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## Early Learning & Human Services Committee

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### SHB 1594

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

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Early Learning & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Sawyer, Roberts, Zeiger, Walsh, Kagi, Fey, Ryu, Freeman, Appleton, Moscoso and Ormsby).

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a general 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:** 1/29/14

**Staff:** Lindsay Lanham (786-7120).

#### Background:

In conducting an investigation of alleged abuse or neglect, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) or law enforcement agencies may interview children. The interviews may be conducted on school premises, at day-care facilities, at the child's home, or at other suitable locations outside the presence of the parents. Parental notification of the interview must occur at the earliest possible point in the investigation that will not jeopardize the safety or protection of the child or the investigation.

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:**

Child Advocacy Centers are established as the generally preferred location for a forensic interview of a child, when access to a Child Advocacy Center is reasonably available.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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