

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1237

As of March 18, 2021

Title: An act relating to defining family resource centers.

Brief Description: Defining family resource centers.

Sponsors: Representatives Eslick, Senn, Leavitt, Callan, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Davis, Santos, Rule, Goodman and Riccelli.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/3/21, 94-1.

Committee Activity: Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation: 3/18/21.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Defines the term "family resource center" to mean a unified single point of entry where families, individuals, children, and youth in communities can obtain information, an assessment of needs, referral to, or direct delivery of family services in a manner that is welcoming and strength-based.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, REENTRY & REHABILITATION

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7488)

Background: A family resource center (FRC) generally refers to community-based resource hubs where families can access formal and informal supports to promote their health and well-being. These FRCs are sometimes located in apartment complexes, schools, health centers, libraries, community centers, storefronts, and churches, among other places.

The National Family Support Network (NFSN) is made up of statewide networks of two or more family support and strengthening programs, such as FRCs. According to the NFSN, FRCs most commonly offer parenting support, access to resources, child development

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activities, and parent leadership development services.

Other terms are sometimes used to describe the same type of services provided by an FRC, such as:

- family support center (FSC);
- family center;
- family success center; and
- parent child center.

There are a number of FRCs or FSCs throughout Washington.

Summary of Bill: It is the stated intent of the Legislature to provide a common definition for family resource centers across the state in an effort to establish a core set of principles for existing and newly forming family resource centers. The Legislature finds family resource centers play a critical role in preventing child abuse and neglect, strengthening children and families, connecting family-impacting agencies and programs, creating opportunities for community-level coordination, and creating connections to resources and support systems.

An "FRC" is defined as a unified single point of entry where families, individuals, children, and youth in communities can obtain information, an assessment of needs, referral to, or direct delivery of family services in a welcoming and strength-based manner. An FRC is designed to meet the needs, cultures, and interests of the communities the FRC serves.

Family services may be delivered directly to a family at the FRC by the FRC staff or by providers who contract with or have provider agreements with the FRC.

Each FRC must have one or more family advocate who screens and assesses a family's needs and strengths.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Family resource centers (FRC) started opening in the 1990's and now there are at least 60 FRCs in Washington. Many other states have standardized what FRCs are, which is what we are doing here. We do not want existing programs to change their name, but they can add that they are FRC and by defining them and what they stand for, they will have a consistent strengths-based approach. All FRCs do not offer the same type of assistance as they really cater to their local community.

They help build trust, they know where to turn for assistance be it rental assistance or helping out with diapers. There is a FRC that helps relatives who are caring for children which has prevented kids from entering the system. They also are not just about helping people meet their immediate needs, but also planning for their future. People come as a family and get treated as a family.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Carolyn Eslick, Prime Sponsor; Gina Cabiddu, Children Home Society of Washington; Heidi Strobe, Parent; Laurie Lippold, Partners For Our Children; Byron Manering, Brigid Collins Family Support Center; Lynsey Gagnon, Volunteers of American of Western Washington; Dorothy Gorder, Multicultural Child and Family Hope Center.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.