

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2725

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

**Title:** An act relating to foster resource parents.

**Brief Description:** Renaming foster resource parents.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Ortiz-Self, Morgan, Frame, Kilduff, Lovick, Callan and Leavitt.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Human Services & Early Learning: 1/29/20, 2/7/20 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to convene a meeting or meetings with stakeholders, including birth parents and foster parents, to discuss changing the term "foster parent" and provide a report to the Legislature and the Governor regarding these meetings and recommendations regarding continued use of that terminology or using different terminology.
- Requires that foster parent preservice training demonstrate that foster resource parenting is temporary in nature with the goal of maintaining the safety of the child, promoting reunification, and promoting permanency for the child.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & EARLY LEARNING

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Callan, Vice Chair; Frame, Vice Chair; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Goodman, Kilduff, Klippert, Lovick and Ortiz-Self.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Dent, Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Griffey.

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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.*

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

**Background:**

*Foster Parent Licensure.*

Anyone, including the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), may file a petition in court alleging that a child should be a dependent of the state due to abuse, neglect, or because there is no parent, guardian, or custodian capable of adequately caring for the child.

When a child is taken into custody, the court is to hold a shelter care hearing within 72 hours to determine whether the child can be immediately and safely returned home while the dependency case is being resolved.

When the child is placed in out-of-home care pursuant to a dependency court process, the child may be placed with relatives or in foster care. Foster parents are licensed by the DCYF to provide 24-hour temporary care to children placed in out-of-home care.

Individuals can apply for a foster parent license directly to the DCYF or through a child-placing agency (CPA). The CPAs are licensed by the DCYF and can certify that an individual meets the foster licensing requirements before the application is sent to the DCYF. The CPAs also provide ongoing case management to foster families.

To receive a foster parent license, an individual must:

- be age 21 or older,
- complete the following training, along with individuals age 18 or older in the household:
  - first aid;
  - age-appropriate adult and/or infant cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR);
  - human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome; and
  - blood borne pathogens;
- pass, along with certain household members, a background check;
- submit, along with individuals age 18 or older in the household, a negative tuberculosis test or an X-ray;
- submit proof of current immunization status for any children living on the premises, not in out-of-home care;
- to serve foster children under the age of two, submit proof of pertussis and influenza immunizations for all people living in the home;
- pass an assessment of demonstrating an ability to provide a safe home and to provide the quality of care needed by children placed in the home; and
- complete training requirements.

*Foster Parent Preservice Training.*

An individual must complete certain training requirements before becoming a licensed foster parent.

The first preservice training requirement for foster parents is an orientation. The orientation provides an overview of the licensure process. Individuals are encouraged to attend this orientation in person but can complete an online orientation.

Following the orientation, individuals must complete 24 hours of core preservice training. The Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence provides this training. This training consists of eight 3-hour sessions and a break for a field experience. All components of the foster parent preservice training must be made available online.

The DCYF must allow individuals to complete as much online preservice training as is practicable while requiring that some preservice training be completed in person.

Prospective foster parents must also complete a first aid/CPR and blood borne pathogens course.

All licensed family foster homes are required to complete ongoing training during each three-year licensing period.

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### **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The foster parent preservice training must include information regarding culturally appropriate services, implicit bias, the Washington State Indian Child Welfare Act, and the federal Indian Child Welfare Act. The preservice training must clarify that the focus of foster resource parenting is on reunification, separate and apart from the adoption process, instead of prohibiting any formal training regarding foster resource parenting as a process that could lead to adoption. Potential adoptive parents may receive separate training designed specifically to address their unique needs.

The preservice training must reinforce that foster parenting is temporary in nature with goals of:

- maintaining the safety of the foster child;
- promoting reunification with the foster child's birth parent or parents; and
- promoting permanency for the child.

The foster resource parent preservice training must demonstrate that foster resource parenting is temporary in nature with the goal of maintaining the safety of the foster child and promoting reunification with the foster child's birth parent or parents.

The DCYF must convene a meeting or meetings with stakeholders, including birth parents and foster parents, to discuss changing the term "foster parent" and provide a report to the Legislature and the Governor by November 1, 2020, regarding these meetings and recommendations regarding continued use of that terminology or using different terminology.

### **Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill removes provisions changing the term "foster parent" to "foster resource parent."

The substitute bill requires foster resource parent preservice training to include information regarding culturally appropriate services, implicit bias, the Washington State Indian Child Welfare Act, and the federal Indian Child Welfare Act.

The substitute bill requires the preservice training to clarify that the focus of foster resource parenting is on reunification, separate and apart from the adoption process, instead of prohibiting any formal training regarding foster resource parenting as a process that could lead to adoption.

The substitute bill allows potential adoptive parents to receive separate training designed specifically to address their unique needs.

The substitute bill adds "promoting permanency" to the goals of the preservice training.

The substitute bill provides that all components of the foster resource parent training be made available online, if possible.

The substitute bill requires the DCYF to convene a meeting or meetings with stakeholders, including birth parents and foster parents, to discuss changing the term "foster parent" and provide a report to the Legislature and the Governor regarding these meetings and recommendations regarding continued use of that terminology or using different terminology.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 21, 2020.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) There is confusion regarding the goals of foster parenting. Foster parents have been instructed not to communicate with birth parents. Foster parents have been told that foster parenting is an avenue toward adoption. There is information out there that individuals can foster to adopt. Foster parents should be used as a resource to birth families. The DCYF was very supportive of this and indicated that there is a 10-year contract being renewed for training, and this would be a good time to make this change. By clarifying the role of foster parents, the pain associated with the misconception that foster parenting may be used as a process that leads to adoption will be alleviated. Foster children are confused when learning to love a new foster parent while grieving the ambiguous loss of their birth parents. The solution is to be simple and intentional about the roles of foster parents. Foster parents are often told that the child entering their home is their child. Foster parents have their hearts broken when foster children are reunified. More foster parents will be retained if they are

aware that the goal of fostering is reunification. There are many exciting things happening to change the culture of foster care. The way that foster care is viewed has changed over time. The majority of adoptions now are open adoptions instead of intentionally severing all ties with birth families. This bill reflects the culture change that has occurred regarding foster care. This bill invites caregivers to provide a resource to birth families; in this case, the resource is parenting. By emphasizing the temporary nature of foster care from the beginning, foster parents will clearly understand their role.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Ortiz-Self, prime sponsor; Courtney Canova, Children's Home Society of Washington; Alise Morrissey, Washington State Parent Ally Committee; Laurie Lippold, Partners for Our Children; and Ryan Murrey, Washington Association of Child Advocate Programs.

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