
HOUSE BILL 1366

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Representatives Ortiz-Self, Hargrove, Caldier, Tarleton,
Pettigrew, Gregerson, Kilduff, and Senn

1 AN ACT Relating to promoting child welfare family reunification;
2 amending RCW 13.34.025; adding a new section to chapter 13.34 RCW;
3 and adding a new section to chapter 74.13 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 13.34
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 The legislature intends to emphasize and support the efforts to
8 reunify families involved in the child welfare process. The
9 legislature recognizes the importance of parent-child and sibling
10 visitation in allowing families to reunify, and intends to ensure
11 that families receive services and activities designed to facilitate
12 access to and visitation of children by parents and siblings. Parent-
13 child visitation must be provided to families except if that
14 visitation is limited by a court pursuant to RCW 13.34.136.

15 **Sec. 2.** RCW 13.34.025 and 2009 c 520 s 20 are each amended to
16 read as follows:

17 (1) The department and supervising agencies shall develop methods
18 for coordination of services to parents and children in child
19 dependency cases. To the maximum extent possible under current
20 funding levels, the department and supervising agencies must:

1 (a) Coordinate and integrate services to children and families,
2 using service plans and activities that address the children's and
3 families' multiple needs, including ensuring that siblings have
4 regular visits with each other, as appropriate. Assessment criteria
5 should screen for multiple needs;

6 (b) Develop treatment plans for the individual needs of the
7 client in a manner that minimizes the number of contacts the client
8 is required to make; and

9 (c) Access training for department and supervising agency staff
10 to increase skills across disciplines to assess needs for mental
11 health, substance abuse, developmental disabilities, and other areas.

12 (2) The department shall coordinate within the administrations of
13 the department, and with contracted service providers including
14 supervising agencies, to ensure that parents in dependency
15 proceedings under this chapter receive priority access to remedial
16 services recommended by the department or supervising agency in its
17 social study or ordered by the court for the purpose of correcting
18 any parental deficiencies identified in the dependency proceeding
19 that are capable of being corrected in the foreseeable future.
20 Services may also be provided to caregivers other than the parents as
21 identified in RCW 13.34.138.

22 (a) For purposes of this chapter, remedial services are those
23 services defined in the federal adoption and safe families act as
24 time-limited family reunification services. Remedial services include
25 individual, group, and family counseling; substance abuse treatment
26 services; mental health services; assistance to address domestic
27 violence; services designed to provide temporary child care and
28 therapeutic services for families; services and activities designed
29 to facilitate access to and visitation of children by parents and
30 siblings except in cases where a court limits visitation pursuant to
31 RCW 13.34.136; and transportation to or from any of the above
32 services and activities.

33 (b) The department shall provide funds for remedial services if
34 the parent is unable to pay to the extent funding is appropriated in
35 the operating budget or otherwise available to the department for
36 such specific services. As a condition for receiving funded remedial
37 services, the court may inquire into the parent's ability to pay for
38 all or part of such services or may require that the parent make
39 appropriate applications for funding to alternative funding sources
40 for such services.

1 (c) If court-ordered remedial services are unavailable for any
2 reason, including lack of funding, lack of services, or language
3 barriers, the department or supervising agency shall promptly notify
4 the court that the parent is unable to engage in the treatment due to
5 the inability to access such services.

6 (d) This section does not create an entitlement to services and
7 does not create judicial authority to order the provision of services
8 except for the specific purpose of making reasonable efforts to
9 remedy parental deficiencies identified in a dependency proceeding
10 under this chapter.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13
12 RCW to read as follows:

13 The department of social and health services shall convene a
14 parent-child visitation work group with the following duties:

15 (1) Engaging relevant stakeholders to include biological parents
16 involved in or with experience in the child welfare process;

17 (2) Developing and implementing changes in policy or practice to
18 increase the amount and quality of parent-child visitation;

19 (3) Submitting an annual report to the appropriate committees of
20 the legislature by November 1st that includes:

21 (a) The percentage of supervised, unsupervised, and monitored
22 visitation for families that are dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34
23 RCW;

24 (b) The average length of time after visitation is court ordered
25 following a shelter care hearing pursuant to RCW 13.34.065 that
26 parent-child visitation is made available to a family;

27 (c) Incorporating a parent engagement and education component in
28 parent-child visitation;

29 (d) Changes made in policy or practice to improve the
30 effectiveness of parent-child visitation; and

31 (e) Recommendations of further policy or statutory changes to
32 improve the effectiveness of parent-child visitation.

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