
**Early Learning & Human Services
Committee**

HB 1594

Brief Description: Concerning interviewing children in child protective services investigations at children's advocacy centers.

Sponsors: Representatives Sawyer, Roberts, Zeiger, Walsh, Kagi, Fey, Ryu, Freeman, Appleton, Moscoso and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a preference for child protective services' interviews to take place at children's advocacy centers, when access to children's advocacy centers is reasonably available.

Hearing Date: 2/8/13

Staff: Lindsay Lanham (786-7120).

Background:

Child protective services' investigators are required to respond to allegations of child abuse or child neglect. In statute, each county has the responsibility to develop specific protocol for handling sexual abuse, child fatality, child physical abuse, and criminal child neglect cases. The regional protocol must address the coordination between the prosecutor's office, law enforcement, children's protective services, child advocacy centers (when available), local advocacy groups, community sexual assault programs, emergency medical services, or any other agency involved in the investigation of the case.

Children's advocacy center is defined in statute as a child-focused facility in good standing with the state chapter for children's advocacy centers. Children's advocacy centers coordinate a multidisciplinary process for the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of sexual and other types of child abuse. Children's advocacy centers provide a location for forensic interviews and

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coordinate access to services such as, but not limited to, medical evaluations, advocacy, therapy, and case review by multidisciplinary teams within the context of county protocols.

Traditionally, forensic interviews are conducted when there is a possibility that a criminal case may emerge from the child protective services' investigation. Forensic interviews are often conducted in a standardized manner and used to obtain facts. Forensic interviews serve as the child's recorded statement. Currently, not all child protective services' investigations require forensic interviewing.

Summary of Bill:

Children's advocacy centers are established as the preferred location for all child protective services' interviews, when access to children's advocacy center's is reasonably available.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 31, 2013.

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