

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 6642

C 147 L 04

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Ordering case conferences following shelter care hearings.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Children & Family Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Stevens, Hargrove, Schmidt, Carlson, Mulliken, Hewitt, Roach and McAuliffe).

Senate Committee on Children & Family Services & Corrections
House Committee on Children & Family Services
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Current law allows parents in a dependency action to request that the Department of Social and Health Services facilitate a meeting of the parties. The purpose of the conference is for the department and the parents to discuss their expectations regarding the care and placement of the child. Concerns have been expressed that such conferences rarely occur, either because parents are not aware of them, or because they are not deemed to be helpful.

Summary: A case conference must be convened no later than 30 days prior to the fact-finding hearing.

A written service agreement must be created which establishes voluntary services for the parent.

The participants in the case conference are specifically limited to include only the parties, their counsel and other persons agreed upon by the parties.

A shelter care order must include a provision establishing a case conference unless the parent is not present at the shelter care hearing or does not agree to the case conference.

Notice of the case conference is provided in the shelter care order.

The court is permitted to order a conference or meeting as an alternative to the case conference so long as the ordered conference includes the requirements of the case conference, including a written agreement establishing the services to be provided to the parent.

The bill is null and void unless funded in the omnibus appropriations act.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0	
House	96	0	(House amended)
Senate	42	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 1, 2004