

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1970

C 145 L 24
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Improving communication between the department of children, youth, and families and caregivers.

Sponsors: House Committee on Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning (originally sponsored by Representatives McClintock, Couture, Waters, Graham, Cheney, Sandlin, Harris and Caldier).

House Committee on Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Human Services
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

Child welfare services administered by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) are provided to strengthen, supplement, or substitute for parental care and supervision for the purpose of preventing or remedying problems which may result in family conflict, neglect, or abuse, and providing adequate care for children away from their homes in foster homes, day care, or other child care agencies or facilities. Child welfare services may include an array of services, such as voluntary and in-home services, out-of-home care, case management, and adoption services. The investigation into whether child abuse or neglect occurred, referred to as child protective services, is not considered a child welfare service.

Caregivers caring for a child receiving child welfare services may include parents, relatives, or other suitable persons, foster parents, and group homes.

Summary:

The DCYF must establish a caregiver communication specialist position within the DCYF for the purpose of improving communication between the DCYF and caregivers. The

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caregiver communication specialist position is responsible for developing policies for sharing appropriate and timely information with caregivers of children receiving child welfare services, and for supporting coordination between existing caregiver engagement teams, constituent relations, communications specialists, and child welfare field offices.

By October 1, 2025, the DCYF must submit a report to the Legislature and the Governor describing:

- how the DCYF could implement an automated notification system that would provide electronic or telephonic notification to caregivers of children receiving child welfare services regarding upcoming changes in placement, court hearings, or other relevant information;
- any statutory, policy, or funding changes needed to accomplish this notification system; and
- recommendations for improving communications between the DCYF and caregivers. The DCYF must consult with the caregiver communication specialist, current and former caregivers, and youth who received or are receiving child welfare services regarding these recommendations.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0
Senate	49	0

Effective: June 6, 2024