

RCW 13.34.062 Shelter care—Notice of custody and rights.

(1) (a) Whenever a child is taken into custody by child protective services pursuant to a court order issued under RCW 13.34.050 or when child protective services is notified that a child has been taken into custody pursuant to RCW 26.44.050 or 26.44.056, child protective services shall make diligent efforts to inform the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the fact that the child has been taken into custody, the reasons why the child was taken into custody, and their legal rights under this title, including the right to a shelter care hearing, as soon as possible. Notice must be provided in an understandable manner and take into consideration the parent's, guardian's, or legal custodian's primary language, level of education, and cultural issues.

(b) In no event shall the notice required by this section be provided to the parent, guardian, or legal custodian more than twenty-four hours after the child has been taken into custody or twenty-four hours after child protective services has been notified that the child has been taken into custody.

(2) (a) The notice of custody and rights may be given by any means reasonably certain of notifying the parents including, but not limited to, written, telephone, or in person oral notification. If the initial notification is provided by a means other than writing, child protective services shall make reasonable efforts to also provide written notification.

(b) The written notice of custody and rights required by this section shall be in substantially the following form:

"NOTICE

Your child has been placed in temporary custody under the supervision of Child Protective Services (or other person or agency). You have important legal rights and you must take steps to protect your interests.

1. A court hearing will be held before a judge within 72 hours of the time your child is taken into custody excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. You should call the court at . . . (insert appropriate phone number here) for specific information about the date, time, and location of the court hearing.

2. You have the right to have a lawyer represent you at the hearing. Your right to representation continues after the shelter care hearing. You have the right to records the department intends to rely upon. A lawyer can look at the files in your case, talk to child protective services and other agencies, tell you about the law, help you understand your rights, and help you at hearings. If you cannot afford a lawyer, the court will appoint one to represent you. To get a court-appointed lawyer you must contact: . . . (explain local procedure).

3. At the hearing, you have the right to speak on your own behalf, to introduce evidence, to examine witnesses, and to receive a decision based solely on the evidence presented to the judge.

4. If your hearing occurs before a court commissioner, you have the right to have the decision of the court commissioner reviewed by a superior court judge. To obtain that review, you must, within ten days after the entry of the decision of the court commissioner, file with the court a motion for revision of the decision, as provided in RCW 2.24.050.

You should be present at any shelter care hearing. If you do not come, the judge will not hear what you have to say.

You may call the Child Protective Services' caseworker for more information about your child. The caseworker's name and telephone number are: . . . (insert name and telephone number).

5. You have a right to a case conference to develop a written service agreement following the shelter care hearing. The service agreement may not conflict with the court's order of shelter care. You may request that a multidisciplinary team, family group conference, or prognostic staffing be convened for your child's case. You may participate in these processes with your counsel present.

6. If your child is placed in the custody of the department of children, youth, and families or other agency, immediately following the shelter care hearing, the court will enter an order granting the department or other agency the right to inspect and copy all health, medical, mental health, and education records of the child, directing health care providers to release such information without your further consent, and granting the department or agency or its designee the authority and responsibility, where applicable, to:

(1) Notify the child's school that the child is in out-of-home placement;

(2) Enroll the child in school;

(3) Request the school transfer records;

(4) Request and authorize evaluation of special needs;

(5) Attend parent or teacher conferences;

(6) Excuse absences;

(7) Grant permission for extracurricular activities;

(8) Authorize medications which need to be administered during school hours and sign for medical needs that arise during school hours; and

(9) Complete or update school emergency records.

7. If the court decides to place your child in the custody of the department of children, youth, and families or other agency, the department or agency will create a permanency plan for your child, including a primary placement goal and secondary placement goal. The department or agency also will recommend that the court order services for your child and for you, if needed. The department or agency is required to make reasonable efforts to provide you with services to address your parenting problems, and to provide you with visitation with your child according to court orders. Failure to promptly engage in services or to maintain contact with your child may lead to the filing of a petition to terminate your parental rights.

8. Primary and secondary permanency plans are intended to run at the same time so that your child will have a permanent home as quickly as possible. Absent good cause, and when appropriate, the department or other agency must follow the wishes of a natural parent regarding placement of a child. You should tell your lawyer and the court where you wish your child placed immediately, including whether you want your child placed with you, with a relative, or with another suitable person. You also should tell your lawyer and the court what services you feel are necessary and your wishes regarding visitation with your child. Even if you want another parent or person to be the primary placement choice for your child, you should tell your lawyer, the department or other agency, and the court if you want to be a secondary placement option, and you should comply with court orders for services and participate in visitation with your child. Early and

consistent involvement in your child's case plan is important for the well-being of your child.

9. A dependency petition begins a judicial process, which, if the court finds your child dependent, could result in substantial restrictions including, the entry or modification of a parenting plan or residential schedule, previously existing nonparental custody order or decree, guardianship order, or permanent loss of your parental rights."

Upon receipt of the written notice, the parent, guardian, or legal custodian shall acknowledge such notice by signing a receipt prepared by child protective services. If the parent, guardian, or legal custodian does not sign the receipt, the reason for lack of a signature shall be written on the receipt. The receipt shall be made a part of the court's file in the dependency action.

If after making reasonable efforts to provide notification, child protective services is unable to determine the whereabouts of the parents, guardian, or legal custodian, the notice shall be delivered or sent to the last known address of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian.

(3) If child protective services is not required to give notice under this section, the juvenile court counselor assigned to the matter shall make all diligent efforts to advise the parents, guardian, or legal custodian of the time and place of any shelter care hearing, request that they be present, and inform them of their basic rights as provided in RCW 13.34.090.

(4) Diligent efforts to advise and to give notice, as required in this section, shall include, at a minimum, investigation of the whereabouts of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian. If such diligent efforts are not successful, or the parent, guardian, or legal custodian does not appear at the shelter care hearing, the petitioner shall testify at the hearing or state in a declaration:

(a) The efforts made to investigate the whereabouts of, and to advise, the parent, guardian, or custodian; and

(b) Whether actual advice of rights was made, to whom it was made, and how it was made, including the substance of any oral communication or copies of written materials used. [2021 c 211 § 7; 2020 c 312 § 115; 2018 c 58 § 71; 2009 c 477 § 2. Prior: 2007 c 413 § 4; 2007 c 409 § 5; 2004 c 147 § 2; 2001 c 332 § 2; 2000 c 122 § 5.]

Effective date—Short title—Finding—Intent—2021 c 211: See notes following RCW 13.34.040.

Effective date—2020 c 312: See note following RCW 11.130.915.

Effective date—2018 c 58: See note following RCW 28A.655.080.

Findings—Intent—2009 c 477: "The legislature finds that when children have been found dependent and placed in out-of-home care, the likelihood of reunification with their parents diminishes significantly after fifteen months. The legislature also finds that early and consistent parental engagement in services and participation in appropriate parent-child contact and visitation increases the likelihood of successful reunifications. The legislature intends to promote greater awareness among parents in dependency cases of the importance of active participation in services, visitation, and case planning for the child, and the risks created by failure to

participate in their child's case over the long term." [2009 c 477 § 1.]

Severability—2007 c 413: See note following RCW 13.34.215.

Effective date—2007 c 409: See note following RCW 13.34.096.

Effective date—2004 c 147: See note following RCW 13.34.067.