

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1367

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Human Services & Early Learning

**Title:** An act relating to child-placing agencies.

**Brief Description:** Concerning child-placing agencies.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Sullivan, McCaslin, Eslick, Dent, Senn, Corry, Appleton and Frame.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Human Services & Early Learning: 1/25/19, 1/29/19 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to conduct a child-placing agency contract evaluation by July 15, 2019.
- Requires the DCYF to contract with an outside entity to conduct a rate analysis comparing current rates with actual costs incurred by child-placing agencies by October 1, 2019.
- Requires the DCYF to facilitate a stakeholder work group to design a child-placing agency rate payment methodology and submit a report to the Legislature by December 15, 2019.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & EARLY LEARNING

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Callan, Vice Chair; Frame, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Goodman, Griffey, Kilduff, Klippert, Lovick and Ortiz-Self.

**Staff:** Luke Wickham (786-7146).

**Background:**

*Child Welfare.*

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*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.*

If an individual suspects that a child has been abused or neglected, that abuse or neglect can be reported to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Child Protective Services (CPS) office or to law enforcement. There are many individuals who are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect.

The CPS will then determine whether the report of child abuse or neglect is credible and whether the report meets the sufficiency screening criteria. If the report meets the screening criteria, CPS will assign either: (1) a 24-hour response that includes an investigation; or (2) a family assessment response for low to moderate risk allegations that requires a 72-hour response.

The DCYF, or anyone else, can file a court petition alleging that the child should be a dependent of the state due to abuse, neglect, or because no parent, guardian, or custodian is capable of adequately caring for the child. A court will hold a shelter care hearing following removal of a child from his or her home within 72 hours. At this hearing, the court will determine if the child can return home safely.

#### *Out-of-Home Care.*

When children are removed from the home of a parent or guardian due to allegations of abuse or neglect, those children may be placed with relatives or in foster care. Relatives care for almost half the children placed in out-of-home care and are required to meet certain safety requirements but are not required to be licensed. Foster parents may pursue licensure by either the DCYF or private child-placing agencies and provide temporary care to children with the goal of reunifying the child with his or her parent or guardian.

#### *Child-Placing Agencies.*

Child placing agencies certify to the DCYF that an individual meets the foster parent requirements, and the DCYF has final approval for licensing foster applications. In addition to this certification, child-placing agencies provide case management services for the child and caregiver, coordinate parent-child visitation, provide follow up services after a youth changes placement, and provide case aide services, among other things.

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### **Summary of Bill:**

The DCYF is required to conduct a child-placing agency contract evaluation by July 15, 2019, that includes:

- consideration of whether current contracts reflect the services provided by and responsibilities awarded to child-placing agencies;
- the appropriateness of data-sharing agreements between child-placing agencies and the DCYF and any recommended changes to those agreements; and
- whether contracts clarify the role of child-placing agencies within the foster care continuum.

The DCYF must contract with an outside entity to conduct a rate analysis of current rates compared with actual costs incurred by child-placing agencies by October 1, 2019.

The DCYF must facilitate a stakeholder work group to design a child-placing agency rate payment methodology based on actual provider costs of care that considers the findings of the contract evaluation and rate analysis. The DCYF must submit a report to the Legislature of the findings and recommendations of this stakeholder work group and contracted rate analysis by December 15, 2019.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 21, 2019.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) There are many foster families that would not be foster families without the support that child-placing agencies provide. Foster families supported by child-placing agencies make up about 36 percent of the foster parents in the state. There is a shortage of foster homes, and the state can't afford to see child-placing agencies decline. Child-placing agencies conduct foster parent certification, ongoing case management, birth family connection, respite care support, and ongoing licensure oversight. Child-placing agencies must raise significant private funding to make up for the lack of state funding for these services.

The fundamental problem with foster care is that it is too much work done by too few people. In July of 2018 there are only around 5,072 foster homes and around 9,246 foster children. Child-placing agencies want to certify more foster homes, but can't afford to.

The DCYF child-placing agency contracts haven't been reviewed in 10 years. Child-placing agencies want to make sure that they are providing the right services and not duplicating efforts. Child-placing agencies are currently closing because of the current rates paid.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Jeff Clare, Olive Crest; Ray Deck, Skookum Kids; and Jill May, Washington Association for Children & Families.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.