
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 2439

Brief Description: Specifying services that should be available for children with developmental disabilities.

Sponsors: Representatives O'Brien, Edwards, Schmidt, Benson, Jackley, Ballasiotes, Morris, Simpson, Van Luven, Lovick, Wood, Esser, Darneille, Ogden, Pflug and Haigh.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Recognizes the importance of the Voluntary Placement Program (VPP) for children with developmental disabilities.
- States legislative intent that services should be provided at a level of intensity to children in their own homes so that entry into VPP occurs only when necessary.
- Requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to serve these children at a level comparable to services provided to persons who enter the VPP, excluding room and board.

Hearing Date: 1/28/02

Staff: Deborah Frazier (786-7152).

Background:

In 1998, the Legislature eliminated the requirement that parents of children with developmental disabilities, who believed they were no longer able to care for the child in the family home, go to court and give up custody of the child to secure an out-of-home placement for the child.

Today, parents can enter into a voluntary placement agreement to secure these services without court action and without relinquishing custody of the child. Under the Voluntary Placement Program (VPP), the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) provides a range of services to its clients. These services include:

- Basic maintenance (room and board, clothing, and personal incidentals)
- Specialized support (for children with exceptional and individualized needs)
- Respite care and childcare
- Professional services (counseling, evaluation, physical therapy, nursing, and medical and dental)
- Other services (transportation and community activities)

The services are provided in three types of out-of-home placements:

- Family Foster Care - a private agency foster home or an individual licensed provider
- Family Group Care - licensed group care facility
- Other Residential - community-based supported living and intensive tenant support

In addition, in-home supports such as intensive supervision, personal care, respite care and childcare are provided.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature recognizes the importance of the VPP for children with developmental disabilities. The Legislature states the intent that services should be provided at a level of intensity to children in their own homes so that entry into VPP occurs only when necessary.

The DSHS is required to serve eligible children with developmental disabilities in their own homes at a level comparable to services provided to persons with developmental disabilities who enter the VPP, excluding room and board. Eligibility is to be determined by the department under existing statutes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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