

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6309

C 77 L 18
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Extending the timeline for completing a family assessment response.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Darneille, Miloscia, O'Ban, Rivers, Frockt and Hunt).

Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Early Learning & Human Services
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) began implementation of the family assessment response (FAR), a differential response system for responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect with low to moderate risk of child maltreatment, in January 2014. FAR services were phased-in throughout the state until full implementation was completed on June 1, 2017.

Upon receiving a report of child abuse or neglect that is screened as needing a response, DSHS must refer the case either for investigation or for a FAR. DSHS developed an assessment method to assign cases to be investigated or for a FAR based on factors that include: imminent danger, level of risk, number of previous child abuse or neglect reports, the type of alleged maltreatment, or the age of the alleged victim. Cases will receive a FAR unless the assessment determines that there is a risk of imminent harm to the child, a serious threat of substantial harm to the child, the conduct constitutes criminal activity, the child is abandoned, the child is a dependent, or the child is in a facility licensed by DSHS.

Parents must agree to participate in FAR services before services begin. If parents refuse initial FAR services, DSHS must provide a full investigation. DSHS must complete FAR services within 45 days of receiving the child abuse and neglect report, but parents may agree to extend the response period up to 90 days.

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) will assume child welfare services from DSHS on July 1, 2018.

Summary: The timeline for completing a FAR, upon parental agreement, is extended from 90 to 120 days and DCYF is required to operate this extension within existing appropriations.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate 47 0

House 98 0

Effective: July 1, 2018