

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6514

As Passed House - Amended:

February 28, 1996

Title: An act relating to preservation services.

Brief Description: Enhancing preservation services for families.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Long, Hargrove, Schow, Kohl and Winsley).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/16/96, 2/22/96 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 2/28/96, 92-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by nine members: Representatives Cooke, Chairman; Lambert, Vice Chairman; Stevens, Vice Chairman; Tokuda, Ranking Minority Member; Brown, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buck; Carrell; Dickerson; and Patterson.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background: "Preservation services" for families are divided into two classes of services, "intensive family preservation services" and "family preservation services." Either service may be delivered in the home or in the community. The services include respite care, parenting skills, and the promotion of the child's and family's well-being.

"Family preservation services" must ensure the safety of the child and strengthen the family. The services must empower the family to become self-sufficient, utilize community supports, and locate and refer the family to basic support services. The services may be provided to children and their families when children face a "substantial likelihood of out-of-home placement" due to child abuse or neglect, a serious threat to their health, safety, or welfare, or family conflict. Caseworkers may handle up to 10 cases at a time, and the services are limited to a maximum of 90 days.

"Intensive family preservation services" share many of the characteristics of family preservation services, but are available sooner, case loads are limited to an average of two families, and are limited to 40 days in duration. The services are provided when the child is in "imminent risk" of out-of-home placement.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is required to provide the services through outcome-based, competitive contracts with social service agencies, unless there is no provider available. Last session the Legislature required DSHS to develop a plan for the statewide implementation of both types of preservation services.

The providers of intensive family preservation services are required to demonstrate the services prevent out-of-home placement for at least six months in 70 percent of the cases served.

Summary of Bill: The department's contractors of preservation services for families may use paraprofessional workers in delivering the services. Paraprofessional workers are individuals who are trained to provide assistance and community support development. These workers are required to act under the supervision of a preservation services therapist.

The providers of preservation services must help the families in the development and maintenance of community support systems. The support systems include family, friends, neighbors, religious organizations, and other support groups or organizations. The providers may also provide follow-up services, on an individual case basis, for up to one year after the delivery of the initial services.

Case load for intensive family preservation services may be increased from an average of two families per caseworker to five families when paraprofessional workers are used. The intensive services may be offered for up to 90 days instead of 40 days. The less intensive services may be provided for up to six months instead of 90 days. The department may require the services to be extended on an individual case basis. DSHS must adopt rules to implement chapter.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: More flexibility in the delivery of family preservation services and intensive family preservation services will allow new providers and service models to be used in this program.

Testimony Against: None presented.

Testified: (Pro) Mary Stone-Smith, Catholic Community Services; Margaret Casey, Washington Catholic Conference; Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; Rachael Meyers, National Association of Social Workers; and Jennifer Strus, Department of Social and Health Services.