

RCW 26.26A.465 Precluding establishment of parentage by perpetrator of sexual assault. (1) For the purposes of this section, "sexual assault" means nonconsensual sexual penetration that results in pregnancy.

(2) In a proceeding in which a parent alleges that a person committed a sexual assault that resulted in the parent becoming pregnant and subsequently giving birth to a child, the parent may seek to preclude the person from establishing or maintaining the person's parentage of the child. A parent who alleges that a child was born as a result of sexual assault may also seek additional relief as described in this section.

(3) This section does not apply if the person described in subsection (2) of this section has previously been adjudicated in a proceeding brought under RCW 26.26A.400 to be a parent of the child, except as may be specifically permitted under subsection (4) of this section.

(4) Unless RCW 26.26A.240 or 26.26A.430 applies, a parent must file a pleading making an allegation under subsection (2) of this section not later than four years after the birth of the child, except that for a period of one year after January 1, 2019, a court may waive the time bar in cases in which a presumed, acknowledged, or adjudicated parent was found in a criminal or separate civil proceeding to have committed a sexual assault against the parent alleging that the child was born as a result of the sexual assault.

(5) If a parent makes an allegation under subsection (2) of this section and subsection (3) of this section does not apply, the court must conduct a fact-finding hearing on the allegation.

(a) The court may not enter any temporary orders providing residential time or decision making to the alleged perpetrator prior to the fact-finding hearing on the sexual assault allegation unless both of the following criteria are satisfied: (i) The alleged perpetrator has a bonded and dependent relationship with the child that is parental in nature; and (ii) the court specifically finds that it would be in the best interest of the child if such temporary orders are entered.

(b) Prior to the fact-finding hearing, the court may order genetic testing to determine whether the alleged perpetrator is biologically related to the child. If genetic testing reveals that the alleged perpetrator is not biologically related to the child, the fact-finding hearing must be stricken.

(c) Fourteen days prior to the fact-finding hearing, the parent alleging that the child was born as a result of a sexual assault shall submit affidavits setting forth facts supporting the allegation and shall give notice, together with a copy of the affidavit, to other parties to the proceedings, who may file opposing affidavits. Opposing affidavits must be submitted and served to other parties to the proceeding five days prior to the fact-finding hearing.

(d) The court shall determine on the record whether affidavits and documents submitted for the fact-finding hearing should be sealed.

(6) An allegation under subsection (2) of this section may be proved by:

(a) Evidence that the person was convicted of or pleaded guilty to a sexual assault under RCW 9A.44.040, 9A.44.050, or 9A.44.060, or a comparable crime of sexual assault, including child rape of any degree, in this state or any other jurisdiction, against the child's parent and the child was born within three hundred twenty days after the sexual assault; or

(b) Clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that the person committed sexual assault, as defined in this section, against the child's parent and the child was born within three hundred twenty days after the sexual assault.

(7) Subject to subsections (1) through (5) of this section, if the court determines that an allegation has been proved under subsection (6) of this section at the fact-finding hearing or after a bench trial, the court shall:

(a) Adjudicate that the person described in subsection (2) of this section is not a parent of the child, has no right to residential time or decision-making responsibilities for the child, has no right to inheritance from the child, and has no right to notification of, or standing to object to, the adoption of the child. If the parent who was the victim of the sexual assault expressly consents in writing for the court to decline to enter one or more of these restrictions or limitations, the court may do so;

(b) Require the state registrar of vital statistics to amend the birth record if requested by the parent and the court determines that the amendment is in the best interest of the child; and

(c) Require the person pay to child support, birth-related costs, or both, unless the parent requests otherwise and the court determines that granting the request is in the best interest of the child.

(8) The child's parent or guardian may decline an order for child support or birth-related costs. If the child's parent or guardian declines an order for child support, and is either currently receiving public assistance or later applies for it for the child born as a result of the sexual assault, support enforcement agencies as defined in this chapter shall not file administrative or court proceedings to establish or collect child support, including medical support, from the person described in subsection (2) of this section.

(9) If the court enters an order under subsection (8) of this section providing that no child support obligation may be established or collected from the person described in subsection (2) of this section, the court shall forward a copy of the order to the Washington state support registry.

(10) The court may order an award of attorneys' fees under this section on the same basis as attorneys' fees are awarded under RCW 26.09.140.

(11) Any party may move to close the fact-finding hearing and any related proceedings under this section to the public. If no party files such a motion, the court shall determine on its own initiative whether the fact-finding hearing and any related proceedings under this section should be closed to the public. Upon finding good cause for closing the proceeding, and if consistent with Article I, section 10 of the state Constitution, the court may:

(a) Restrict admission to only those persons whom the court finds to have a direct interest in the case or in the work of the court, including witnesses deemed necessary to the disposition of the case; and

(b) Restrict persons who are admitted from disclosing any information obtained at the hearing that would identify the parties involved or the child. [2019 c 46 § 4001; 2018 c 6 § 514.]