

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT  
**SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1204**

Chapter 138, Laws of 2023

68th Legislature  
2023 Regular Session

FAMILY CONNECTIONS PROGRAM—PERMANENT

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 30, 2023

Passed by the House February 27, 2023  
Yeas 95 Nays 0

LAURIE JINKINS

**Speaker of the House of  
Representatives**

Passed by the Senate April 10, 2023  
Yeas 49 Nays 0

DENNY HECK

**President of the Senate**

Approved April 20, 2023 2:27 PM

JAY INSLEE

**Governor of the State of Washington**

CERTIFICATE

I, Bernard Dean, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1204** as passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on the dates hereon set forth.

BERNARD DEAN

**Chief Clerk**

FILED

April 21, 2023

**Secretary of State  
State of Washington**

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SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1204

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Passed Legislature - 2023 Regular Session

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

**By** House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Callan, Eslick, Leavitt, Bateman, Kloba, Reed, Simmons, Doglio, Goodman, Ortiz-Self, McEntire, Davis, and Pollet; by request of Department of Children, Youth, and Families)

READ FIRST TIME 02/16/23.

1 AN ACT Relating to implementing the family connections program;  
2 amending RCW 74.13.715; creating a new section; providing an  
3 effective date; and declaring an emergency.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 74.13.715 and 2021 c 334 s 990 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 (1) (~~Beginning September 1, 2020~~) Within available funding, the  
8 department shall contract with an external organization or  
9 organizations with experience serving youth or families receiving  
10 out-of-home care services to implement and operate the family  
11 connections program, which facilitates interaction between a parent  
12 of a child found to be dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and in  
13 out-of-home care and the individual with whom the child is placed.

14 (2) The external organization or organizations contracted to  
15 implement and operate the family connections program shall implement  
16 and operate the family connections program in one or more locations  
17 west of the crest of the Cascade mountains, and one or more locations  
18 east of the crest of the Cascade mountains.

19 (3) Families may be referred to the family connections program in  
20 any manner determined to be appropriate by the family connections  
21 program, including but not limited to a referral by ((a)):

- 1       (a) A caseworker(~~(an)~~);
- 2       (b) An attorney(~~(a)~~);
- 3       (c) A guardian ad litem as defined in RCW 13.34.030(~~(a)~~);
- 4       (d) A parent ally(~~(an)~~);
- 5       (e) An office of public defense social worker(~~(or the)~~);
- 6       (f) The court; or
- 7       (g) The parent or caregiver.

8       (4) After receiving a referral, the family connections program  
9 shall determine whether an in-person meeting between a parent of a  
10 child found to be dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and in out-  
11 of-home care and the individual with whom the child is placed is  
12 appropriate. If the family connections program determines that such a  
13 meeting is appropriate, the family connections program shall then  
14 determine whether:

15       (a) The parent of a child found to be dependent pursuant to  
16 chapter 13.34 RCW and in out-of-home care and the individual with  
17 whom the child is placed are willing to participate in an in-person  
18 meeting; and

19       (b) Safety concerns exist such that an in-person meeting should  
20 not occur.

21       (5) If the family connections program determines that an in-  
22 person meeting should occur following the analysis required by  
23 subsection (4) of this section, the family connections program shall  
24 provide a referral to the family connections program team. The family  
25 connections program team shall include a parent ally and an  
26 experienced caregiver. After receiving a referral, the family  
27 connections program team shall:

28       (a) Ensure that the parent ally contact the parent to prepare for  
29 an in-person meeting between the parent and caregiver;

30       (b) Ensure that the experienced caregiver contact the caregiver  
31 to prepare for an in-person meeting between the parent and caregiver;

32       (c) Convene an in-person meeting between the parent and  
33 caregiver; and

34       (d) Provide ongoing support to the parent and caregiver following  
35 the in-person meeting.

36       (6) If the family connections program determines that an in-  
37 person meeting should not occur following the analysis required under  
38 subsection (4) of this section, the family connections program team  
39 shall facilitate the exchange of information between the parent and  
40 caregiver in an appropriate manner that does not include an in-person

1 meeting. The format of this exchange of information may include  
2 written messages, phone calls, or videoconferencing. The family  
3 connections program shall routinely reevaluate whether an in-person  
4 meeting should occur using the analysis required under subsection (4)  
5 of this section.

6 (7) The department shall collect data and measure outcomes for  
7 families engaging in the family connections program. By September 1,  
8 2021, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the department shall  
9 submit a report to the relevant committees of the legislature that  
10 details:

- 11 (a) Data collected for the family connections program;
- 12 (b) Outcomes for families engaging in the family connections  
13 program; and
- 14 (c) The department's plan on how to expand the family connections  
15 program statewide.

16 (8) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this  
17 section:

- 18 (a) "Experienced caregiver" means:
  - 19 (i) An individual who is or has received a foster family home  
20 license pursuant to chapter 74.15 RCW or an equivalent license from  
21 another state; or
  - 22 (ii) An individual who cared for a child who was removed from his  
23 or her parent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and who has a kin  
24 relationship to that child pursuant to RCW 74.13.600.

25 (b) "Parent ally" has the same meaning as provided in RCW  
26 2.70.060.

27 (~~(9) This section expires June 30, 2023.~~)

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
29 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of  
30 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes  
31 effect June 30, 2023.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** If specific funding for the purposes of  
33 this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not  
34 provided by June 30, 2023, in the omnibus appropriations act, this  
35 act is null and void.

Passed by the House February 27, 2023.  
Passed by the Senate April 10, 2023.  
Approved by the Governor April 20, 2023.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State April 21, 2023.

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