

RCW 74.14A.020 Services for emotionally disturbed and mentally ill children, potentially dependent children, and families-in-conflict.

State efforts shall address the needs of children and their families, including emotionally disturbed and mentally ill children, potentially dependent children, and families-in-conflict by:

- (1) Serving children and families as a unit in the least restrictive setting available and in close proximity to the family home, consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child;
- (2) Ensuring that appropriate social and health services are provided to the family unit both prior to and during the removal of a child from the home and after family reunification;
- (3) Ensuring that the safety and best interests of the child are the paramount considerations when making placement and service delivery decisions;
- (4) Recognizing the interdependent and changing nature of families and communities, building upon their inherent strengths, maintaining their dignity and respect, and tailoring programs to their specific circumstances;
- (5) Developing and implementing comprehensive, preventive, and early intervention social and health services which have demonstrated the ability to delay or reduce the need for out-of-home placements and ameliorate problems before they become chronic or severe;
- (6) Authorizing and facilitating blended funding for children who require services and residential treatment from multiple services systems; including child welfare services, mental health, alcohol and drug, and juvenile rehabilitation;
- (7) Being sensitive to the family and community culture, norms, values, and expectations, ensuring that all services are provided in a culturally appropriate and relevant manner, and ensuring participation of racial and ethnic minorities at all levels of planning, delivery, and evaluation efforts;
- (8) (a) Developing coordinated social and health services which:
 - (i) Identify problems experienced by children and their families early and provide services which are adequate in availability, appropriate to the situation, and effective;
 - (ii) Seek to bring about meaningful change before family situations become irreversibly destructive and before disturbed psychological behavioral patterns and health problems become severe or permanent;
 - (iii) Serve children and families in their own homes thus preventing unnecessary out-of-home placement or institutionalization;
 - (iv) Focus resources on social and health problems as they begin to manifest themselves rather than waiting for chronic and severe patterns of illness, criminality, and dependency to develop which require long-term treatment, maintenance, or custody;
 - (v) Reduce duplication of and gaps in service delivery;
 - (vi) Improve planning, budgeting, and communication among all units of the department and among all agencies that serve children and families; and
 - (vii) Utilize outcome standards for measuring the effectiveness of social and health services for children and families.
- (b) In developing services under this subsection, local communities must be involved in planning and developing community networks that are tailored to their unique needs. [2000 c 219 § 1; 1994 sp.s. c 7 § 102; 1983 c 192 § 2.]

Severability—2000 c 219: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [2000 c 219 § 3.]

Effective date—2000 c 219: "This act takes effect July 1, 2000." [2000 c 219 § 4.]

Finding—Intent—Severability—1994 sp.s. c 7: See notes following RCW 43.70.540.

Effective date—1983 c 192: "Sections 2 through 4 of this act shall take effect January 1, 1984." [1983 c 192 § 8.]