

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1605

C 120 L 19
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring traumatic brain injury screenings for children entering the foster care system.

Sponsors: House Committee on Human Services & Early Learning (originally sponsored by Representatives Dent, Peterson, Griffey, Caldier, Goodman, Volz, Stanford, Lovick, Reeves, Klippert, Frame, Schmick, Harris, Appleton, Kretz, DeBolt, Cody, Macri, Orwall, Shea, Blake, Kloba, Doglio, Ortiz-Self, Eslick, Jenkins, Van Werven, Fey, Ormsby, Callan, Bergquist, Tarleton and Leavitt).

House Committee on Human Services & Early Learning
Senate Committee on Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

Child Welfare.

If an individual suspects that a child has been abused or neglected, that abuse or neglect can be reported to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Child Protective Services (CPS) office or to law enforcement. There are many individuals who are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect.

The CPS will determine whether a report of child abuse or neglect is credible and whether the report meets the screening criteria. If the report meets the screening criteria, CPS will assign either: (1) a 24-hour response that includes an investigation; or (2) a family assessment response for a low- to moderate-risk allegation that requires a 72-hour response.

The DCYF, or anyone else, can file a court petition alleging that the child should be a dependent of the state due to abuse, neglect, or because no parent, guardian, or custodian is capable of adequately caring for the child. A court will hold a shelter care hearing following removal of a child from his or her home within 72 hours. At this hearing, the court will determine if the child can return home safely.

Out-of-Home Care.

When children are removed from the home of a parent or guardian due to allegations of abuse or neglect, those children may be placed with relatives or in foster care. Relatives care

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for almost half of the children placed in out-of-home care and are required to meet certain safety requirements but are not required to be licensed. Foster parents may pursue licensure by either the DCYF or private child-placing agencies and provide temporary care to children with the goal of reunifying the child with his or her parent or guardian.

Child Health and Education Tracking.

A Child Health and Education Tracking (CHET) screening is conducted by a DCYF screener within 30 days of a child's placement in out-of-home care. This evaluation includes:

- meeting with each child in person to complete the screen if possible;
- assessing each child in the developmentally appropriate domain according to a CHET handbook;
- obtaining information from sources such as parents, caregivers, and teachers; and
- documenting the long-term, well-being needs of the child.

Following a CHET screen, the screener must make referrals to:

- the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers program if a developmental delay is identified for children younger than age 3; and
- Apple Health Core Connections.

The screener must also provide the CHET screening report to caregivers and the assigned social worker within five days of completing the screen.

Traumatic Brain Injury.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines a traumatic brain injury (TBI) as a disruption in the normal function of the brain that can be caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or penetrating head injury. According to the CDC, everyone is at risk for a TBI, especially children and older adults.

Summary:

The DCYF, in consultation with the health plan contracted to provide health care coverage to foster youth, must evaluate:

- TBI screening tools that could be used with children entering out-of-home care;
- options to include TBI screening tools in existing screens or regular health care appointments for children in out-of-home care; and
- the treatment actions based on health care, behavioral health care, and trauma-related best practices for youth for whom a potential TBI is identified using a screening tool.

The DCYF shall provide a report based on the evaluation described above to the Legislature by December 1, 2019.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	98	0
Senate	45	0

Effective: July 28, 2019