

---

**Early Learning & Children's  
Services Committee**

---

**HB 3145**

**Brief Description:** Implementing a tiered classification system for foster parent licensing.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Kagi, Haler, Roberts, Walsh, Pettigrew, Dickerson, Conway, Green, Goodman, Kenney, Wood and Ormsby.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Directs the Department of Social and Health Services to implement a specialized licensed foster parent program in two geographical areas in Washington.
- Requires a report to the Governor and the Legislature with recommendations for expansion and statewide implementation of the specialized licensed foster parent program.

**Hearing Date:** 1/29/08

**Staff:** Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

**Background:**

In 2007 the Legislature enacted HB 1624 creating a work group to study the need for and feasibility of creating tiered classifications for foster parent licensing, including a professional foster parent classification. The work group was facilitated by the Assistant Secretary of the Children's Administration (CA) of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Executive Director of the Northwest Institute for Children and Families (NW Institute) at the University of Washington (UW).

Work group members included representation from the Legislature; Indian tribes; foster parents; the Foster Parent Association of Washington State (FPAWS); child welfare professionals; Partners for our Children at the UW; and the Washington Federation of State Employees. The work group met five times and held two stakeholder meetings. In addition, two subcommittees of the work group each met three times.

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

The draft report from the work group was published January 25, 2007, and included the following recommendations:

- (1) The foster care level system should be reexamined for the overall foster care system.
- (2) A specific model of skill-building should be selected for use by specialized foster parents who serve children with behavioral issues.
- (3) The Children's Administration should work with foster parents, the UW School of Social Work, and child-serving agencies to further refine a number of specifics relating to implementation of a specialized foster parent program.

Issues identified for further work include the selection process and criteria for specialized foster parents; managing the risks of reduced permanency; how specialized foster parents would fit in the continuum of services for children; and federal funding and individual income tax implications.

**Summary of Bill:**

The DSHS must select two geographical areas for phase one of the implementation of a specialized foster parent program to begin not later than July 1, 2008. Implementation of the initial sites should be undertaken with goal of eventual expansion of the program statewide. The DSHS must consult with foster parents, associations of foster parents, and out-of-home care service providers and must utilize the information provide in the workgroup's report, including the information presented to the workgroup. Collectively, the DSHS and other entities must:

- (1) define the criteria for licensing of specialized foster parents;
- (2) define the criteria for identifying eligibility for placement with specialized foster parents;
- (3) establish rules for placement of children with specialized foster parents, including a limit on the number of children who may be placed in a specialized foster home;
- (4) identify one or more models of skill-building to be used;
- (5) specify training, consultation, and supports for specialized foster parents;
- (6) adopt a system of payment to specialized foster parents based on achievement of specific desired outcomes for the child; and
- (7) establish clearly defined responsibilities of specialized foster parents.

By December 1, 2008, the DSHS must report to te Governor and the Legislature with recommendations for phase-in and statewide expansion of the program.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 23, 2008.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.