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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1945**

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**State of Washington**

**67th Legislature**

**2022 Regular Session**

**By** House Children, Youth & Families (originally sponsored by Representatives Dent, Sutherland, Wicks, and Robertson)

1 AN ACT Relating to improving communication between the department  
2 of children, youth, and families and caregivers; adding a new section  
3 to chapter 74.13 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an  
4 expiration date.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13  
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 The department shall establish a caregiver communication  
9 specialist position within the department for the purpose of  
10 improving communication between the department and caregivers. The  
11 caregiver communication specialist position established in this  
12 section is responsible for:

13 (1) Assisting caseworkers in promptly communicating with  
14 caregivers of children receiving child welfare services;

15 (2) Developing policies for sharing appropriate and timely  
16 information with caregivers of children receiving child welfare  
17 services; and

18 (3) Supporting coordination between existing caregiver engagement  
19 teams, constituent relations, communications specialists, and child  
20 welfare field offices.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    (1) By October 1, 2023, and in compliance  
2 with RCW 43.01.036, the department of children, youth, and families  
3 shall submit a report to the appropriate committees of the  
4 legislature and the governor describing:

5        (a) How the department of children, youth, and families could  
6 implement an automated notification system that would provide  
7 electronic or telephonic notifications to caregivers of children  
8 receiving child welfare services regarding upcoming changes in  
9 placements for the child, court hearings, or other relevant and  
10 appropriate information;

11        (b) Any statutory, policy, or funding changes needed to  
12 accomplish the automated notification system described in (a) of this  
13 subsection; and

14        (c) Recommendations regarding improving communications between  
15 the department of children, youth, and families and caregivers. The  
16 department shall consult with the caregiver communication specialist  
17 established in section 1 of this act, current and former caregivers,  
18 and youth who received or are receiving child welfare services  
19 regarding the recommendations required under this subsection.

20        (2) This section expires April 1, 2024.

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