
Early Learning & Human Services Committee

HB 1728

Brief Description: Creating the parents for parents program.

Sponsors: Representatives Ormsby, Walsh, Ortiz-Self, Senn, Kagi, S. Hunt, Farrell, Dent, Zeiger and Gregerson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that the Parent for Parent (PFP) program be funded by a pass-through from the Office of Public Defense to a non-profit lead organization with extensive experience supporting veteran parents.
- Identifies the components of the PFP program to include outreach, support, education, and peer support groups for parents involved in the dependency court system.

Hearing Date: 2/6/15

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

Dependency Court System.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) may file a petition in court alleging that a child should be a dependent of the state due to abuse, neglect, or because there is no parent, guardian, or custodian capable of adequately caring for the child.

If a court determines that a child is dependent, then the court will conduct periodic reviews and make determinations regarding the child's placement, the provision of services by the DSHS, compliance of the parents, and whether progress has been made by the parents.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Under certain circumstances after a child has been removed from the custody of a parent for at least six months pursuant to a finding of dependency, a petition may be filed seeking termination of parental rights.

Parents for Parents Program.

The goal of the PFP program is to increase early engagement of birth parents newly entering the dependency process through education and peer support coordinated by birth parents, referred to as veteran parents, who have successfully navigated the child welfare system.

The PFP program currently exists in nine counties: Grays Harbor, Pacific, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, and Mason.

Summary of Bill:

Components of the PFP program are defined to include the following:

- outreach and support to parents at dependency-related hearings, beginning with the shelter care hearing;
- a class to educate parents on the dependency court process;
- ongoing support to help parents achieve their case plan; and
- structured, curriculum-based peer support groups.

Veteran parent is defined to mean a parent who has successfully navigated the juvenile dependency court system, resulting in family reunification.

Parent for Parent Organization.

The PFP program must be funded by a pass-through from the Office of Public Defense to a non-profit lead organization with extensive experience supporting veteran parents. Through a contract with a lead organization, each local program must be administered by the county superior court or a nonprofit organization.

Local stakeholders representing child welfare systems must serve as PFP program advisors. A veteran parent lead must provide program coordination and maintain local program information.

The lead organization must provide:

- ongoing training to the host organizations;
- statewide program oversight and coordination; and
- maintain statewide program information.

Evaluation of Parent for Parent.

A child welfare research entity based at the University of Washington must conduct an evaluation of the PFP program to determine whether the program can be considered a research-based program. A preliminary report must be submitted to the Legislature by December 1, 2016. A subsequent report must be delivered to the Legislature by December 1, 2019.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.