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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1366**

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**State of Washington**

**65th Legislature**

**2017 Regular Session**

**By** House Early Learning & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Ortiz-Self, Hargrove, Caldier, Tarleton, Pettigrew, Gregerson, Kilduff, Senn, Ryu, Appleton, Goodman, Lovick, Ormsby, and Frame)

READ FIRST TIME 02/10/17.

1 AN ACT Relating to promoting child welfare family reunification;  
2 amending RCW 13.34.025; adding a new section to chapter 13.34 RCW;  
3 and adding a new section to chapter 74.13 RCW.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 13.34  
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 The legislature intends to emphasize and support the efforts to  
8 reunify families involved in the child welfare process. The  
9 legislature recognizes the importance of parent-child and sibling  
10 visitation in allowing families to reunify, and intends to ensure  
11 that families receive services and activities designed to facilitate  
12 access to and visitation of children by parents and siblings. Parent-  
13 child visitation must be provided to families except if that  
14 visitation is limited by a court pursuant to RCW 13.34.136.

15 **Sec. 2.** RCW 13.34.025 and 2009 c 520 s 20 are each amended to  
16 read as follows:

17 (1) The department and supervising agencies shall develop methods  
18 for coordination of services to parents and children in child  
19 dependency cases. To the maximum extent possible under current  
20 funding levels, the department and supervising agencies must:

1 (a) Coordinate and integrate services to children and families,  
2 using service plans and activities that address the children's and  
3 families' multiple needs, including ensuring that siblings have  
4 regular visits with each other, as appropriate. Assessment criteria  
5 should screen for multiple needs;

6 (b) Develop treatment plans for the individual needs of the  
7 client in a manner that minimizes the number of contacts the client  
8 is required to make; and

9 (c) Access training for department and supervising agency staff  
10 to increase skills across disciplines to assess needs for mental  
11 health, substance abuse, developmental disabilities, and other areas.

12 (2) The department shall coordinate within the administrations of  
13 the department, and with contracted service providers including  
14 supervising agencies, to ensure that parents in dependency  
15 proceedings under this chapter receive priority access to remedial  
16 services recommended by the department or supervising agency in its  
17 social study or ordered by the court for the purpose of correcting  
18 any parental deficiencies identified in the dependency proceeding  
19 that are capable of being corrected in the foreseeable future.  
20 Services may also be provided to caregivers other than the parents as  
21 identified in RCW 13.34.138.

22 (a) For purposes of this chapter, remedial services are those  
23 services defined in the federal adoption and safe families act as  
24 time-limited family reunification services. Remedial services include  
25 individual, group, and family counseling; substance abuse treatment  
26 services; mental health services; assistance to address domestic  
27 violence; services designed to provide temporary child care and  
28 therapeutic services for families; services and activities designed  
29 to facilitate access to and visitation of children by parents and  
30 siblings except in cases where that visitation is not in the best  
31 interest of the child or a court limits visitation pursuant to RCW  
32 13.34.136; and transportation to or from any of the above services  
33 and activities.

34 (b) The department shall provide funds for remedial services if  
35 the parent is unable to pay to the extent funding is appropriated in  
36 the operating budget or otherwise available to the department for  
37 such specific services. As a condition for receiving funded remedial  
38 services, the court may inquire into the parent's ability to pay for  
39 all or part of such services or may require that the parent make

1 appropriate applications for funding to alternative funding sources  
2 for such services.

3 (c) If court-ordered remedial services are unavailable for any  
4 reason, including lack of funding, lack of services, or language  
5 barriers, the department or supervising agency shall promptly notify  
6 the court that the parent is unable to engage in the treatment due to  
7 the inability to access such services.

8 (d) This section does not create an entitlement to services and  
9 does not create judicial authority to order the provision of services  
10 except for the specific purpose of making reasonable efforts to  
11 remedy parental deficiencies identified in a dependency proceeding  
12 under this chapter.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13  
14 RCW to read as follows:

15 The department of social and health services shall convene a  
16 parent-child visitation work group with the following duties:

17 (1) Engaging relevant stakeholders to include biological parents  
18 involved in or with experience in the child welfare process;

19 (2) Developing and implementing changes in policy or practice to  
20 increase the amount and quality of parent-child visitation;

21 (3) Submitting an annual report to the appropriate committees of  
22 the legislature by November 1st that includes:

23 (a) The percentage of supervised, unsupervised, and monitored  
24 visitation for families that are dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34  
25 RCW;

26 (b) The average length of time after visitation is court ordered  
27 following a shelter care hearing pursuant to RCW 13.34.065 that  
28 parent-child visitation is made available to a family;

29 (c) Incorporating a parent engagement and education component in  
30 parent-child visitation;

31 (d) Changes made in policy or practice to improve the  
32 effectiveness of parent-child visitation; and

33 (e) Recommendations of further policy or statutory changes to  
34 improve the effectiveness of parent-child visitation.

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