

# **HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS**

## **HB 1692**

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**Title:** An act relating to investigations involving children as witnesses and victims; amending RCW 74.14B.010; adding a new section to chapter 43.101 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 26.44 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 43.20A RCW; creating a new section; and making appropriations.

**Brief Description:** Providing special training for those who interview child witnesses and victims.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Kagi, Tokuda, Boldt, Edmonds, Dickerson, Talcott, Kastama, Lovick, Wood, Kenney, Schual-Berke, Eickmeyer, Ogden, Santos, Mitchell, Bush and Stensen.

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### **HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES**

**Meeting Date:** February 8, 1999.

**Bill Analysis Prepared by:** Dave Knutson, Counsel (786-7146)

**Background:** A recent report of the Office of the Family and Children's Ombudsman recommended several improvements related to investigations of alleged abuse and neglect by law enforcement and child protective service workers. The Ombudsman recommended improvements in documenting interviews, providing specialized and ongoing training in effective interviewing techniques for child protective services staff and law enforcement, and establishing collaborative protocols between child protective services and other agencies involved in child abuse investigations.

**Summary of Bill:** The criminal justice training commission and the Department of Social and Health Services are required to provide introductory and ongoing training in interviewing children to law enforcement personnel and child protective services staff.

The criminal justice training commission and the Department of Social and Health Services are required to develop written protocols for establishing multi disciplinary investigations. The protocols will cover both interviewing techniques and procedures and for recording interviews. Each local agency involved in the investigation of child abuse and neglect will document how it handles child abuse and neglect cases and how it coordinates with other agencies.

The Department of Social and Health Services will establish three pilot projects involving child abuse and neglect investigations. The pilot programs will compare the effectiveness

of using different methods and techniques of conducting and recording interviews with alleged child victims of abuse and neglect.

***Appropriation:*** Yes, but unspecified.

***Fiscal Note:*** Requested on February 2, 1999.

***Effective Date:*** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.