

*Children & Family Services*

**HB 1249**

**Brief Description:** *Regarding the quality of foster care services.*

**Sponsors:** *Representatives Kagi, Boldt, Ballasiotes, Tokuda, Dickerson, Gombosky, Darneille, Morell, Anderson, Schual-Berke, Esser, McIntire, Doumit, Kenney, Clements, Edwards, Fromhold, Miloscia, Barlean, Talcott, Ruderman, Conway, Kessler, Ogden, Lovick, D. Schmidt, O'Brien, Edmonds, Wood and Haigh.*

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- *The Legislature declares support for the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) efforts to achieve accreditation for all Children's Administration offices by July 1, 2006.*
- *Minimum standards for respite care for foster parents are established at three days per month per family caring for a child longer than 90 days.*
- *The department is instructed to explore and adopt proven professional foster care models.*

**Hearing Date:** *1/29/01*

**Staff:** *Deborah Frazier (786-7152).*

**Background:**

*The Children's Administration of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) served over 19,000 children in out of home care during fiscal year 2000. Over 6,300 licensed foster homes were available to serve the majority of these children.*

*A 1999 Foster Care Task Force identified a number of priorities for improving the foster care system. Foster care rates, assessments for children entering foster care, and foster parent recruitment and retention were identified as priorities for immediate action. Restructured rates are being implemented and assessment improvement efforts are underway. Recruitment and retention efforts are ongoing.*

*Some child welfare practitioners and advocates support accreditation as a means to promote some of the foster care system improvements identified as priorities by the task force, and other system improvements. Accreditation involves self-evaluation and evaluation by an outside entity against performance standards developed nationally.*

***Summary of Bill:***

*The bill creates an intent section for the foster care statutes and recodifies existing statutes by placing them in a different order.*

*The Legislature declares support for the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) efforts to achieve accreditation for all Children's Administration offices by July 1, 2006.*

*Minimum standards for respite care for foster parents are established at three days per month per family caring for a child longer than 90 days. Respite care providers are to be paid directly by the respite care program.*

*The department is instructed to explore and adopt proven professional foster care models.*

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

***Appropriation:*** *None.*

***Fiscal Note:*** *Requested on January 23, 2001.*