
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6474

State of Washington

56th Legislature

2000 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, McCaslin, Long, Costa, Sheahan, Patterson, Kline, Winsley, Haugen, Franklin and Gardner)

Read first time 01/28/00.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving foster care services and the foster
2 care rate structure; adding new sections to chapter 43.20A RCW; adding
3 new sections to chapter 74.13 RCW; and providing an effective date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.20A RCW
6 to read as follows:

7 The legislature finds that foster care issues continue from year to
8 year without resolution. In addition, caseloads have grown, which
9 impairs the capacity of caseworkers to provide efficient and effective
10 services. The legislature finds that relationships with foster
11 parents, biological parents, providers, and the children have suffered
12 as a result. Therefore, it is the legislature's intent to begin to
13 alleviate some of these problems by encouraging the department to
14 evaluate its criteria for delivery of services and selection of
15 vendors. It is not the legislature's intent to supplant state jobs in
16 doing so but rather to improve the quality of services and service
17 delivery.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.20A RCW
2 to read as follows:

3 Consistent with chapter . . . (Senate Bill No. 6402), Laws of 2000,
4 the secretary of the department shall emphasize the purchase of child
5 welfare services from licensed child-placing agencies or other entities
6 as permitted under chapter 41.06 RCW.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.20A RCW
8 to read as follows:

9 (1) The department shall increase by at least fifteen percent the
10 number of children currently being served by licensed child-placing
11 agencies.

12 (2) The department shall determine on a regional basis the method
13 by which the increase required in subsection (1) of this section will
14 be met.

15 (3) The department shall develop guidelines to determine which
16 cases will be managed by licensed child-placing agencies. These
17 guidelines shall be developed in conjunction with the licensed child-
18 placing agencies no later than November 15, 2000.

19 (4) The department shall use the following outcome measures for
20 child welfare services provided by the department and licensed child-
21 placing agencies:

22 (a) Children in out-of-home care will not experience confirmed
23 abuse or neglect while in placement;

24 (b) Children will not experience confirmed abuse or neglect within
25 six months of reunification with their biological parent;

26 (c) Youth age sixteen and older discharged from foster care have
27 either completed high school, obtained a GED, or are participating in
28 an educational or job training program;

29 (d) Parents and youth age fourteen and older will report
30 satisfaction with services upon case closure;

31 (e) Fewer than ten percent of the foster families annually will
32 leave the program because of dissatisfaction;

33 (f) Foster families will report satisfaction with overall support;
34 and

35 (g) Other outcomes as deemed appropriate by the department.

36 (5) The department shall compare the outcomes achieved by the
37 department with those achieved by licensed child-placing agencies and

1 report to the appropriate committees of the legislature on an annual
2 basis beginning January 1, 2001.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW
4 to read as follows:

5 (1) For purposes of this section, "specialized rate for family
6 foster care" means amounts paid by the department to foster families in
7 addition to the basic foster care rate.

8 (2) The department shall discontinue payment of the specialized
9 rate for family foster care.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW
11 to read as follows:

12 (1) For purposes of this section, "exceptional cost plans" means
13 funds to reimburse foster parents for unusual, highly demanding
14 activities or supervision for children with severe impairments or acute
15 emotional or behavioral problems.

16 (2) The department is authorized to pay for exceptional cost plans,
17 in addition to the basic foster care rate, as provided in this act.

18 (3) The department shall create the following levels of exceptional
19 cost plans:

20 (a) Level I, for which the maximum monthly reimbursement shall be
21 seven hundred fifty dollars.

22 (b) Level II, for which the maximum monthly reimbursement shall be
23 two thousand dollars.

24 (4) The criteria for reimbursement of foster parents at the level
25 I range are:

26 (a) The foster child requires special classes, lessons, or social
27 activities not related to physical care or supervision;

28 (b) The foster child requires minimal mental health therapy; or

29 (c) The foster child requires special therapeutic interventions by
30 the foster parent.

31 (5) The criteria for reimbursement of foster parents at the level
32 II range are:

33 (a) Respite or child care as a substitute for or to assist the
34 foster parent in caring for the child is required;

35 (b) The foster child requires a special diet;

36 (c) The foster child requires mental health treatment beyond that
37 reimbursed under level I;

1 (d) The foster child requires special equipment or furniture; or
2 (e) Additional reimbursement to the foster parent is necessary for
3 the maintenance or special supervision of the foster child.

4 (6) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (4) and (5) of
5 this section, only when authorized by the regional administrator,
6 foster parents may receive payments in excess of those authorized in
7 subsection (5) of this section under the following criteria:

8 (a) The foster child is severely medically fragile as defined by
9 the department in rule;

10 (b) The foster child requires extraordinary twenty-four hour
11 supervision;

12 (c) The foster child has severe emotional or physical disabilities;
13 or

14 (d) The foster child has an extensive history of inpatient mental
15 health or substance abuse treatment.

16 (7) No regional administrator may delegate to any subordinate the
17 authority to authorize an exception granted under subsection (6) of
18 this section. In the absence, or disability, of a regional
19 administrator, the assistant secretary shall determine whether an
20 exception shall be granted.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW
22 to read as follows:

23 The department shall develop a training curriculum for foster
24 parents by which foster parents receiving level I or II exceptional
25 cost plan reimbursement or an exceptional amount in addition to those
26 levels as provided in section 5 of this act are required to complete a
27 certain number of hours of training on an annual basis to continue
28 receiving the higher rates of reimbursement. The training required of
29 each foster parent shall be directly related to the specific special
30 needs of the foster child or children for whom the foster parent
31 provides care. The annual amount of training required shall be
32 determined by the department in rule.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW
34 to read as follows:

35 The department shall develop by September 1, 2000, and implement by
36 December 15, 2000, a state-wide policy for the provision of a minimum
37 level of respite care for all licensed foster parents.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW
2 to read as follows:

3 The assistant secretary for the children's administration at the
4 department shall convene a quality improvement team whose sole
5 responsibility shall be to oversee the implementation of this act. The
6 team shall consist of at least the following members: A representative
7 of two private child-placing agencies; a licensed foster parent; a
8 member of the foster parents association of Washington state; a parent
9 of a child in foster care provided by the children's administration; a
10 parent of a child who is in foster care provided by a child-placing
11 agency; a representative of the department; and a representative of a
12 state employees' union. The team shall meet at least quarterly to
13 oversee the department's progress on implementation. The department
14 shall provide access to all records and documents necessary for the
15 team to perform its responsibilities under this act. The team shall
16 provide a preliminary report to the legislature by January 1, 2001.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** Sections 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 of this act take
18 effect May 1, 2001.

--- END ---