

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6832

C 291 L 10
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning child welfare services.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senator Hargrove).

Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections
House Committee on Early Learning & Children's Services

Background: In 2009 the Legislature enacted 2SHB 2106, which, among other things, established the Child Welfare Transformation Design Committee (TDC) to select two demonstration sites and develop performance measures and criteria for contracting of child welfare services. The TDC includes representation from the following entities:

- the Office of the Governor;
- the Office of the Attorney General;
- the Children's Administration within the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) ;
- the Office of the Family and Children's Ombudsman;
- the Indian Policy Advisory Committee convened by DSHS;
- the Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee convened by DSHS;
- the bargaining representative for the largest number of Children's Administration's employees;
- nationally recognized experts in performance-based contracting;
- private agencies providing child welfare services in Washington;
- parents with experience in the dependency process;
- Partners for Our Children (POC);
- superior court judges; and
- foster parents.

Since its initial meeting, the TDC has included a former foster youth in its deliberations. Because the representation of foster youth is not listed in statute, however, the foster youth representative has not had formal voting rights in the TDC's decision making. In its most recent and second quarterly report to the Legislative Children's Oversight Committee and the Governor, the TDC recommended the Legislature amend the statute to include a representative of foster youth on the TDC, and that the representative have full voting rights.

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.

DSHS contracts with multiple private providers for the purchase of various child welfare services, including individual and group counseling or therapy; group care and behavioral health services; assessment and treatment for chemical dependence, domestic violence, or mental health needs; reunification services; and adoption services. These contracts are fee-for-service contracts with both nonprofit and for-profit entities. The 2SHB 2106 required DSHS to consolidate and convert existing contracts to performance-based contracts by January 1, 2011. The TDC has recommended this date be extended to July 1, 2011, to allow sufficient time for DSHS and contracted providers to consolidate and convert contracts.

The date by which the demonstration sites be implemented is July 1, 2012. There was concern expressed by members of the TDC that the date be extended to allow for an orderly transition of existing cases from the DSHS to the supervising agencies.

One of the TDC's advisory committee recommended that in the demonstration sites, the supervising agencies work in the same geographic area as DSHS to allow for better comparison of outcomes.

Most child welfare case management services are currently provided by DSHS only. Federal law requires that states maintain care and placement authority of youth for whom child welfare funding is being received and spent. Implementation of the demonstration sites will require DSHS to contract with supervising agencies for case management services.

Summary: The date by which DSHS must convert all contracts for the purchase of child welfare services to performance-based contracts is extended from January 1, 2011, to July 1, 2011.

The membership of the TDC is expanded to include a representative of foster youth who will be selected by the co-chairs of the TDC. The representative may be a youth currently in foster care or a recent alumnus.

The date by which the demonstration sites are to be fully implemented is extended from June 30, 2012, to December 30, 2012.

DSHS may provide child welfare services in the same two demonstration sites as a supervising agency for the purpose of establishing a control or comparison group to compare the performance of both in achieving measurable outcomes.

The TDC is directed, when selecting the demonstration sites and developing the transition plan for the demonstration sites, to maintain the care and placement authority of DSHS at a level that does not jeopardize federal funding eligibility and that also provides flexibility and will maximize federal funding opportunities.

The primary preference for contracting of case management services, if the demo sites are continued after 2015, is with private nonprofit entities, Indian tribes, and state employees as long as all other elements of the bids are equal.

The authority of Indian tribes to provide their own child welfare programs is expressly recognized.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	46	0	
House	95	1	(House amended)
Senate	48	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 10, 2010