

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 3090

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Children & Family Services & Corrections, February 26, 2004

Title: An act relating to the definition of out-of-home placement.

Brief Description: Revising the definition of out-of-home placement.

Sponsors: House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Kagi, Boldt, Darneille, Miloscia, Pettigrew, Roach, Dickerson, Fromhold, Talcott, Shabro, Pearson and Bailey).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 2/25/04, 2/26/04 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Stevens, Chair; Parlette, Vice Chair; Carlson, Deccio, Hargrove, McAuliffe and Regala.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: The Legislature has recognized that protecting the health and safety of children is paramount. When their safety is threatened by abuse or neglect, children can be placed in out-of-home (foster) care. If the issues these families are experiencing can be addressed prior to removing the child from the home, families can be strengthened and the high costs associated with foster care can be avoided. Intensive family preservation services provides intensive, in home crisis intervention, counseling, and life-skills education for families who have children at imminent risk of placement in out-of-home state funded care. The goal of family preservation services is to prevent the unnecessary out-of-home placement of children and to teach families new problem-solving skills to prevent future crises.

In some instances, reunification of a child with their family is not possible. The department will attempt to locate other family members with whom the child can be placed. Under current law, these kinship placements are defined as out-of-home placements.

Current law prohibits the department from providing intensive family preservation services unless it can be shown that they prevent out-of-home placement in at least 70 percent of the cases served for a period of no less than six months following termination of services. The department can renew the contract even if the contractor is not meeting this standard, if it determines that the contractor is making progress towards meeting that goal or there are other conditions which contributed to the failure to reach the standard.

Summary of Amended Bill: Intensive family preservation services may be provided by the department as long as contractors show their services prevent foster care placement in 70

percent of the cases in which a child is placed out of the home. Placement with kin is no longer considered a "failure" in providing services to the child and their family.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: For the purpose of determining the effectiveness of intensive family preservation services, the department will not consider children placed with family members as a failure in placement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Placement with family members should be considered a positive outcome for children being placed out of their home.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Art Cantrall, Department of Social and Health Services.