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**HOUSE BILL 2873**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2020 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives J. Johnson, Frame, Ramel, Callan, Hudgins, Ryu, Davis, Orwall, and Pollet

AN ACT Relating to families in conflict; amending RCW 13.32A.030, 13.32A.040, and 13.32A.150; and adding a new section to chapter 13.32A RCW.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 13.32A.030 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 417 are each amended to read as follows:

As used in this chapter the following terms have the meanings indicated unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

(1) "Abuse or neglect" means the injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child by any person under circumstances that indicate the child's health, welfare, and safety is harmed, excluding conduct permitted under RCW 9A.16.100. An abused child is a child who has been subjected to child abuse or neglect as defined in this section.

(2) "Administrator" means the individual who has the daily administrative responsibility of a crisis residential center, or his or her designee.

(3) "At-risk youth" means a juvenile:

(a) Who is absent from home for at least seventy-two consecutive hours without consent of his or her parent;

(b) Who is beyond the control of his or her parent such that the child's behavior endangers the health, safety, or welfare of the child or any other person; or

(c) Who has a substance abuse problem for which there are no pending criminal charges related to the substance abuse.

(4) "Child," "juvenile," "youth," and "minor" mean any unemancipated individual who is under the chronological age of eighteen years.

(5) "Child in need of services" means a juvenile:

(a) Who is beyond the control of his or her parent such that the child's behavior endangers the health, safety, or welfare of the child or any other person;

(b) Who has been reported to law enforcement as absent without consent for at least twenty-four consecutive hours on two or more separate occasions from the home of either parent, a crisis residential center, an out-of-home placement, or a court-ordered placement; and

(i) Has exhibited a serious substance abuse problem; or

(ii) Has exhibited behaviors that create a serious risk of harm to the health, safety, or welfare of the child or any other person;

(c)(i) Who is in need of: (A) Necessary services, including food, shelter, health care, clothing, or education; or (B) services designed to maintain or reunite the family;

(ii) Who lacks access to, or has declined to use, these services; and

(iii) Whose parents have evidenced continuing but unsuccessful efforts to maintain the family structure or are unable or unwilling to continue efforts to maintain the family structure; or

(d) Who is a "sexually exploited child."

(6) "Child in need of services petition" means a petition filed in juvenile court by a parent, child, or the department seeking adjudication of placement of the child.

(7) "Crisis residential center" means a secure or semi-secure facility established pursuant to chapter 74.13 RCW.

(8) "Custodian" means the person or entity that has the legal right to custody of the child.

(9) "Department" means the department of children, youth, and families.

(10) "Extended family member" means an adult who is a grandparent, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, uncle, aunt, or first cousin with whom the child has a relationship and is comfortable, and who is willing and available to care for the child.

(11) "Guardian" means the person or agency that (a) has been appointed as the guardian of a child in a legal proceeding other than a proceeding under chapter 13.34 RCW, and (b) has the legal right to custody of the child pursuant to such appointment. The term "guardian" does not include a "dependency guardian" appointed pursuant to a proceeding under chapter 13.34 RCW.

(12) "Multidisciplinary team" means a group formed to provide assistance and support to a child who is an at-risk youth or a child in need of services and his or her parent. The team must include the parent, a department caseworker, a local government representative when authorized by the local government, and when appropriate, members from the mental health and substance abuse disciplines. The team may also include, but is not limited to, the following persons: Educators, law enforcement personnel, probation officers, employers, church persons, tribal members, therapists, medical personnel, social service providers, placement providers, and extended family members. The team members must be volunteers who do not receive compensation while acting in a capacity as a team member, unless the member's employer chooses to provide compensation or the member is a state employee.

(13) "Out-of-home placement" means a placement in a foster family home or group care facility licensed pursuant to chapter 74.15 RCW or placement in a home, other than that of the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian, not required to be licensed pursuant to chapter 74.15 RCW.

(14) "Parent" means the parent or parents who have the legal right to custody of the child. "Parent" includes custodian or guardian.

(15) "Secure facility" means a crisis residential center, or portion thereof, that has locking doors, locking windows, or a secured perimeter, designed and operated to prevent a child from leaving without permission of the facility staff.

(16) "Semi-secure facility" means any facility, including but not limited to crisis residential centers or specialized foster family homes, operated in a manner to reasonably assure that youth placed there will not run away. Pursuant to rules established by the department, the facility administrator shall establish reasonable hours for residents to come and go from the facility such that no residents are free to come and go at all hours of the day and night. To prevent residents from taking unreasonable actions, the facility administrator, where appropriate, may condition a resident's leaving the facility upon the resident being accompanied by the administrator or the administrator's designee and the resident may be required to notify the administrator or the administrator's designee of any intent to leave, his or her intended destination, and the probable time of his or her return to the center.

(17) "Sexually exploited child" means any person under the age of eighteen who is a victim of the crime of commercial sex abuse of a minor under RCW 9.68A.100, promoting commercial sexual abuse of a minor under RCW 9.68A.101, or promoting travel for commercial sexual abuse of a minor under RCW 9.68A.102.

(18) "Staff secure facility" means a structured group care facility licensed under rules adopted by the department with a ratio of at least one adult staff member to every two children.

(19) "Temporary out-of-home placement" means an out-of-home placement of not more than fourteen days ordered by the court at a fact-finding hearing on a child in need of services petition.

(20) "Family reconciliation services" means services provided by culturally relevant, trauma-informed community-based entities under contract with the department designed to assess and stabilize the family with the goal of resolving crisis and building supports, skills, and connection to community networks and resources including, but not limited to:

(a) Referrals for services for suicide prevention, psychiatric or other medical care, psychological care, behavioral health treatment, legal assistance, or educational assistance;

(b) Parent training;

(c) Assistance with conflict management or dispute resolution; or

(d) Other social services, as appropriate to meet the needs of the child and the family.

**Sec.**  RCW 13.32A.040 and 2000 c 123 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

((~~Families~~)) (1) The department, or a designated contractor of the department, shall offer family reconciliation services to families or youth who are ((~~in~~)) experiencing conflict ((~~or~~)) and who ((~~are experiencing problems with at-risk youth or a child who~~)) may be in need of services ((~~may request family reconciliation services from the department~~)) upon request from the family and subject to the availability of funding appropriated for this specific purpose.

(2) The department may involve a local multidisciplinary team in its response in determining the services to be provided and in providing those services. Such services shall be provided to alleviate personal or family situations which present a serious and imminent threat to the health or stability of the child or family and to maintain families intact wherever possible. ((~~Family reconciliation services shall be designed to develop skills and supports within families to resolve problems related to at-risk youth, children in need of services, or family conflicts. These services may include but are not limited to referral to services for suicide prevention, psychiatric or other medical care, or psychological, mental health, drug or alcohol treatment, welfare, legal, educational, or other social services, as appropriate to the needs of the child and the family, and training in parenting, conflict management, and dispute resolution skills.~~))

**Sec.**  RCW 13.32A.150 and 2019 c 312 s 10 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the juvenile court shall not accept the filing of a child in need of services petition by the child or the parents or the filing of an at-risk youth petition by the parent, unless verification is provided that the department, or a community-based entity under contract with the department, has completed a family assessment. The family assessment shall involve the multidisciplinary team if one exists. The family assessment or plan of services developed by the multidisciplinary team shall be aimed at family reconciliation, reunification, and avoidance of the out-of-home placement of the child.

(2) A child or a child's parent may file with the juvenile court a child in need of services petition to approve an out-of-home placement for the child before completion of a family assessment. The department shall, when requested, assist either a parent or child in the filing of the petition. The petition must be filed in the county where the parent resides. The petition shall allege that the child is a child in need of services and shall ask only that the placement of a child outside the home of his or her parent be approved. The filing of a petition to approve the placement is not dependent upon the court's having obtained any prior jurisdiction over the child or his or her parent, and confers upon the court a special jurisdiction to approve or disapprove an out-of-home placement under this chapter.

(3) A petition may not be filed if the child is the subject of a proceeding under chapter 13.34 RCW.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 13.32A RCW to read as follows:

(1) Beginning December 1, 2020, and annually thereafter, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the department shall provide a report to the appropriate committees of the legislature on the use of family reconciliation services which includes:

(a) The number of requests for family reconciliation services;

(b) The number of referrals made for family reconciliation services;

(c) The demographic profile of families and youth accessing family reconciliation services including race, ethnicity, housing status, child welfare history, existence of an individualized education program, eligibility for services under 29 U.S.C. Sec. 701, or eligibility for other disability-related services;

(d) The nature of the family conflict;

(e) The type and length of the family reconciliation services delivered;

(f) Family outcomes after receiving family reconciliation services; and

(g) Recommendations for improving family reconciliation services.

(2) If the department cannot provide the information specified under subsection (1) of this section, the department shall include a plan detailing how the department will obtain and report this information in the report required under subsection (1) of this section.

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