

FINAL BILL REPORT

E2SHB 3145

C 281 L 08

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Implementing a tiered classification system for foster parent licensing.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Kagi, Haler, Roberts, Walsh, Pettigrew, Dickerson, Conway, Green, Goodman, Kenney, Wood and Ormsby).

House Committee on Early Learning & Children's Services

House Committee on Appropriations

Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections

Background:

In 2007 the Legislature enacted HB 1624 creating a work group to study the need for and feasibility of creating tiered classifications for foster parent licensing, including a professional foster parent classification. The work group was facilitated by the Assistant Secretary of the Children's Administration (CA) of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Executive Director of the Northwest Institute for Children and Families (NW Institute) at the University of Washington (UW).

Work group members included representation from the Legislature; Indian tribes; foster parents; the Foster Parent Association of Washington State (FPAWS); child welfare professionals; Partners For Our Children at the UW; and the Washington Federation of State Employees. The work group met five times and held two stakeholder meetings. In addition, two subcommittees of the work group each met three times.

The draft report from the work group was published January 25, 2007, and included the following recommendations:

- (1) The foster care level system should be re-examined for the overall foster care system.
- (2) A specific model of skill-building should be selected for use by specialized foster parents who serve children with behavioral issues.
- (3) The CA should work with foster parents, the UW School of Social Work, and child-serving agencies to further refine a number of specifics relating to implementation of a specialized foster parent program.

Issues identified for further work include the selection process and criteria for specialized foster parents; managing the risks of reduced permanency; how specialized foster parents would fit in the continuum of services for children; and federal funding and individual income tax implications.

Summary:

Specialized Foster Home Program.

The DSHS must select two or more geographic areas for implementing an intensive resource foster home pilot program (program). In determining the scope of the pilot program, the DSHS must examine areas where high concentrations of children with significant needs are in foster care; consider areas of appropriate size that will allow for an analysis of the impact of the program on the continuum of out-of-home care providers; and determine the number of children to be served. Implementation of the initial sites should be undertaken with the goal of eventual expansion of the program statewide.

The DSHS must seek recommendations from foster parents and other out-of-home care providers regarding the qualifications and requirements of intensive resource home providers; the needs of children who will be served in the program; and the desired outcomes to be measured or monitored. The DSHS must also consult experts in child welfare, children's mental health, and children's health care to identify evidence-based or promising practice models to be utilized in the program, including the appropriate support to be provided to intensive resource home providers to ensure program fidelity.

Using the recommendations from foster parents, the consultations with professionals from appropriate disciplines, and information from the specialized foster parent work group, the DSHS must:

- (1) define the eligibility criteria for intensive resource home providers;
- (2) define the criteria for identifying children eligible for placement with intensive resource home providers;
- (3) establish rules for placement of children in intensive resource homes, including a limit on the number of children who may be placed;
- (4) identify one or more models of skill-building to be used by intensive resource home providers;
- (5) specify training, consultation, supervision, and support to be provided to intensive resource home providers;
- (6) develop a tiered payment system which may include a stipend to the provider to account for the additional responsibilities intensive resource home providers have with regard to the children placed in their care. Until such time as the DSHS has developed the tiered payment system, payments to intensive home providers under exceptional cost plans must pay only for special services or supplies provided to the child but must not reimburse the provider for services provided to the child under the contract. A stipend of not more than \$500 per month may be used to reimburse the provider for services he or she provides directly to the child;
- (7) establish clearly defined responsibilities for intensive resource home providers; and
- (8) develop a process for annual performance reviews of intensive resource home providers.

Beginning on or before October 1, 2008, the DSHS must begin selecting and negotiating contracts with intensive resource home providers. Contracts must specify at least the following elements:

- (1) the model of treatment and care to be provided;
- (2) the training and ongoing professional consultation to be provided;

- (3) the method for determining any additional support to be provided to the child or the intensive resource home provider;
- (4) the desired outcomes to be measured;
- (5) a reasonable and efficient process for seeking a modification to the contract;
- (6) the rate and terms of payment under the contract; and
- (7) the process for an annual performance review of the intensive resource home provider and an annual assessment of the child.

The DSHS must report to the Legislature and the Governor with an implementation status update by January 30, 2009, and with recommendations for phasing in a statewide expansion of the program by September 1, 2009. The recommendations for expansion must identify the essential elements of the intensive resource home program that should be addressed or replicated as the program is expanded to the next phase.

Implementation of the program is limited to not more than 75 intensive resource homes and use of only those funds specifically appropriated for the pilot program. The DSHS also shall allocate \$200,000 of the appropriation to contract with an agency working in partnership with the University of Washington School of Social Work to implement a constellation hub model of foster care support, as developed by the Mockingbird Society, in areas of the state not currently served by this model.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	72	22	
Senate	46	2	(Senate amended)
House			(House refused to concur)
Senate	47	0	(Senate amended)
House	96	0	(House concurred)

Effective: June 12, 2008