Jesse's Law.

"§ 50-110. Purpose.

The purpose of this Article is to ensure that professional personnel involved in cases containing domestic violence or child abuse allegations receive trauma-informed and culturally appropriate training on the dynamics, signs, and impact of domestic violence and child abuse, including child sexual abuse.

"§ 50-111. Definitions.

The following definitions apply in this Article:

- (1) Child custody proceeding. – Any civil action brought under this Chapter concerning the custody of minor children.
- (2) Domestic violence. – As defined in G.S. 50B-1.
- (3) Minor child. – As defined in Article 5 of this Chapter.
- (4) Reunification treatment. – A treatment or therapy aimed at reuniting or reestablishing a relationship between a child and an estranged or rejected parent or other family member of the child.

"§ 50-112. Training requirements for court officers and personnel.

(a) Any judge, magistrate, or judicial officer who hears child custody proceedings, and any court personnel, including guardian ad litem, mediators, parent coordinators, and any court referred professionals engaging in reunification treatment must complete the training program described in this section.

(b) The training program shall consist of an initial training session constituting at least 20 hours and not less than 15 hours of ongoing training every five years that includes, at a minimum, all of the following:

- (1) A focus on solely domestic and sexual violence, including child sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, coercive control, implicit and explicit bias, and trauma.
- (2) Long- and short-term impacts of domestic violence and child abuse on minor children.



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(3) Victim and perpetrator behavior patterns and relationship dynamics within the cycle of violence.

(4) A study of scientific-based research, including, but not limited to, the Duluth model, Saunders study, and Adverse Childhood Experiences study.

(c) The training must be provided by a professional with substantial experience in assisting survivors of domestic violence or child abuse, including a victim service provider, as defined in 34 U.S.C. § 12291, and, if possible, a survivor of domestic violence or child physical or sexual abuse. The training must rely on evidence-based and peer-reviewed research by recognized experts in the types of abuse referenced in this section and shall not include any theories, concepts, or belief systems unsupported by the research described in this section.

(d) The training must be designed to improve the ability of those persons participating to recognize and respond to child physical and sexual abuse, domestic violence, and trauma in all family victims, particularly children, and assist in making child custody decisions in appropriate proceedings."

SECTION 2. The Administrative Office of the Courts or appropriate State agency shall apply to the United States Attorney General's Office for federal grant support to implement the training program established in this act, and any other federal grant funds made available under the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022.

SECTION 3. This act becomes effective October 1, 2025.