

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1397

C 144 L 02

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Encouraging support services for kinship caregivers.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Tokuda, Boldt, Kagi, Benson, Kenney, Cody, Schual-Berke and Santos).

House Committee on Children & Family Services
Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections

Background:

Children who need out of home placement because of abuse, abandonment or neglect may be placed with relatives. This placement may be through a formal process such as dependency or a voluntary agreement, or it may be through an informal arrangement within the family.

Relatives may choose to be licensed as foster homes. If the relative's home is licensed, the child's care is paid for through foster care funding, the child is eligible for Medicaid, and support services are available. Foster care rates vary with the age of the child; the rate for a child from birth up to age six is \$366 per month, per child in placement.

If the relative's home is not licensed, the child's care is paid for through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grants, Medicaid coverage is provided and, if the child was placed through a dependency action, support services are available. The TANF grant for the first child, of any age, is \$349 per month. The grant is increased for each subsequent child placed by an increment of at least \$91 per child, per month.

Summary:

The Legislature recognizes the value of placing children, who are at risk of foster care placement, with relatives.

The DSHS is required, within existing resources, to convene a workgroup on kinship caregivers. The membership of the workgroup is described. The duties of the workgroup are to:

- review the Washington State Institute for Public Policy kinship caregivers study which is due in June 2002;
- develop a briefing for the Legislature that identifies the policy issues related to kinship caregivers, the federal and state statutes associated with these issues, and

- options to address the issues; and
- submit the briefing to the Children and Family Services Committee of the House of Representatives by November 1, 2002.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 97 0

Senate 45 0 (Senate amended)

House 94 0 (House concurred)

Effective: June 13, 2002