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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1735**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** House Early Learning & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Orwall, Kagi, Carlyle, Gregerson, Pollet, and Ormsby)

AN ACT Relating to extended foster care services; amending RCW 13.34.267 and 74.13.031; reenacting and amending RCW 74.13.020; and adding a new section to chapter 74.13 RCW.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 13.34.267 and 2014 c 122 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) In order to facilitate the delivery of extended foster care services, the court, upon the agreement of the youth to participate in the extended foster care program, shall maintain the dependency proceeding for any youth who is dependent in foster care at the age of eighteen years and who, at the time of his or her eighteenth birthday, is:

(a) Enrolled in a secondary education program or a secondary education equivalency program;

(b) Enrolled and participating in a postsecondary academic or postsecondary vocational program, or has applied for and can demonstrate that he or she intends to timely enroll in a postsecondary academic or postsecondary vocational program;

(c) Participating in a program or activity designed to promote employment or remove barriers to employment; ((~~or~~))

(d) Within amounts appropriated specifically for this purpose, engaged in employment for eighty hours or more per month; or

(e) Not able to engage in any of the activities described in (a) through (d) of this subsection due to a documented medical condition.

(2) If the court maintains the dependency proceeding of a youth pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, the youth is eligible to receive extended foster care services pursuant to RCW 74.13.031, subject to the youth's continuing eligibility and agreement to participate.

(3) A dependent youth receiving extended foster care services is a party to the dependency proceeding. The youth's parent or guardian must be dismissed from the dependency proceeding when the youth reaches the age of eighteen.

(4) The court shall dismiss the dependency proceeding for any youth who is a dependent in foster care and who, at the age of eighteen years, does not meet any of the criteria described in subsection (1)(a) through ((~~(d)~~)) (e) of this section or does not agree to participate in the program.

(5) The court shall order a youth participating in extended foster care services to be under the placement and care authority of the department, subject to the youth's continuing agreement to participate in extended foster care services. The department may establish foster care rates appropriate to the needs of the youth participating in extended foster care services. The department's placement and care authority over a youth receiving extended foster care services is solely for the purpose of providing services and does not create a legal responsibility for the actions of the youth receiving extended foster care services.

(6) The court shall appoint counsel to represent a youth, as defined in RCW 13.34.030(2)(b), in dependency proceedings under this section.

(7) The case plan for and delivery of services to a youth receiving extended foster care services is subject to the review requirements set forth in RCW 13.34.138 and 13.34.145, and should be applied in a developmentally appropriate manner, as they relate to youth age eighteen to twenty-one years. Additionally, the court shall consider:

(a) Whether the youth is safe in his or her placement;

(b) Whether the youth continues to be eligible for extended foster care services;

(c) Whether the current placement is developmentally appropriate for the youth;

(d) The youth's development of independent living skills; and

(e) The youth's overall progress toward transitioning to full independence and the projected date for achieving such transition.

(8) Prior to the review hearing, the youth's attorney shall indicate whether there are any contested issues and may provide additional information necessary for the court's review.

**Sec.**  RCW 74.13.020 and 2013 c 332 s 8 and 2013 c 162 s 5 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

For purposes of this chapter:

(1) "Case management" means convening family meetings, developing, revising, and monitoring implementation of any case plan or individual service and safety plan, coordinating and monitoring services needed by the child and family, caseworker-child visits, family visits, and the assumption of court-related duties, excluding legal representation, including preparing court reports, attending judicial hearings and permanency hearings, and ensuring that the child is progressing toward permanency within state and federal mandates, including the Indian child welfare act.

(2) "Child" means:

(a) A person less than eighteen years of age; or

(b) A person age eighteen to twenty-one years who is eligible to receive the extended foster care services authorized under RCW 74.13.031.

(3) "Child protective services" has the same meaning as in RCW 26.44.020.

(4) "Child welfare services" means social services including voluntary and in-home services, out-of-home care, case management, and adoption services which strengthen, supplement, or substitute for, parental care and supervision for the purpose of:

(a) Preventing or remedying, or assisting in the solution of problems which may result in families in conflict, or the neglect, abuse, exploitation, or criminal behavior of children;

(b) Protecting and caring for dependent, abused, or neglected children;

(c) Assisting children who are in conflict with their parents, and assisting parents who are in conflict with their children, with services designed to resolve such conflicts;

(d) Protecting and promoting the welfare of children, including the strengthening of their own homes where possible, or, where needed;

(e) Providing adequate care of children away from their homes in foster family homes or day care or other child care agencies or facilities.

"Child welfare services" does not include child protection services.

(5) "Committee" means the child welfare transformation design committee.

(6) "Department" means the department of social and health services.

(7) "Extended foster care services" means residential and other support services the department is authorized to provide to foster children. These services include, but are not limited to, placement in licensed, relative, or otherwise approved care, or supervised independent living settings; assistance in meeting basic needs; independent living services; medical assistance; and counseling or treatment.

(8) "Family assessment" means a comprehensive assessment of child safety, risk of subsequent child abuse or neglect, and family strengths and needs that is applied to a child abuse or neglect report. Family assessment does not include a determination as to whether child abuse or neglect occurred, but does determine the need for services to address the safety of the child and the risk of subsequent maltreatment.

(9) "Measurable effects" means a statistically significant change which occurs as a result of the service or services a supervising agency is assigned in a performance-based contract, in time periods established in the contract.

(10) "Medical condition" means, for the purposes of qualifying for extended foster care services, a physical or mental health condition as documented by any licensed health care provider regulated by a disciplining authority under RCW 18.130.040.

(11) "Nonminor dependent" means any individual age eighteen to twenty-one years who is participating in extended foster care services authorized under RCW 74.13.031.

((~~(11)~~)) (12) "Out-of-home care services" means services provided after the shelter care hearing to or for children in out-of-home care, as that term is defined in RCW 13.34.030, and their families, including the recruitment, training, and management of foster parents, the recruitment of adoptive families, and the facilitation of the adoption process, family reunification, independent living, emergency shelter, residential group care, and foster care, including relative placement.

((~~(12)~~)) (13) "Performance-based contracting" means the structuring of all aspects of the procurement of services around the purpose of the work to be performed and the desired results with the contract requirements set forth in clear, specific, and objective terms with measurable outcomes. Contracts shall also include provisions that link the performance of the contractor to the level and timing of reimbursement.

((~~(13)~~)) (14) "Permanency services" means long-term services provided to secure a child's safety, permanency, and well-being, including foster care services, family reunification services, adoption services, and preparation for independent living services.

((~~(14)~~)) (15) "Primary prevention services" means services which are designed and delivered for the primary purpose of enhancing child and family well-being and are shown, by analysis of outcomes, to reduce the risk to the likelihood of the initial need for child welfare services.

((~~(15)~~)) (16) "Supervised independent living" includes, but is not limited to, apartment living, room and board arrangements, college or university dormitories, and shared roommate settings. Supervised independent living settings must be approved by the children's administration or the court.

((~~(16)~~)) (17) "Supervising agency" means an agency licensed by the state under RCW 74.15.090, or licensed by a federally recognized Indian tribe located in this state under RCW 74.15.190, that has entered into a performance-based contract with the department to provide case management for the delivery and documentation of child welfare services, as defined in this section. This definition is applicable on or after December 30, 2015.

((~~(17)~~)) (18) "Unsupervised" has the same meaning as in RCW 43.43.830.

((~~(18)~~)) (19) "Voluntary placement agreement" means, for the purposes of extended foster care services, a written voluntary agreement between a nonminor dependent who agrees to submit to the care and authority of the department for the purposes of participating in the extended foster care program.

**Sec.**  RCW 74.13.031 and 2014 c 122 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department and supervising agencies shall develop, administer, supervise, and monitor a coordinated and comprehensive plan that establishes, aids, and strengthens services for the protection and care of runaway, dependent, or neglected children.

(2) Within available resources, the department and supervising agencies shall recruit an adequate number of prospective adoptive and foster homes, both regular and specialized, i.e. homes for children of ethnic minority, including Indian homes for Indian children, sibling groups, handicapped and emotionally disturbed, teens, pregnant and parenting teens, and the department shall annually report to the governor and the legislature concerning the department's and supervising agency's success in: (a) Meeting the need for adoptive and foster home placements; (b) reducing the foster parent turnover rate; (c) completing home studies for legally free children; and (d) implementing and operating the passport program required by RCW 74.13.285. The report shall include a section entitled "Foster Home Turn-Over, Causes and Recommendations."

(3) The department shall investigate complaints of any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker that results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, or sexual abuse or exploitation, or that presents an imminent risk of serious harm, and on the basis of the findings of such investigation, offer child welfare services in relation to the problem to such parents, legal custodians, or persons serving in loco parentis, and/or bring the situation to the attention of an appropriate court, or another community agency. An investigation is not required of nonaccidental injuries which are clearly not the result of a lack of care or supervision by the child's parents, legal custodians, or persons serving in loco parentis. If the investigation reveals that a crime against a child may have been committed, the department shall notify the appropriate law enforcement agency.

(4) As provided in RCW 26.44.030(11), the department may respond to a report of child abuse or neglect by using the family assessment response.

(5) The department or supervising agencies shall offer, on a voluntary basis, family reconciliation services to families who are in conflict.

(6) The department or supervising agencies shall monitor placements of children in out-of-home care and in-home dependencies to assure the safety, well-being, and quality of care being provided is within the scope of the intent of the legislature as defined in RCW 74.13.010 and 74.15.010. Under this section children in out-of-home care and in-home dependencies and their caregivers shall receive a private and individual face-to-face visit each month. The department and the supervising agencies shall randomly select no less than ten percent of the caregivers currently providing care to receive one unannounced face‑to‑face visit in the caregiver's home per year. No caregiver will receive an unannounced visit through the random selection process for two consecutive years. If the caseworker makes a good faith effort to conduct the unannounced visit to a caregiver and is unable to do so, that month's visit to that caregiver need not be unannounced. The department and supervising agencies are encouraged to group monthly visits to caregivers by geographic area so that in the event an unannounced visit cannot be completed, the caseworker may complete other required monthly visits. The department shall use a method of random selection that does not cause a fiscal impact to the department.

The department or supervising agencies shall conduct the monthly visits with children and caregivers to whom it is providing child welfare services.

(7) The department and supervising agencies shall have authority to accept custody of children from parents and to accept custody of children from juvenile courts, where authorized to do so under law, to provide child welfare services including placement for adoption, to provide for the routine and necessary medical, dental, and mental health care, or necessary emergency care of the children, and to provide for the physical care of such children and make payment of maintenance costs if needed. Except where required by Public Law 95-608 (25 U.S.C. Sec. 1915), no private adoption agency which receives children for adoption from the department shall discriminate on the basis of race, creed, or color when considering applications in their placement for adoption.

(8) The department and supervising agency shall have authority to provide temporary shelter to children who have run away from home and who are admitted to crisis residential centers.

(9) The department and supervising agency shall have authority to purchase care for children.

(10) The department shall establish a children's services advisory committee with sufficient members representing supervising agencies which shall assist the secretary in the development of a partnership plan for utilizing resources of the public and private sectors, and advise on all matters pertaining to child welfare, licensing of child care agencies, adoption, and services related thereto. At least one member shall represent the adoption community.

(11)(a) The department and supervising agencies shall provide continued extended foster care services to nonminor dependents who are:

(i) Enrolled in a secondary education program or a secondary education equivalency program;

(ii) Enrolled and participating in a postsecondary academic or postsecondary vocational education program;

(iii) Participating in a program or activity designed to promote employment or remove barriers to employment; ((~~or~~))

(iv) Within amounts appropriated specifically for this purpose, engaged in employment for eighty hours or more per month; or

(v) Not able to engage in any of the activities described in (a)(i) through (iv) of this subsection due to a documented medical condition.

(b) To be eligible for extended foster care services, the nonminor dependent must have been dependent and in foster care at the time that he or she reached age eighteen years. If the dependency case of the nonminor dependent was dismissed pursuant to RCW 13.34.267, he or she may receive extended foster care services pursuant to a voluntary placement agreement under RCW 74.13.336 or pursuant to an order of dependency issued by the court under RCW 13.34.268. A nonminor dependent whose dependency case was dismissed by the court must have requested extended foster care services before reaching age nineteen years.

(c) The department shall develop and implement rules regarding youth eligibility requirements.

(12) The department shall have authority to provide adoption support benefits, or relative guardianship subsidies on behalf of youth ages eighteen to twenty-one years who achieved permanency through adoption or a relative guardianship at age sixteen or older and who meet the criteria described in subsection (11) of this section.

(13) The department shall refer cases to the division of child support whenever state or federal funds are expended for the care and maintenance of a child, including a child with a developmental disability who is placed as a result of an action under chapter 13.34 RCW, unless the department finds that there is good cause not to pursue collection of child support against the parent or parents of the child. Cases involving individuals age eighteen through twenty shall not be referred to the division of child support unless required by federal law.

(14) The department and supervising agencies shall have authority within funds appropriated for foster care services to purchase care for Indian children who are in the custody of a federally recognized Indian tribe or tribally licensed child-placing agency pursuant to parental consent, tribal court order, or state juvenile court order. The purchase of such care is exempt from the requirements of chapter 74.13B RCW and may be purchased from the federally recognized Indian tribe or tribally licensed child-placing agency, and shall be subject to the same eligibility standards and rates of support applicable to other children for whom the department purchases care.

Notwithstanding any other provision of RCW 13.32A.170 through 13.32A.200 and 74.13.032 through 74.13.036, or of this section all services to be provided by the department under subsections (4), (7), and (8) of this section, subject to the limitations of these subsections, may be provided by any program offering such services funded pursuant to Titles II and III of the federal juvenile justice and delinquency prevention act of 1974.

(15) Within amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the supervising agency or department shall provide preventive services to families with children that prevent or shorten the duration of an out-of-home placement.

(16) The department and supervising agencies shall have authority to provide independent living services to youths, including individuals who have attained eighteen years of age, and have not attained twenty-one years of age who are or have been in foster care.

(17) The department and supervising agencies shall consult at least quarterly with foster parents, including members of the foster parent association of Washington state, for the purpose of receiving information and comment regarding how the department and supervising agencies are performing the duties and meeting the obligations specified in this section and RCW 74.13.250 and 74.13.320 regarding the recruitment of foster homes, reducing foster parent turnover rates, providing effective training for foster parents, and administering a coordinated and comprehensive plan that strengthens services for the protection of children. Consultation shall occur at the regional and statewide levels.

(18)(a) The department shall, within current funding levels, place on its public web site a document listing the duties and responsibilities the department has to a child subject to a dependency petition including, but not limited to, the following:

(i) Reasonable efforts, including the provision of services, toward reunification of the child with his or her family;

(ii) Sibling visits subject to the restrictions in RCW 13.34.136(2)(b)(ii);

(iii) Parent-child visits;

(iv) Statutory preference for placement with a relative or other suitable person, if appropriate; and

(v) Statutory preference for an out-of-home placement that allows the child to remain in the same school or school district, if practical and in the child's best interests.

(b) The document must be prepared in conjunction with a community-based organization and must be updated as needed.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW to read as follows:

With respect to youth who will be aging out of foster care, the children's administration shall invite representatives from the division of behavioral health and recovery, the disability services administration, the economic services administration, and the juvenile justice and rehabilitation administration to the youth's shared planning meeting that occurs between age seventeen and seventeen and one-half that is used to develop a transition plan. It is the responsibility of the children's administration to include these agencies in the shared planning meeting. If foster youth who are the subject of this meeting may qualify for developmental disability services pursuant to Title 71A RCW, the children's administration shall direct these youth to apply for these services and provide assistance in the application process.

**--- END ---**