
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6249

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Senate Human Services, Mental Health & Housing (originally sponsored by Senators O'Ban, Bailey, Darneille, Miloscia, Dammeier, Hasegawa, Carlyle, Litzow, Padden, and McAuliffe)

1 AN ACT Relating to host home programs; amending RCW 74.15.020 and
2 26.44.030; adding a new section to chapter 24.03 RCW; and creating a
3 new section.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 74.15.020 and 2013 c 105 s 2 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter and
8 RCW 74.13.031 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

9 (1) "Agency" means any person, firm, partnership, association,
10 corporation, or facility which receives children, expectant mothers,
11 or persons with developmental disabilities for control, care, or
12 maintenance outside their own homes, or which places, arranges the
13 placement of, or assists in the placement of children, expectant
14 mothers, or persons with developmental disabilities for foster care
15 or placement of children for adoption, and shall include the
16 following irrespective of whether there is compensation to the agency
17 or to the children, expectant mothers, or persons with developmental
18 disabilities for services rendered:

19 (a) "Child-placing agency" means an agency which places a child
20 or children for temporary care, continued care, or for adoption;

1 (b) "Community facility" means a group care facility operated for
2 the care of juveniles committed to the department under RCW
3 13.40.185. A county detention facility that houses juveniles
4 committed to the department under RCW 13.40.185 pursuant to a
5 contract with the department is not a community facility;

6 (c) "Crisis residential center" means an agency which is a
7 temporary protective residential facility operated to perform the
8 duties specified in chapter 13.32A RCW, in the manner provided in RCW
9 74.13.032 through 74.13.036;

10 (d) "Emergency respite center" is an agency that may be commonly
11 known as a crisis nursery, that provides emergency and crisis care
12 for up to seventy-two hours to children who have been admitted by
13 their parents or guardians to prevent abuse or neglect. Emergency
14 respite centers may operate for up to twenty-four hours a day, and
15 for up to seven days a week. Emergency respite centers may provide
16 care for children ages birth through seventeen, and for persons
17 eighteen through twenty with developmental disabilities who are
18 admitted with a sibling or siblings through age seventeen. Emergency
19 respite centers may not substitute for crisis residential centers or
20 HOPE centers, or any other services defined under this section, and
21 may not substitute for services which are required under chapter
22 13.32A or 13.34 RCW;

23 (e) "Foster-family home" means an agency which regularly provides
24 care on a twenty-four hour basis to one or more children, expectant
25 mothers, or persons with developmental disabilities in the family
26 abode of the person or persons under whose direct care and
27 supervision the child, expectant mother, or person with a
28 developmental disability is placed;

29 (f) "Group-care facility" means an agency, other than a foster-
30 family home, which is maintained and operated for the care of a group
31 of children on a twenty-four hour basis;

32 (g) "HOPE center" means an agency licensed by the secretary to
33 provide temporary residential placement and other services to street
34 youth. A street youth may remain in a HOPE center for thirty days
35 while services are arranged and permanent placement is coordinated.
36 No street youth may stay longer than thirty days unless approved by
37 the department and any additional days approved by the department
38 must be based on the unavailability of a long-term placement option.
39 A street youth whose parent wants him or her returned to home may
40 remain in a HOPE center until his or her parent arranges return of

1 the youth, not longer. All other street youth must have court
2 approval under chapter 13.34 or 13.32A RCW to remain in a HOPE center
3 up to thirty days;

4 (h) "Maternity service" means an agency which provides or
5 arranges for care or services to expectant mothers, before or during
6 confinement, or which provides care as needed to mothers and their
7 infants after confinement;

8 (i) "Resource and assessment center" means an agency that
9 provides short-term emergency and crisis care for a period up to
10 seventy-two hours, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays to
11 children who have been removed from their parent's or guardian's care
12 by child protective services or law enforcement;

13 (j) "Responsible living skills program" means an agency licensed
14 by the secretary that provides residential and transitional living
15 services to persons ages sixteen to eighteen who are dependent under
16 chapter 13.34 RCW and who have been unable to live in his or her
17 legally authorized residence and, as a result, the minor lived
18 outdoors or in another unsafe location not intended for occupancy by
19 the minor. Dependent minors ages fourteen and fifteen may be eligible
20 if no other placement alternative is available and the department
21 approves the placement;

22 (k) "Service provider" means the entity that operates a community
23 facility.

24 (2) "Agency" shall not include the following:

25 (a) Persons related to the child, expectant mother, or person
26 with developmental disability in the following ways:

27 (i) Any blood relative, including those of half-blood, and
28 including first cousins, second cousins, nephews or nieces, and
29 persons of preceding generations as denoted by prefixes of grand,
30 great, or great-great;

31 (ii) Stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, and stepsister;

32 (iii) A person who legally adopts a child or the child's parent
33 as well as the natural and other legally adopted children of such
34 persons, and other relatives of the adoptive parents in accordance
35 with state law;

36 (iv) Spouses of any persons named in (a)(i), (ii), or (iii) of
37 this subsection (2), even after the marriage is terminated;

38 (v) Relatives, as named in (a)(i), (ii), (iii), or (iv) of this
39 subsection (2), of any half sibling of the child; or

1 (vi) Extended family members, as defined by the law or custom of
2 the Indian child's tribe or, in the absence of such law or custom, a
3 person who has reached the age of eighteen and who is the Indian
4 child's grandparent, aunt or uncle, brother or sister, brother-in-law
5 or sister-in-law, niece or nephew, first or second cousin, or
6 stepparent who provides care in the family abode on a twenty-four-
7 hour basis to an Indian child as defined in 25 U.S.C. Sec. 1903(4);

8 (b) Persons who are legal guardians of the child, expectant
9 mother, or persons with developmental disabilities;

10 (c) Persons who care for a neighbor's or friend's child or
11 children, with or without compensation, where the parent and person
12 providing care on a twenty-four-hour basis have agreed to the
13 placement in writing and the state is not providing any payment for
14 the care;

15 (d) A person, partnership, corporation, or other entity that
16 provides placement or similar services to exchange students or
17 international student exchange visitors or persons who have the care
18 of an exchange student in their home;

19 (e) A person, partnership, corporation, or other entity that
20 provides placement or similar services to international children who
21 have entered the country by obtaining visas that meet the criteria
22 for medical care as established by the United States citizenship and
23 immigration services, or persons who have the care of such an
24 international child in their home;

25 (f) Schools, including boarding schools, which are engaged
26 primarily in education, operate on a definite school year schedule,
27 follow a stated academic curriculum, accept only school-age children
28 and do not accept custody of children;

29 (g) Hospitals licensed pursuant to chapter 70.41 RCW when
30 performing functions defined in chapter 70.41 RCW, nursing homes
31 licensed under chapter 18.51 RCW and assisted living facilities
32 licensed under chapter 18.20 RCW;

33 (h) Licensed physicians or lawyers;

34 (i) Facilities approved and certified under chapter 71A.22 RCW;

35 (j) Any agency having been in operation in this state ten years
36 prior to June 8, 1967, and not seeking or accepting moneys or
37 assistance from any state or federal agency, and is supported in part
38 by an endowment or trust fund;

39 (k) Persons who have a child in their home for purposes of
40 adoption, if the child was placed in such home by a licensed child-

1 placing agency, an authorized public or tribal agency or court or if
2 a replacement report has been filed under chapter 26.33 RCW and the
3 placement has been approved by the court;

4 (l) An agency operated by any unit of local, state, or federal
5 government or an agency licensed by an Indian tribe pursuant to RCW
6 74.15.190;

7 (m) A maximum or medium security program for juvenile offenders
8 operated by or under contract with the department;

9 (n) An agency located on a federal military reservation, except
10 where the military authorities request that such agency be subject to
11 the licensing requirements of this chapter;

12 (o) A host home program, and host home, operated by a tax exempt
13 organization for youth not in the care of or receiving services from
14 the department, if that program: (i) Recruits and screens potential
15 homes in the program, including performing background checks on
16 individuals over the age of eighteen residing in the home through the
17 Washington state patrol or equivalent law enforcement agency and
18 performing physical inspections of the home; (ii) screens and
19 provides case management services to youth in the program; (iii)
20 obtains a notarized permission slip or limited power of attorney from
21 the parent or legal guardian of the youth authorizing the youth to
22 participate in the program and the authorization is updated every six
23 months when a youth remains in a host home longer than six months;
24 (iv) obtains insurance for the program through an insurance provider
25 authorized under Title 48 RCW; (v) provides mandatory reporter and
26 confidentiality training; and (vi) registers with the secretary of
27 state as provided in section 3 of this act.

28 (3) "Department" means the state department of social and health
29 services.

30 (4) "Juvenile" means a person under the age of twenty-one who has
31 been sentenced to a term of confinement under the supervision of the
32 department under RCW 13.40.185.

33 (5) "Performance-based contracts" or "contracting" means the
34 structuring of all aspects of the procurement of services around the
35 purpose of the work to be performed and the desired results with the
36 contract requirements set forth in clear, specific, and objective
37 terms with measurable outcomes. Contracts may also include provisions
38 that link the performance of the contractor to the level and timing
39 of the reimbursement.

1 (6) "Probationary license" means a license issued as a
2 disciplinary measure to an agency that has previously been issued a
3 full license but is out of compliance with licensing standards.

4 (7) "Requirement" means any rule, regulation, or standard of care
5 to be maintained by an agency.

6 (8) "Secretary" means the secretary of social and health
7 services.

8 (9) "Street youth" means a person under the age of eighteen who
9 lives outdoors or in another unsafe location not intended for
10 occupancy by the minor and who is not residing with his or her parent
11 or at his or her legally authorized residence.

12 (10) "Supervising agency" means an agency licensed by the state
13 under RCW 74.15.090 or an Indian tribe under RCW 74.15.190 that has
14 entered into a performance-based contract with the department to
15 provide child welfare services.

16 (11) "Transitional living services" means at a minimum, to the
17 extent funds are available, the following:

18 (a) Educational services, including basic literacy and
19 computational skills training, either in local alternative or public
20 high schools or in a high school equivalency program that leads to
21 obtaining a high school equivalency degree;

22 (b) Assistance and counseling related to obtaining vocational
23 training or higher education, job readiness, job search assistance,
24 and placement programs;

25 (c) Counseling and instruction in life skills such as money
26 management, home management, consumer skills, parenting, health care,
27 access to community resources, and transportation and housing
28 options;

29 (d) Individual and group counseling; and

30 (e) Establishing networks with federal agencies and state and
31 local organizations such as the United States department of labor,
32 employment and training administration programs including the
33 workforce investment act which administers private industry councils
34 and the job corps; vocational rehabilitation; and volunteer programs.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** By July 1, 2017, the department of
36 commerce must report to the governor and the legislature
37 recommendations and best practices for host home programs.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 24.03
2 RCW to read as follows:

3 (1) Host home programs have the same meaning as described in RCW
4 74.15.020.

5 (2) Host home programs shall register with the secretary of
6 state's office. This registration may occur when the host home
7 program files articles of incorporation or registers as a nonprofit
8 organization under this chapter.

9 (3) The host home program registration must include a notarized
10 statement by the host home program that it meets all of the statutory
11 requirements as provided for in RCW 74.15.020.

12 (4) The secretary of state has no duty to confirm that a host
13 home program is meeting its statutory requirements.

14 (5) Any filing under this section does not imply an endorsement
15 by the secretary of state.

16 (6) The secretary of state may adopt rules as necessary to carry
17 out its duties under this section.

18 **Sec. 4.** RCW 26.44.030 and 2015 1st sp.s. c 6 s 1 are each
19 amended to read as follows:

20 (1)(a) When any practitioner, county coroner or medical examiner,
21 law enforcement officer, professional school personnel, registered or
22 licensed nurse, social service counselor, psychologist, pharmacist,
23 employee of the department of early learning, licensed or certified
24 child care providers or their employees, employee of the department,
25 juvenile probation officer, placement and liaison specialist,
26 responsible living skills program staff, HOPE center staff, ((~~or~~))
27 state family and children's ombuds or any volunteer in the ombuds's
28 office, or host home program has reasonable cause to believe that a
29 child has suffered abuse or neglect, he or she shall report such
30 incident, or cause a report to be made, to the proper law enforcement
31 agency or to the department as provided in RCW 26.44.040.

32 (b) When any person, in his or her official supervisory capacity
33 with a nonprofit or for-profit organization, has reasonable cause to
34 believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect caused by a person
35 over whom he or she regularly exercises supervisory authority, he or
36 she shall report such incident, or cause a report to be made, to the
37 proper law enforcement agency, provided that the person alleged to
38 have caused the abuse or neglect is employed by, contracted by, or
39 volunteers with the organization and coaches, trains, educates, or

1 counsels a child or children or regularly has unsupervised access to
2 a child or children as part of the employment, contract, or voluntary
3 service. No one shall be required to report under this section when
4 he or she obtains the information solely as a result of a privileged
5 communication as provided in RCW 5.60.060.

6 Nothing in this subsection (1)(b) shall limit a person's duty to
7 report under (a) of this subsection.

8 For the purposes of this subsection, the following definitions
9 apply:

10 (i) "Official supervisory capacity" means a position, status, or
11 role created, recognized, or designated by any nonprofit or for-
12 profit organization, either for financial gain or without financial
13 gain, whose scope includes, but is not limited to, overseeing,
14 directing, or managing another person who is employed by, contracted
15 by, or volunteers with the nonprofit or for-profit organization.

16 (ii) "Organization" includes a sole proprietor, partnership,
17 corporation, limited liability company, trust, association, financial
18 institution, governmental entity, other than the federal government,
19 and any other individual or group engaged in a trade, occupation,
20 enterprise, governmental function, charitable function, or similar
21 activity in this state whether or not the entity is operated as a
22 nonprofit or for-profit entity.

23 (iii) "Reasonable cause" means a person witnesses or receives a
24 credible written or oral report alleging abuse, including sexual
25 contact, or neglect of a child.

26 (iv) "Regularly exercises supervisory authority" means to act in
27 his or her official supervisory capacity on an ongoing or continuing
28 basis with regards to a particular person.

29 (v) "Sexual contact" has the same meaning as in RCW 9A.44.010.

30 (c) The reporting requirement also applies to department of
31 corrections personnel who, in the course of their employment, observe
32 offenders or the children with whom the offenders are in contact. If,
33 as a result of observations or information received in the course of
34 his or her employment, any department of corrections personnel has
35 reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or
36 neglect, he or she shall report the incident, or cause a report to be
37 made, to the proper law enforcement agency or to the department as
38 provided in RCW 26.44.040.

39 (d) The reporting requirement shall also apply to any adult who
40 has reasonable cause to believe that a child who resides with them,

1 has suffered severe abuse, and is able or capable of making a report.
2 For the purposes of this subsection, "severe abuse" means any of the
3 following: Any single act of abuse that causes physical trauma of
4 sufficient severity that, if left untreated, could cause death; any
5 single act of sexual abuse that causes significant bleeding, deep
6 bruising, or significant external or internal swelling; or more than
7 one act of physical abuse, each of which causes bleeding, deep
8 bruising, significant external or internal swelling, bone fracture,
9 or unconsciousness.

10 (e) The reporting requirement also applies to guardians ad litem,
11 including court-appointed special advocates, appointed under Titles
12 11((7)) and 13((7)) RCW and ((26-RCW)) this title, who in the course
13 of their representation of children in these actions have reasonable
14 cause to believe a child has been abused or neglected.

15 (f) The reporting requirement in (a) of this subsection also
16 applies to administrative and academic or athletic department
17 employees, including student employees, of institutions of higher
18 education, as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, and of private institutions
19 of higher education.

20 (g) The report must be made at the first opportunity, but in no
21 case longer than forty-eight hours after there is reasonable cause to
22 believe that the child has suffered abuse or neglect. The report must
23 include the identity of the accused if known.

24 (2) The reporting requirement of subsection (1) of this section
25 does not apply to the discovery of abuse or neglect that occurred
26 during childhood if it is discovered after the child has become an
27 adult. However, if there is reasonable cause to believe other
28 children are or may be at risk of abuse or neglect by the accused,
29 the reporting requirement of subsection (1) of this section does
30 apply.

31 (3) Any other person who has reasonable cause to believe that a
32 child has suffered abuse or neglect may report such incident to the
33 proper law enforcement agency or to the department of social and
34 health services as provided in RCW 26.44.040.

35 (4) The department, upon receiving a report of an incident of
36 alleged abuse or neglect pursuant to this chapter, involving a child
37 who has died or has had physical injury or injuries inflicted upon
38 him or her other than by accidental means or who has been subjected
39 to alleged sexual abuse, shall report such incident to the proper law
40 enforcement agency, including military law enforcement, if

1 appropriate. In emergency cases, where the child's welfare is
2 endangered, the department shall notify the proper law enforcement
3 agency within twenty-four hours after a report is received by the
4 department. In all other cases, the department shall notify the law
5 enforcement agency within seventy-two hours after a report is
6 received by the department. If the department makes an oral report, a
7 written report must also be made to the proper law enforcement agency
8 within five days thereafter.

9 (5) Any law enforcement agency receiving a report of an incident
10 of alleged abuse or neglect pursuant to this chapter, involving a
11 child who has died or has had physical injury or injuries inflicted
12 upon him or her other than by accidental means, or who has been
13 subjected to alleged sexual abuse, shall report such incident in
14 writing as provided in RCW 26.44.040 to the proper county prosecutor
15 or city attorney for appropriate action whenever the law enforcement
16 agency's investigation reveals that a crime may have been committed.
17 The law enforcement agency shall also notify the department of all
18 reports received and the law enforcement agency's disposition of
19 them. In emergency cases, where the child's welfare is endangered,
20 the law enforcement agency shall notify the department within twenty-
21 four hours. In all other cases, the law enforcement agency shall
22 notify the department within seventy-two hours after a report is
23 received by the law enforcement agency.

24 (6) Any county prosecutor or city attorney receiving a report
25 under subsection (5) of this section shall notify the victim, any
26 persons the victim requests, and the local office of the department,
27 of the decision to charge or decline to charge a crime, within five
28 days of making the decision.

29 (7) The department may conduct ongoing case planning and
30 consultation with those persons or agencies required to report under
31 this section, with consultants designated by the department, and with
32 designated representatives of Washington Indian tribes if the client
33 information exchanged is pertinent to cases currently receiving child
34 protective services. Upon request, the department shall conduct such
35 planning and consultation with those persons required to report under
36 this section if the department determines it is in the best interests
37 of the child. Information considered privileged by statute and not
38 directly related to reports required by this section must not be
39 divulged without a valid written waiver of the privilege.

1 (8) Any case referred to the department by a physician licensed
2 under chapter 18.57 or 18.71 RCW on the basis of an expert medical
3 opinion that child abuse, neglect, or sexual assault has occurred and
4 that the child's safety will be seriously endangered if returned
5 home, the department shall file a dependency petition unless a second
6 licensed physician of the parents' choice believes that such expert
7 medical opinion is incorrect. If the parents fail to designate a
8 second physician, the department may make the selection. If a
9 physician finds that a child has suffered abuse or neglect but that
10 such abuse or neglect does not constitute imminent danger to the
11 child's health or safety, and the department agrees with the
12 physician's assessment, the child may be left in the parents' home
13 while the department proceeds with reasonable efforts to remedy
14 parenting deficiencies.

15 (9) Persons or agencies exchanging information under subsection
16 (7) of this section shall not further disseminate or release the
17 information except as authorized by state or federal statute.
18 Violation of this subsection is a misdemeanor.

19 (10) Upon receiving a report of alleged abuse or neglect, the
20 department shall make reasonable efforts to learn the name, address,
21 and telephone number of each person making a report of abuse or
22 neglect under this section. The department shall provide assurances
23 of appropriate confidentiality of the identification of persons
24 reporting under this section. If the department is unable to learn
25 the information required under this subsection, the department shall
26 only investigate cases in which:

27 (a) The department believes there is a serious threat of
28 substantial harm to the child;

29 (b) The report indicates conduct involving a criminal offense
30 that has, or is about to occur, in which the child is the victim; or

31 (c) The department has a prior founded report of abuse or neglect
32 with regard to a member of the household that is within three years
33 of receipt of the referral.

34 (11)(a) Upon receiving a report of alleged abuse or neglect, the
35 department shall use one of the following discrete responses to
36 reports of child abuse or neglect that are screened in and accepted
37 for departmental response:

38 (i) Investigation; or

39 (ii) Family assessment.

1 (b) In making the response in (a) of this subsection the
2 department shall:

3 (i) Use a method by which to assign cases to investigation or
4 family assessment which are based on an array of factors that may
5 include the presence of: Imminent danger, level of risk, number of
6 previous child abuse or neglect reports, or other presenting case
7 characteristics, such as the type of alleged maltreatment and the age
8 of the alleged victim. Age of the alleged victim shall not be used as
9 the sole criterion for determining case assignment;

10 (ii) Allow for a change in response assignment based on new
11 information that alters risk or safety level;

12 (iii) Allow families assigned to family assessment to choose to
13 receive an investigation rather than a family assessment;

14 (iv) Provide a full investigation if a family refuses the initial
15 family assessment;

16 (v) Provide voluntary services to families based on the results
17 of the initial family assessment. If a family refuses voluntary
18 services, and the department cannot identify specific facts related
19 to risk or safety that warrant assignment to investigation under this
20 chapter, and there is not a history of reports of child abuse or
21 neglect related to the family, then the department must close the
22 family assessment response case. However, if at any time the
23 department identifies risk or safety factors that warrant an
24 investigation under this chapter, then the family assessment response
25 case must be reassigned to investigation;

26 (vi) Conduct an investigation, and not a family assessment, in
27 response to an allegation that, the department determines based on
28 the intake assessment:

29 (A) Poses a risk of "imminent harm" consistent with the
30 definition provided in RCW 13.34.050, which includes, but is not
31 limited to, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation as defined in this
32 chapter;

33 (B) Poses a serious threat of substantial harm to a child;

34 (C) Constitutes conduct involving a criminal offense that has, or
35 is about to occur, in which the child is the victim;

36 (D) The child is an abandoned child as defined in RCW 13.34.030;

37 (E) The child is an adjudicated dependent child as defined in RCW
38 13.34.030, or the child is in a facility that is licensed, operated,
39 or certified for care of children by the department under chapter
40 74.15 RCW, or by the department of early learning.

1 (c) The department may not be held civilly liable for the
2 decision to respond to an allegation of child abuse or neglect by
3 using the family assessment response under this section unless the
4 state or its officers, agents, or employees acted with reckless
5 disregard.

6 (12)(a) For reports of alleged abuse or neglect that are accepted
7 for investigation by the department, the investigation shall be
8 conducted within time frames established by the department in rule.
9 In no case shall the investigation extend longer than ninety days
10 from the date the report is received, unless the investigation is
11 being conducted under a written protocol pursuant to RCW 26.44.180
12 and a law enforcement agency or prosecuting attorney has determined
13 that a longer investigation period is necessary. At the completion of
14 the investigation, the department shall make a finding that the
15 report of child abuse or neglect is founded or unfounded.

16 (b) If a court in a civil or criminal proceeding, considering the
17 same facts or circumstances as are contained in the report being
18 investigated by the department, makes a judicial finding by a
19 preponderance of the evidence or higher that the subject of the
20 pending investigation has abused or neglected the child, the
21 department shall adopt the finding in its investigation.

22 (13) For reports of alleged abuse or neglect that are responded
23 to through family assessment response, the department shall:

24 (a) Provide the family with a written explanation of the
25 procedure for assessment of the child and the family and its
26 purposes;

27 (b) Collaborate with the family to identify family strengths,
28 resources, and service needs, and develop a service plan with the
29 goal of reducing risk of harm to the child and improving or restoring
30 family well-being;

31 (c) Complete the family assessment response within forty-five
32 days of receiving the report; however, upon parental agreement, the
33 family assessment response period may be extended up to ninety days;

34 (d) Offer services to the family in a manner that makes it clear
35 that acceptance of the services is voluntary;

36 (e) Implement the family assessment response in a consistent and
37 cooperative manner;

38 (f) Have the parent or guardian sign an agreement to participate
39 in services before services are initiated that informs the parents of
40 their rights under family assessment response, all of their options,

1 and the options the department has if the parents do not sign the
2 consent form.

3 (14)(a) In conducting an investigation or family assessment of
4 alleged abuse or neglect, the department or law enforcement agency:

5 (i) May interview children. If the department determines that the
6 response to the allegation will be family assessment response, the
7 preferred practice is to request a parent's, guardian's, or
8 custodian's permission to interview the child before conducting the
9 child interview unless doing so would compromise the safety of the
10 child or the integrity of the assessment. The interviews may be
11 conducted on school premises, at day-care facilities, at the child's
12 home, or at other suitable locations outside of the presence of
13 parents. If the allegation is investigated, parental notification of
14 the interview must occur at the earliest possible point in the
15 investigation that will not jeopardize the safety or protection of
16 the child or the course of the investigation. Prior to commencing the
17 interview the department or law enforcement agency shall determine
18 whether the child wishes a third party to be present for the
19 interview and, if so, shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate
20 the child's wishes. Unless the child objects, the department or law
21 enforcement agency shall make reasonable efforts to include a third
22 party in any interview so long as the presence of the third party
23 will not jeopardize the course of the investigation; and

24 (ii) Shall have access to all relevant records of the child in
25 the possession of mandated reporters and their employees.

26 (b) The Washington state school directors' association shall
27 adopt a model policy addressing protocols when an interview, as
28 authorized by this subsection, is conducted on school premises. In
29 formulating its policy, the association shall consult with the
30 department and the Washington association of sheriffs and police
31 chiefs.

32 (15) If a report of alleged abuse or neglect is founded and
33 constitutes the third founded report received by the department
34 within the last twelve months involving the same child or family, the
35 department shall promptly notify the office of the family and
36 children's ombuds of the contents of the report. The department shall
37 also notify the ombuds of the disposition of the report.

38 (16) In investigating and responding to allegations of child
39 abuse and neglect, the department may conduct background checks as
40 authorized by state and federal law.

1 (17)(a) The department shall maintain investigation records and
2 conduct timely and periodic reviews of all founded cases of abuse and
3 neglect. The department shall maintain a log of screened-out
4 nonabusive cases.

5 (b) In the family assessment response, the department shall not
6 make a finding as to whether child abuse or neglect occurred. No one
7 shall be named as a perpetrator and no investigative finding shall be
8 entered in the department's child abuse or neglect database.

9 (18) The department shall use a risk assessment process when
10 investigating alleged child abuse and neglect referrals. The
11 department shall present the risk factors at all hearings in which
12 the placement of a dependent child is an issue. Substance abuse must
13 be a risk factor.

14 (19) Upon receipt of a report of alleged abuse or neglect the law
15 enforcement agency may arrange to interview the person making the
16 report and any collateral sources to determine if any malice is
17 involved in the reporting.

18 (20) Upon receiving a report of alleged abuse or neglect
19 involving a child under the court's jurisdiction under chapter 13.34
20 RCW, the department shall promptly notify the child's guardian ad
21 litem of the report's contents. The department shall also notify the
22 guardian ad litem of the disposition of the report. For purposes of
23 this subsection, "guardian ad litem" has the meaning provided in RCW
24 13.34.030.

25 (21) The department shall make efforts as soon as practicable to
26 determine the military status of parents whose children are subject
27 to abuse or neglect allegations. If the department determines that a
28 parent or guardian is in the military, the department shall notify a
29 department of defense family advocacy program that there is an
30 allegation of abuse and neglect that is screened in and open for
31 investigation that relates to that military parent or guardian.

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