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**SENATE BILL 5617**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators C. Wilson, Frame, Hasegawa, Lovelett, Lovick, Nobles, Trudeau, and Valdez

AN ACT Relating to providing for a child in need of services petition process for juveniles in and exiting detention; amending RCW 13.32A.045, 13.32A.150, 13.32A.152, 13.32A.160, 13.32A.170, 13.32A.179, and 43.330.724; reenacting and amending RCW 13.32A.030; and adding new sections to chapter 13.32A RCW.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 13.32A.030 and 2020 c 51 s 1 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

As used in this chapter the following terms have the meanings indicated unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

(1) "Abuse or neglect" means the injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child by any person under circumstances that indicate the child's health, welfare, and safety is harmed, excluding conduct permitted under RCW 9A.16.100. An abused child is a child who has been subjected to child abuse or neglect as defined in this section.

(2) "Administrator" means the individual who has the daily administrative responsibility of a crisis residential center, or his or her designee.

(3) "At-risk youth" means a juvenile:

(a) Who is absent from home for at least ((~~seventy-two~~)) 72 consecutive hours without consent of his or her parent;

(b) Who is beyond the control of his or her parent such that the child's behavior endangers the health, safety, or welfare of the child or any other person; or

(c) Who has a substance abuse problem for which there are no pending criminal charges related to the substance abuse.

(4) "Child," "juvenile," "youth," and "minor" mean any unemancipated individual who is under the chronological age of ((~~eighteen~~)) 18 years.

(5) "Child in need of services" means a juvenile:

(a) Who is beyond the control of his or her parent such that the child's behavior endangers the health, safety, or welfare of the child or any other person;

(b) Who has been reported to law enforcement as absent without consent for at least ((~~twenty-four~~)) 24 consecutive hours on two or more separate occasions from the home of either parent, a crisis residential center, an out-of-home placement, or a court-ordered placement; and

(i) Has exhibited a serious substance abuse problem; or

(ii) Has exhibited behaviors that create a serious risk of harm to the health, safety, or welfare of the child or any other person;

(c)(i) Who is in need of: (A) Necessary services, including food, shelter, health care, clothing, or education; or (B) services designed to maintain or reunite the family;

(ii) Who lacks access to, or has declined to use, these services; and

(iii) Whose parents have evidenced continuing but unsuccessful efforts to maintain the family structure or are unable or unwilling to continue efforts to maintain the family structure; ((~~or~~))

(d) Who is a "sexually exploited child((~~.~~))"; or

(e) Who reasonably believes that there will be no parent, legal guardian, or responsible adult to whom they can be released when legal jurisdiction to detain ends.

(6) "Child in need of services petition" means a petition filed in juvenile court by a parent, child, or the department seeking adjudication of placement of the child.

(7) "Community-based family reconciliation services" means family reconciliation services as defined in this chapter that are provided by a community-based entity under contract with the department.

(8) "Crisis residential center" means a secure or semi-secure facility established pursuant to chapter 74.13 RCW.

((~~(8)~~)) (9) "Custodian" means the person or entity that has the legal right to custody of the child.

((~~(9)~~)) (10) "Department" means the department of children, youth, and families.

((~~(10)~~)) (11) "Extended family member" means an adult who is a grandparent, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, uncle, aunt, or first cousin with whom the child has a relationship and is comfortable, and who is willing and available to care for the child.

((~~(11)~~)) (12) "Family reconciliation services" means services provided by culturally relevant, trauma-informed community-based entities under contract with the department, or provided directly by the department, designed to assess and stabilize the family with the goal of resolving crisis and building supports, skills, and connection to community networks and resources including, but not limited to:

(a) Referrals for services for suicide prevention, psychiatric or other medical care, psychological care, behavioral health treatment, legal assistance, or educational assistance;

(b) Parent training;

(c) Assistance with conflict management or dispute resolution; or

(d) Other social services, as appropriate to meet the needs of the child and the family.

((~~(12)~~)) (13) "Guardian" means the person or agency that (a) has been appointed as the guardian of a child in a legal proceeding other than a proceeding under chapter 13.34 RCW, and (b) has the legal right to custody of the child pursuant to such appointment. The term "guardian" does not include a "dependency guardian" appointed pursuant to a proceeding under chapter 13.34 RCW.

((~~(13)~~)) (14) "Multidisciplinary team" means a group formed to provide assistance and support to a child who is an at-risk youth or a child in need of services and his or her parent. The team must include the parent, a department caseworker, a local government representative when authorized by the local government, and when appropriate, members from the mental health and substance abuse disciplines. The team may also include, but is not limited to, the following persons: Educators, law enforcement personnel, probation officers, employers, church persons, tribal members, therapists, medical personnel, social service providers, placement providers, and extended family members. The team members must be volunteers who do not receive compensation while acting in a capacity as a team member, unless the member's employer chooses to provide compensation or the member is a state employee.

((~~(14)~~)) (15) "Out-of-home placement" means a placement in a foster family home or group care facility licensed pursuant to chapter 74.15 RCW or placement in a home, other than that of the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian, not required to be licensed pursuant to chapter 74.15 RCW.

((~~(15)~~)) (16) "Parent" means the parent or parents who have the legal right to custody of the child. "Parent" includes custodian or guardian.

((~~(16)~~)) (17) "Responsible adult" means an adult the court orders as a responsible adult to assist in making release plans with the juvenile. The juvenile may recommend adults that they believe to be a responsible adult for the court's consideration.

(18) "Secure facility" means a crisis residential center, or portion thereof, that has locking doors, locking windows, or a secured perimeter, designed and operated to prevent a child from leaving without permission of the facility staff.

((~~(17)~~)) (19) "Semi-secure facility" means any facility, including but not limited to crisis residential centers or specialized foster family homes, operated in a manner to reasonably assure that youth placed there will not run away. Pursuant to rules established by the department, the facility administrator shall establish reasonable hours for residents to come and go from the facility such that no residents are free to come and go at all hours of the day and night. To prevent residents from taking unreasonable actions, the facility administrator, where appropriate, may condition a resident's leaving the facility upon the resident being accompanied by the administrator or the administrator's designee and the resident may be required to notify the administrator or the administrator's designee of any intent to leave, his or her intended destination, and the probable time of his or her return to the center.

((~~(18)~~)) (20) "Sexually exploited child" means any person under the age of ((~~eighteen~~)) 18 who is a victim of the crime of commercial sex abuse of a minor under RCW 9.68A.100, promoting commercial sexual abuse of a minor under RCW 9.68A.101, or promoting travel for commercial sexual abuse of a minor under RCW 9.68A.102.

((~~(19)~~)) (21) "Staff secure facility" means a structured group care facility licensed under rules adopted by the department with a ratio of at least one adult staff member to every two children.

((~~(20)~~)) (22) "Temporary out-of-home placement" means an out-of-home placement of not more than ((~~fourteen~~)) 14 days ordered by the court at a fact-finding hearing on a child in need of services petition.

**Sec.**  RCW 13.32A.045 and 2020 c 51 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Beginning December 1, 2020, and annually thereafter, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the department shall make data available on the use of family reconciliation services which includes:

(a) The number of requests for family reconciliation services;

(b) The number of referrals made for family reconciliation services;

(c) The demographic profile of families and youth accessing family reconciliation services including race, ethnicity, housing status, child welfare history, existence of an individualized education program, eligibility for services under 29 U.S.C. Sec. 701, or eligibility for other disability-related services;

(d) The nature of the family conflict;

(e) The type and length of the family reconciliation services delivered;

(f) Family outcomes after receiving family reconciliation services; ((~~and~~))

(g) Recommendations for improving family reconciliation services;

(h) The number of requests for community-based family reconciliation services; and

(i) The number of referrals made through community-based family reconciliation services.

(2) If the department cannot provide the information specified under subsection (1) of this section, the department shall identify steps necessary to obtain and make available the information required under subsection (1) of this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 13.32A.150 and 2020 c 51 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the juvenile court shall not accept the filing of a child in need of services petition by the child or the parents or the filing of an at-risk youth petition by the parent, unless verification is provided that the department, or a community-based entity under contract with the department, has completed a family assessment. The family assessment shall involve the multidisciplinary team if one exists. The family assessment or plan of services developed by the multidisciplinary team shall be aimed at family reconciliation, reunification, and avoidance of the out-of-home placement of the child. A family assessment is not required for a child in need of services petition filed pursuant to section 9 of this act.

(2) ((~~A~~)) Except as provided otherwise in this section, a child or a child's parent may file with the juvenile court a child in need of services petition to approve an out-of-home placement for the child before completion of a family assessment. The department shall, when requested, assist either a parent or child in the filing of the petition. The petition must be filed in the county where the parent resides, except for petitions filed pursuant to section 9 of this act. The petition shall allege that the child is a child in need of services and shall ask only that the placement of a child outside the home of his or her parent be approved, except for petitions filed pursuant to section 9 of this act. The filing of a petition to approve the placement is not dependent upon the court's having obtained any prior jurisdiction over the child or his or her parent, and confers upon the court a special jurisdiction to approve or disapprove an out-of-home placement under this chapter.

(3) A petition may not be filed if the child is the subject of a proceeding under chapter 13.34 RCW.

**Sec.**  RCW 13.32A.152 and 2011 c 309 s 21 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Whenever a child in need of services petition is filed by: (a) A youth pursuant to RCW 13.32A.150 or section 9 of this act; (b) the child or the child's parent pursuant to RCW 13.32A.120; or (c) the department pursuant to RCW 13.32A.140, the filing party shall have a copy of the petition served on the parents of the youth. Service shall first be attempted in person and if unsuccessful, then by certified mail with return receipt, except as provided otherwise.

(2) Whenever a child in need of services petition is filed by a youth or parent pursuant to RCW 13.32A.150 or section 9 of this act, the court shall immediately notify the department that a petition has been filed.

(3) When a child in need of services petition is filed by the department, and the court or the petitioning party knows or has reason to know that an Indian child is involved, the provisions of chapter 13.38 RCW apply.

(4) When a court schedules an emergency hearing under section 9 of this act, the court shall make diligent efforts to inform the parent or legal guardian of the emergency hearing. The notice may be given by any means reasonably certain of notifying the parent or legal guardian including, but not limited to: Written, including in an electronic format; telephone; or in-person oral notification.

**Sec.**  RCW 13.32A.160 and 2020 c 312 s 724 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) When a proper child in need of services petition to approve an out-of-home placement is filed under RCW 13.32A.120, 13.32A.140, ((~~or~~)) 13.32A.150, or section 9 of this act, the juvenile court shall: (a)(i) Schedule a fact-finding hearing to be held: (A) For a child who resides in a place other than his or her parent's home and other than an out-of-home placement, within five calendar days unless the last calendar day is a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, in which case the hearing shall be held on the preceding judicial day; or (B) for a child living at home or in an out-of-home placement, within ((~~ten~~)) 10 days; and (ii) notify the parent, child, and the department of such date; (b) notify the parent of the right to be represented by counsel and, if indigent, to have counsel appointed for him or her by the court; (c) appoint legal counsel for the child; (d) inform the child and his or her parent of the legal consequences of the court approving or disapproving a child in need of services petition; (e) notify the parents of their rights under this chapter and chapters 11.130, 13.34, and 71.34 RCW, ((~~including~~)) and, except for petitions filed pursuant to section 9 of this act, the right to file an at-risk youth petition, the right to submit an application for admission of their child to a treatment facility for alcohol, chemical dependency, or mental health treatment, and the right to file a guardianship petition; and (f) notify all parties, including the department, of their right to present evidence at the fact-finding hearing.

(2) Upon filing of a child in need of services petition, except for a petition filed pursuant to section 9 of this act, the child may be placed, if not already placed, by the department in a crisis residential center, HOPE center, foster family home, group home facility licensed under chapter 74.15 RCW, or any other suitable residence to be determined by the department. The court may place a child in a crisis residential center for a temporary out-of-home placement as long as the requirements of RCW 13.32A.125 are met.

(3) If the child has been placed in a foster family home or group care facility under chapter 74.15 RCW, the child shall remain there, or in any other suitable residence as determined by the department, pending resolution of the petition by the court. Any placement may be reviewed by the court within three judicial days upon the request of the juvenile or the juvenile's parent.

**Sec.**  RCW 13.32A.170 and 2000 c 123 s 20 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The court shall hold a fact-finding hearing to consider a proper child in need of services petition, giving due weight to the intent of the legislature that families have the right to place reasonable restrictions and rules upon their children, appropriate to the individual child's developmental level. The court may appoint legal counsel and/or a guardian ad litem to represent the child and advise parents of their right to be represented by legal counsel. At the commencement of the hearing, the court shall advise the parents of their rights as set forth in RCW 13.32A.160(1). If the court approves or denies a child in need of services petition, a written statement of the reasons must be filed.

(2) The court may approve an order stating that the child shall be placed in a residence other than the home of his or her parent only if it is established by a preponderance of the evidence, including a departmental recommendation for approval or dismissal of the petition, that:

(a) The child is a child in need of services as defined in RCW 13.32A.030(5);

(b) If the petitioner is a child, he or she has made a reasonable effort to resolve the conflict. This subsection does not apply to a petition filed pursuant to section 9 of this act;

(c) Reasonable efforts have been made to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from the child's home and to make it possible for the child to return home; and

(d) A suitable out-of-home placement resource is available. This subsection does not apply to a petition filed pursuant to section 9 of this act.

The court may not grant a petition filed by the child or the department if it is established that the petition is based only upon a dislike of reasonable rules or reasonable discipline established by the parent.

The court may not grant the petition if the child is the subject of a proceeding under chapter 13.34 RCW.

(3) Following the fact-finding hearing the court shall: (a) Approve a child in need of services petition and, if appropriate, enter a temporary out-of-home placement for a period not to exceed ((~~fourteen~~)) 14 days pending approval of a disposition decision to be made under RCW 13.32A.179(2); (b) approve an at-risk youth petition filed by the parents and dismiss the child in need of services petition, unless the petition was filed pursuant to section 9 of this act; or (c) dismiss the petition.

At any time the court may order the department to review the case to determine whether the case is appropriate for a dependency petition under chapter 13.34 RCW.

**Sec.**  RCW 13.32A.179 and 2000 c 123 s 21 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) A disposition hearing shall be held no later than ((~~fourteen~~)) 14 days after the approval of the temporary out-of-home placement. The parents, child, and department shall be notified by the court of the time and place of the hearing.

(2) At the conclusion of the disposition hearing, the court may: (a) Reunite the family and dismiss the petition; (b) approve an at-risk youth petition filed by the parents and dismiss the child in need of services petition, unless the child in need of services petition was filed pursuant to section 9 of this act; (c) approve an out-of-home placement requested in the child in need of services petition by the parents unless the child in need of services petition was filed pursuant to section 9 of this act; or (d) order an out-of-home placement at the request of the child or the department not to exceed ((~~ninety~~)) 90 days.

At any time the court may order the department to review the matter for purposes of filing a dependency petition under chapter 13.34 RCW. Whether or not the court approves or orders an out-of-home placement, the court may also order any conditions of supervision as set forth in RCW 13.32A.196(3).

(3) The court may only enter an order under subsection (2)(d) of this section if it finds by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that: (a)(i) The order is in the best interest of the family; (ii) the parents have not requested an out-of-home placement; (iii) the parents have not exercised any other right listed in RCW 13.32A.160(1)(e); (iv) the child has made reasonable efforts to resolve the problems that led to the filing of the petition; (v) the problems cannot be resolved by delivery of services to the family during continued placement of the child in the parental home; (vi) reasonable efforts have been made to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from the child's home and to make it possible for the child to return home; and (vii) a suitable out-of-home placement resource is available; (b)(i) the order is in the best interest of the child; and (ii) the parents are unavailable; or (c) the parent's actions cause an imminent threat to the child's health or safety. (a)(ii), (iii), and (iv) of this subsection (3) do not apply to petitions filed pursuant to section 9 of this act.

(4) The court may order the department to submit a dispositional plan if such a plan would assist the court in ordering a suitable disposition in the case. The plan, if ordered, shall address the needs of the child, and the perceived needs of the parents if the order was entered under subsection (2)(d) of this section or if specifically agreed to by the parents. If the parents do not agree or the order was not entered under subsection (2)(d) of this section the plan may only make recommendations regarding services in which the parents may voluntarily participate. If the court orders the department to prepare a plan, the department shall provide copies of the plan to the parent, the child, and the court. If the parties or the court desire the department to be involved in any future proceedings or case plan development, the department shall be provided with timely notification of all court hearings.

(5) A child who fails to comply with a court order issued under this section shall be subject to contempt proceedings, as provided in this chapter, but only if the noncompliance occurs within one year after the entry of the order. This subsection does not apply to petitions filed under section 9 of this act.

(6) ((~~After~~)) Except for petitions filed under section 9 of this act, after the court approves or orders an out-of-home placement, the parents or the department may request, and the court may grant, dismissal of the child in need of services proceeding when it is not feasible for the department to provide services due to one or more of the following circumstances:

(a) The child has been absent from court approved placement for ((~~thirty~~)) 30 consecutive days or more;

(b) The parents or the child, or all of them, refuse to cooperate in available, appropriate intervention aimed at reunifying the family; or

(c) The department has exhausted all available and appropriate resources that would result in reunification.

(7) The court shall dismiss a placement made under subsection (2)(c) of this section upon the request of the parents.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.330.724 and 2022 c 137 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Subject to the amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs shall select, monitor, and provide funding and assistance ((~~for a minimum of six total~~)) statewide to counties that implement housing stability for youth in crisis programs as described in this section ((~~for a period of three years~~)).

(2) The housing stability for youth in crisis ((~~pilot~~)) programs must include the following components:

(a) Regular trainings provided to all appropriate juvenile court staff regarding risk factors and identifiers for youth homelessness;

(b) An identification and referral system used throughout the juvenile court system where all appropriate court staff use routine data flags to identify youth at risk for youth homelessness and refer youth to the housing stability coordinator described under (c) of this subsection;

(c) A dedicated housing stability coordinator in each participating county that receives referrals, conducts housing stability assessments with youth and caregivers, connects youth and caregivers with relevant community providers based on assessments, and follows up on referrals;

(d) A model of homelessness prevention services that provides the appropriate amount of intervention based on the youth or family needs; and

(e) Coordinated housing services for youth experiencing homelessness.

(3) By October 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs shall submit a report to the relevant committees of the legislature and the governor that includes:

(a) An evaluation of the housing stability for youth in crisis programs that includes outcome data for participants;

(b) Recommendations for improving the housing stability for youth in crisis programs; and

(c) ((~~Recommendation for expanding the housing stability for youth in crisis programs.~~

~~(4) This section expires July 1, 2026~~)) Any other relevant information as determined by the office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 13.32A RCW to read as follows:

(1) Prior to their release, a juvenile in detention or in the physical custody of the juvenile court may file a child in need of services petition with the juvenile court for the court to approve an out-of-home placement and wrap-around services if the juvenile has reason to believe there will be no parent, legal guardian, or responsible adult to whom they can be released when legal jurisdiction to detain ends.

(2) The petition is to be filed in the county where the child is detained.

(3) If the juvenile may be released from detention or physical custody of the court prior to the time of a scheduled fact-finding hearing, the court shall schedule an emergency hearing to be held as soon as possible and no later than the time that legal authority to detain the juvenile ends. Hearsay shall be admissible at the emergency hearing. If at the conclusion of the hearing the court finds the juvenile successfully argues that their parents are not able or willing to ensure their basic needs are met, the court shall order the department to take custody of the juvenile pending the outcome of a fact-finding hearing under RCW 13.32A.170. Diligent efforts must be made to notify the parents or legal guardians of this emergency hearing.

(4) Court staff may refer juveniles to the housing stability for youth in crisis programs, as provided for in RCW 43.330.724, where they exist and within existing resources to assist with housing stability by collaborating with shelter providers, the department, juvenile court staff, community partners, host homes, parents, guardians, kin, and other identified supporters to prevent homelessness and ensure the juvenile transitions to safe housing. Out-of-home placement assistance may involve providing vouchers to juveniles or their families/friends to address immediate needs and stabilize housing including, but not limited to, transportation, vehicle repairs, and acquiring essential furniture.

(5)(a) A juvenile in detention or in the physical custody of the juvenile court shall be assigned counsel by the court or referred to an available civil legal aid law firm to assist with preparing, filing of court documents, and advising them of their legal rights related to housing and other supports.

(b) Prior to the juvenile's release from detention or the physical custody of the court, and while the child in need of services fact-finding hearing is pending, the department is to: (i) Offer services to help locate family, relatives, or kin, locally and nationally, using the department's family search resources; and (ii) offer and provide family reconciliation services to assist the juvenile, family, or other responsible adult, as ordered by the court, willing to support the juvenile to remedy issues that prevent the juvenile from living with their family or other responsible adults.

(6) A petition may not be filed if the juvenile is the subject of a proceeding under chapter 13.34 RCW.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 13.32A RCW to read as follows:

Subject to funding appropriated for this specific purpose, the department shall:

(1) Offer contracts to provide community-based family reconciliation services in three regions served by the department, two regions on the west side of the mountains, and one region on the east side of the mountains by January 1, 2026; and

(2) Offer contracts to provide community-based family reconciliation services statewide by January 1, 2030.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 13.32A RCW to read as follows:

The partnership council on juvenile justice shall consider and provide recommendations regarding the family reconciliation, child in need of services, at-risk youth, and truancy systems in order to develop recommendations to modernize this chapter and align its intentions, goals, and services with other, newer chapters, including chapter 43.330 RCW. The partnership council on juvenile justice is authorized to consult with experts to study and gather research on best practices regarding supports and services for family reconciliation, at-risk youth, children in need of services, and truancy, and to consult with relevant stakeholders regarding its potential recommendations. Relevant stakeholders may include, but are not limited to, the superior court judges association; Washington association of juvenile court administrators; office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs; office of the superintendent of public instruction; community-based organizations with expertise in unaccompanied youth, truancy professionals, and youth shelter providers; law enforcement; prosecutors; public defenders; incarcerated and formerly incarcerated youth and young adults; youth and young adults who have experienced homelessness; parents who have experienced raising at-risk youth; chemical dependency treatment providers; adolescent behavioral health professionals; and the administrative office of the courts.

By October 31, 2026, the partnership council on juvenile justice shall report to the governor and appropriate committees of the legislature recommendations for modernizing this chapter and other necessary steps to develop a meaningful safety and support network to address the needs of unaccompanied minors. Recommendations shall consider restorative principles and best practices and shall be developed in consultation with those who have been unaccompanied minors; have experienced truancy, chemical dependency, or have been children in need of services; and family members of youth who have experienced truancy or at-risk behaviors. The partnership council on juvenile justice shall provide recommendations for updating statutory language, identifying gaps in the provision of services, recommending pathways to address those gaps, recommending program implementation including, but not limited to, structure and placement within state government; scope and scale of funding including eligibility criteria; court processes as needed; and coordination with the existing adolescent services.

**--- END ---**