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## Early Learning & Children's Services Committee

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### HB 2596

**Brief Description:** Defining child advocacy centers for the multidisciplinary investigation of child abuse and implementation of county protocols.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Williams, Chase, Upthegrove and Simpson.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a definition for *Children's Advocacy Center* within the chapter governing abuse and neglect of children.
- Adds Children's Advocacy Centers to the list of local multidisciplinary entities with whom counties must coordinate in developing protocols for investigations of child abuse, neglect, and fatality.
- Makes a technical change to establish uniformity in existing references to child protective services.

**Hearing Date:** 1/22/10

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

#### Background:

##### Investigation Protocols for Child Neglect, Abuse, and Fatality.

The coordination of county-based protocols has been required for child sexual abuse investigations in Washington since 1999. Since 2007 county-based protocols have been required also for the investigation child abuse, criminal child neglect, and child fatality. Protocols are intended to coordinate a multidisciplinary investigation by the various local entities responsible for responding to the abuse, neglect, or death of children, including city and county law enforcement; child protective services; county prosecutors; emergency medical personnel; and other local agencies and advocacy groups. County prosecutors are responsible for developing the protocols in collaboration with all other entities.

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*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.*

Washington Association of Children's Advocacy Centers.

The Children's Advocacy Centers of Washington (CACWA) is a membership association representing Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC) in the state, and providing training and technical assistance to existing and emerging CACs. The CACWA also is the Washington Chapter of the National Children's Alliance, a national membership and accrediting organization for CACs. As the state chapter of the national accrediting organization, the CACWA provides training and technical assistance to existing and developing centers and serves as a voice and support for CACs. The common goal of the CACs and the state chapter is to ensure children are not re-victimized by the very system designed to protect them. Children's Advocacy Centers are located in the following Washington cities: Vancouver, Lacey, Montesano, Wenatchee, Tacoma, Spokane, Everett, Colville, Bingen, Bellingham, Kennewick, and Port Orchard.

**Summary of Bill:**

A CAC is defined as a child-focused facility in good standing with the CACWA providing coordination of a multidisciplinary process for the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse, including child sexual abuse. The CACs provide a child-friendly location for forensic interviews and help coordinate access to medical evaluations; advocacy; therapy; and case reviews within the context of the county-based protocols.

The CACs are added to the list of entities to be included in the coordination and development of county-based protocols for the investigation of child sexual abuse, child abuse, criminal child neglect, and child fatalities.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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