
**Early Learning & Human Services
Committee**

SSB 6309

Brief Description: Extending the timeline for completing a family assessment response.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Darneille, Miloscia, O'Ban, Rivers, Frockt and Hunt).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Extends the timeline for which family assessment response services can be offered with parental agreement from 90 days to 120 days.

Hearing Date: 2/21/18

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

Family Assessment Response.

In 2014 the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) began implementation of a differential response system for responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect with low to moderate risk of child maltreatment called family assessment response (FAR). The FAR services were phased-in throughout the state until full implementation was completed on June 1, 2017.

Upon receiving a report of child abuse or neglect that screens in for a response, the DSHS must either refer the case for investigation or FAR. The DSHS developed a method by which to assign cases to investigation or FAR. Cases must be referred for investigation when the assessment determines that there is a risk of imminent harm to the child, a serious threat of substantial harm to the child, the conduct constitutes criminal activity, the child is abandoned, the child is dependent, or in a facility licensed by the DSHS or the Department of Early Learning.

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 DSHS must complete FAR services within 45 days of receiving the child abuse and neglect report, and parents may agree to extend the response period up to 90 days. Parents must agree to participate in FAR services before services begin.

On July 1, 2018, the child welfare functions of the DSHS transfer to the Department of Children, Youth, and Family (DCYF).

Summary of Bill:

The length of time that FAR services can be offered with parental agreement is increased from 90 to 120 days. The extension of the FAR response period must be operated within the appropriation of the DCYF.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect July 1, 2018.