

RCW 11.130.220 Standby guardian for minor. (1) A standby guardian appointed under this section may act as guardian, with all duties and powers of a guardian under RCW 11.130.230 and 11.130.235, when no parent of the minor is willing or able to exercise the duties and powers granted to the guardian.

(2) A parent of a minor, in a signed record, may nominate a person to be appointed by the court as standby guardian for the minor. The parent, in a signed record, may state desired limitations on the powers to be granted the standby guardian. The parent, in a signed record, may revoke or amend the nomination at any time before the court appoints a standby guardian.

(3) The court may appoint a standby guardian for a minor on:

(a) Petition by a parent of the minor or a person nominated under subsection (2) of this section; and

(b) Finding that, within two years after the appointment, no parent of the minor likely will be able or willing to perform parenting functions as defined in RCW 26.09.004.

(4) A petition under subsection (3)(a) of this section must include the same information required under RCW 11.130.190 for the appointment of a guardian for a minor.

(5) On filing a petition under subsection (3)(a) of this section, the petitioner shall:

(a) Serve a copy of the petition personally on:

(i) The minor, if the minor is twelve years of age or older, and the minor's attorney, if any;

(ii) Each parent of the minor;

(iii) The person nominated as standby guardian; and

(iv) Any other person the court determines; and

(b) Include with the copy of the petition served under (a) of this subsection a statement of the right to request appointment of an attorney for the minor or to object to appointment of the standby guardian, and a description of the nature, purpose, and consequences of appointment of a standby guardian.

(6) The court may, upon a showing of good cause, order that the information concerning the reasons for the standby guardianship contained in the petition and all subsequently filed pleadings and evidence by any party not be served on the minor if the minor is unrepresented. A minor entitled to service under this subsection may request access to the court pleadings and evidence filed in the court record.

(7) A person entitled to notice under subsection (5) of this section, not later than sixty days after service of the petition and statement, may object to appointment of the standby guardian by filing an objection with the court and giving notice of the objection to each other person entitled to notice under subsection (5) of this section.

(8) If an objection is filed under subsection (7) of this section, the court shall hold a hearing to determine whether a standby guardian should be appointed and, if so, the person that should be appointed. If no objection is filed, the court may make the appointment.

(9) The court may not grant a petition for a standby guardian of the minor if notice substantially complying with subsection (5) of this section is not served on:

(a) The minor, if the minor is twelve years of age or older; and

(b) Each parent of the minor, unless the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent, in a record, waived the right to notice or cannot be located and served with due diligence.

(10) If a petitioner is unable to serve notice under subsection (5) of this section on a parent of the minor or alleges that a parent of the minor waived the right to notice under this section, the court shall appoint a court visitor who shall:

(a) Interview the petitioner and the minor;

(b) If the petitioner alleges the parent cannot be located and served, ascertain whether the parent cannot be located with due diligence; and

(c) Investigate any other matter relating to the petition the court directs.

(11) If the court finds under subsection (3) of this section that a standby guardian should be appointed, the following rules apply:

(a) The court shall appoint the person nominated under subsection (2) of this section unless the court finds the appointment is contrary to the best interest of the minor.

(b) If the parents have nominated different persons to serve as standby guardian, the court shall appoint the nominee whose appointment is in the best interest of the minor, unless the court finds that appointment of none of the nominees is in the best interest of the minor.

(12) An order appointing a standby guardian under this section must state that each parent of the minor is entitled to notice, and identify any other person entitled to notice, if:

(a) The standby guardian assumes the duties and powers of the guardian;

(b) The guardian delegates custody of the minor;

(c) The court modifies or limits the powers of the guardian; or

(d) The court removes the guardian.

(13) Before assuming the duties and powers of a guardian, a standby guardian must file with the court an acceptance of appointment as guardian and give notice of the acceptance to:

(a) Each parent of the minor, unless the parent, in a record, waived the right to notice or cannot be located and served with due diligence;

(b) The minor, if the minor is twelve years of age or older; and

(c) Any person, other than the parent, having care or custody of the minor.

(14) A person that receives notice under subsection (13) of this section or any other person interested in the welfare of the minor may file with the court an objection to the standby guardian's assumption of duties and powers of a guardian. The court shall hold a hearing if the objection supports a reasonable belief that the conditions for assumption of duties and powers have not been satisfied. [2020 c 312 § 107; 2019 c 437 § 208.]

Effective dates—2020 c 312: See note following RCW 11.130.915.