

RCW 74.14A.050 Identification of children in a state-assisted support system—Program development for long-term care—Foster care caseload—Emancipation of minors study. The secretary shall:

(1) (a) Consult with relevant qualified professionals to develop a set of minimum guidelines to be used for identifying all children who are in a state-assisted support system, whether at-home or out-of-home, who are likely to need long-term care or assistance, because they face physical, emotional, medical, mental, or other long-term challenges;

(b) The guidelines must, at a minimum, consider the following criteria for identifying children in need of long-term care or assistance:

(i) Placement within the foster care system for two years or more;

(ii) Multiple foster care placements;

(iii) Repeated unsuccessful efforts to be placed with a permanent adoptive family;

(iv) Chronic behavioral or educational problems;

(v) Repetitive criminal acts or offenses;

(vi) Failure to comply with court-ordered disciplinary actions and other imposed guidelines of behavior, including drug and alcohol rehabilitation; and

(vii) Chronic physical, emotional, medical, mental, or other similar conditions necessitating long-term care or assistance;

(2) Develop programs that are necessary for the long-term care of children and youth that are identified for the purposes of this section. Programs must: (a) Effectively address the educational, physical, emotional, mental, and medical needs of children and youth; and (b) incorporate an array of family support options, to individual needs and choices of the child and family. The programs must be ready for implementation by January 1, 1995;

(3) Conduct an evaluation of all children currently within the foster care agency caseload to identify those children who meet the criteria set forth in this section. All children entering the foster care system must be evaluated for identification of long-term needs within thirty days of placement;

(4) As a result of the passage of chapter 232, Laws of 2000, the department is conducting a pilot project to do a comparative analysis of a variety of assessment instruments to determine the most effective tools and methods for evaluation of children. The pilot project may extend through August 31, 2001. The department shall report to the appropriate committees in the senate and house of representatives by September 30, 2001, on the results of the pilot project. The department shall select an assessment instrument that can be implemented within available resources. The department shall complete statewide implementation by December 31, 2001. The department shall report to the appropriate committees in the senate and house of representatives on how the use of the selected assessment instrument has affected department policies, by no later than December 31, 2002, December 31, 2004, and December 31, 2006;

(5) Use the assessment tool developed pursuant to subsection (4) of this section in making out-of-home placement decisions for children;

(6) Each region of the department shall make the appropriate number of referrals to the foster care assessment program to ensure that the services offered by the program are used to the extent funded

pursuant to the department's contract with the program. The department shall report to the legislature by November 30, 2000, on the number of referrals, by region, to the foster care assessment program. If the regions are not referring an adequate number of cases to the program, the department shall include in its report an explanation of what action it is or has taken to ensure that the referrals are adequate;

(7) The department shall report to the legislature by December 15, 2000, on how it will use the foster care assessment program model to assess children as they enter out-of-home care;

(8) The department is to accomplish the tasks listed in subsections (4) through (7) of this section within existing resources;

(9) Study and develop a comprehensive plan for the evaluation and identification of all children and youth in need of long-term care or assistance, including, but not limited to, the mentally ill, developmentally disabled, medically fragile, seriously emotionally or behaviorally disabled, and physically impaired;

(10) Study and develop a plan for the children and youth in need of long-term care or assistance to ensure the coordination of services between the department's divisions and between other state agencies who are involved with the child or youth;

(11) Study and develop guidelines for transitional services, between long-term care programs, based on the person's age or mental, physical, emotional, or medical condition; and

(12) Study and develop a statutory proposal for the emancipation of minors. [2003 c 207 § 9; 2001 c 255 § 1; 2000 c 232 § 1; 1998 c 245 § 149; 1993 c 508 § 7; 1993 c 505 § 5.]

Section captions—Severability—Effective date—1993 c 508: See RCW 74.39A.900 through 74.39A.903.

Emancipation of minors: Chapter 13.64 RCW.