
HOUSE BILL 3145

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2008 Regular Session

By Representatives Kagi, Haler, Roberts, Walsh, Pettigrew, Dickerson, Conway, Green, Goodman, Kenney, Wood, and Ormsby

Read first time 01/23/08. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & Children's Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to implementing a program of tiered classification
2 for foster parent licensing; and adding new sections to chapter 74.13
3 RCW.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW
6 to read as follows:

7 The legislature finds that foster parents are an essential partner
8 in the child welfare system with responsibility for the care of
9 vulnerable children whose families are unable to meet their needs.
10 Because children who enter the foster care system have experienced
11 varying degrees of stress and trauma before placement, foster parents
12 sometimes are called upon to provide care for children with significant
13 behavioral challenges and intensive developmental needs. Other
14 children who enter foster care may require extraordinary efforts due to
15 health care needs or medical fragility. The legislature also finds
16 that foster parents with specialized skills and experience, or
17 professional training and expertise, can contribute significantly to a
18 child's well-being by promoting placement stability and supporting the

1 child's developmental growth. The legislature intends to implement a
2 program of specialized foster parent licensing to enhance the current
3 system of foster care, group care, and kinship care.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW
5 to read as follows:

6 (1) The department shall select two geographic areas for phase one
7 of the implementation of a foster parent specialized licensing
8 classification. The department may select one county on the west side
9 of the state and one on the east side of the state, or one urban county
10 and one rural county. Phase one of the specialized licensing
11 classification shall begin not later than July 1, 2008. The department
12 shall approach implementation of the program with the goal of expanding
13 the program statewide, based on the experience of the phase one sites.

14 (2) To implement phase one of the program, the department shall:

15 (a) Consult with the foster parents association of Washington,
16 agencies authorized to license foster parents, and other out-of-home
17 care service providers; and

18 (b) Use the information provided in the report to the legislature
19 under chapter 413, Laws of 2007, including the information presented to
20 the work group convened to prepare and present the report. The program
21 shall be implemented in a manner that addresses and is consistent with
22 the needs of the children in out-of-home care in the two sites
23 selected.

24 (3) The department, in consultation with the foster parents
25 association of Washington, agencies authorized to license foster
26 parents, and other out-of-home care service providers shall:

27 (a) Define the criteria for licensure, which shall include all
28 criteria currently utilized for licensing volunteer foster parents, as
29 well as additional requirements relating to relevant experience,
30 education, training, and professional expertise;

31 (b) Define criteria for identifying children eligible for placement
32 with a specialized foster parent. Such criteria shall include an
33 assessment of the child's past and current level of functioning as well
34 as a determination that the child's treatment plan and developmental
35 needs are consistent with the placement plan;

36 (c) Establish rules for placement of children with specialized

1 foster parents, including a process for matching the child's needs with
2 the foster parent's skills and expertise;

3 (d) Establish a limit on the number and ages of children that may
4 be placed with a specialized foster parent. Such limitation shall
5 recognize that children with externalizing behaviors are most likely to
6 experience long-term improvements in their behavior when care is
7 provided in settings that minimize exposure to peers with challenging
8 behaviors;

9 (e) Identify one or more approved models of skill building for use
10 by specialized foster parents;

11 (f) Specify the training and consultation requirements that support
12 the models of service;

13 (g) Establish a system of supports, including professional
14 supervision and consultation for specialized foster parents;

15 (h) Adopt a system of payments to specialized foster parents that
16 is based on achievement of specific desired outcomes for the child and
17 not tied to deficits in the child's level of functioning; and

18 (i) Establish clearly defined responsibilities of specialized
19 foster parents, including parenting responsibilities typically assumed
20 by parents of a child with special needs.

21 (4) The department shall, during implementation of phase one,
22 analyze and refine program components in a way that maximizes the well-
23 being of children being served by specialized foster parents and
24 enhances the overall system of out-of-home care for vulnerable
25 children.

26 (5) Based on the experiences and lessons learned from
27 implementation of the program at both phase one locations, the
28 department shall develop recommendations for expanding the program and
29 phasing it in, statewide. The department shall report to the governor
30 and the appropriate members of the legislature by December 1, 2008.

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