**5494-S3 AMS ZEIG S6654.1 - NOT FOR FLOOR USE**

**3SSB 5494** - S AMD **1044**

By Senator Zeiger

Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the following:

"NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature recognizes that a critical need exists for child and family services programs to prevent the incidence of child abuse, neglect, and endangerment. These programs also need to minimize the incidence of childhood trauma on small children and provide stability to parents and children within the state. It is the intent of the legislature to create an initiative to support early interventions with parents of young children who are found to be dependent.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 2.30 RCW to read as follows:

(1) As used in this section, "infant-toddler court" means a therapeutic court as defined in this chapter that provides an intensive court process for families with a child under age three who has been found dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW. To be eligible for infant-toddler court, a parent must have a child under age three that is dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW at the time the case enters the infant-toddler court process. The case may remain in infant-toddler court after the child is age three or older if the child is still dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW. An infant-toddler court must:

(a) Establish a process for parents to voluntarily participate in infant-toddler court;

(b) Review at least every sixty days through either status or review hearing whether the parent or parents are actively engaged and adequately progressing toward achieving the case plan, unless the court finds good cause;

(c) Order the department of children, youth, and families to provide access to reasonably available and appropriate remedial services designed to remedy identified parental deficiencies;

(d) Aim to reduce the length of removal of young children from parents and reunify young children with parents according to the child's best interests;

(e) Make decisions aimed to reduce incidences of abuse and neglect among young children;

(f) Make decisions aimed to reduce the long-term and short-term effects of traumatic experiences on the brain development of young children; and

(g) Promote effective interaction and the use of resources among the court and public and private child and family services providers.

(2) The family and juvenile court improvement grant program established in RCW 2.56.220 shall:

(a) Develop standards for infant-toddler courts based on national best practices and guidelines for infant-toddler court programs;

(b) Develop a process where any superior court, and not just those receiving grant funds under RCW 2.56.230, may apply for grant funds from the family and juvenile court improvement grant program created in RCW 2.56.220 to establish an infant-toddler court;

(c) By January 1, 2021, distribute grant funds to support infant-toddler courts in two superior courts that serve both rural and urban populations;

(d) Give priority to superior courts that will commit additional funding from public or private sources to its infant-toddler court;

(e) Prohibit using grant funds to supplant any existing funds used to support an infant-toddler court, including existing family and juvenile court improvement grants;

(f) Develop and define the outcome measures for infant-toddler courts;

(g) Collect outcome measure data that is included in an annual report that must be submitted to fiscal committees of the legislature beginning December 1, 2022. This annual report must summarize the results of infant-toddler courts during the previous year, including data on the outcomes achieved in infant-toddler courts compared to the outcomes achieved by general dependency courts, and any cost savings associated with achieving the goals established for infant-toddler courts in subsection (1) of this section; and

(h) Sponsor and coordinate training for judicial officers and other professionals that participate in infant-toddler courts receiving grant funding pursuant to this section."

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On page 1, line 1 of the title, after "the" strike the remainder of the title and insert "infant-toddler court initiative; adding a new section to chapter 2.30 RCW; and creating a new section."

EFFECT: Changes references from baby court to infant-toddler court; requires an infant-toddler court to review parents' progress every 60 days; and requires the grant program to develop infant-toddler court standards based on national best practices and guidelines.