

**RCW 13.34.180 Order terminating parent and child relationship—
Petition—Filing—Allegations.** (1) A petition seeking termination of a parent and child relationship may be filed in juvenile court by any party to the dependency proceedings concerning that child. Such petition shall conform to the requirements of RCW 13.34.040, shall be served upon the parties as provided in RCW 13.34.070(8), and shall allege all of the following unless subsection (3) or (4) of this section applies:

(a) That the child has been found to be a dependent child;

(b) That the court has entered a dispositional order pursuant to RCW 13.34.130;

(c) That the child has been removed or will, at the time of the hearing, have been removed from the custody of the parent for a period of at least six months pursuant to a finding of dependency;

(d) That the services ordered under RCW 13.34.136 have been expressly and understandably offered or provided and all necessary services, reasonably available, capable of correcting the parental deficiencies within the foreseeable future have been expressly and understandably offered or provided;

(e) That there is little likelihood that conditions will be remedied so that the child can be returned to the parent in the near future. A parent's failure to substantially improve parental deficiencies within 12 months following entry of the dispositional order shall give rise to a rebuttable presumption that there is little likelihood that conditions will be remedied so that the child can be returned to the parent in the near future. The presumption shall not arise unless the petitioner makes a showing that all necessary services reasonably capable of correcting the parental deficiencies within the foreseeable future have been clearly offered or provided. In determining whether the conditions will be remedied the court may consider, but is not limited to, the following factors:

(i) Use of intoxicating or controlled substances so as to render the parent incapable of providing proper care for the child for extended periods of time or for periods of time that present a risk of imminent harm to the child, and documented unwillingness of the parent to receive and complete treatment or documented multiple failed treatment attempts;

(ii) Psychological incapacity or mental deficiency of the parent that is so severe and chronic as to render the parent incapable of providing proper care for the child for extended periods of time or for periods of time that present a risk of imminent harm to the child, and documented unwillingness of the parent to receive and complete treatment or documentation that there is no treatment that can render the parent capable of providing proper care for the child in the near future; or

(iii) Failure of the parent to have contact with the child for an extended period of time after the filing of the dependency petition if the parent was provided an opportunity to have a relationship with the child by the department or the court and received documented notice of the potential consequences of this failure, except that the actual inability of a parent to have visitation with the child including, but not limited to, mitigating circumstances such as a parent's current or prior incarceration or service in the military does not in and of itself constitute failure to have contact with the child; and

(f) That continuation of the parent and child relationship clearly diminishes the child's prospects for early integration into a

stable and permanent home. In making this determination, the court must consider the efforts taken by the department to support a guardianship and whether a guardianship is available as a permanent option for the child. If the parent is incarcerated, the court shall consider whether a parent maintains a meaningful role in his or her child's life based on factors identified in RCW 13.34.145(5)(b); whether the department made reasonable efforts as defined in this chapter; and whether particular barriers existed as described in RCW 13.34.145(5)(b) including, but not limited to, delays or barriers experienced in keeping the agency apprised of his or her location and in accessing visitation or other meaningful contact with the child.

(2) As evidence of rebuttal to any presumption established pursuant to subsection (1)(e) of this section, the court may consider the particular constraints of a parent's current or prior incarceration. Such evidence may include, but is not limited to, delays or barriers a parent may experience in keeping the agency apprised of his or her location and in accessing visitation or other meaningful contact with the child.

(3) In lieu of the allegations in subsection (1) of this section, the petition may allege that the child was found under such circumstances that the whereabouts of the child's parent are unknown and no person has acknowledged paternity or maternity and requested custody of the child within two months after the child was found.

(4) In lieu of the allegations in subsection (1)(b) through (f) of this section, the petition may allege that the parent has been convicted of:

(a) Murder in the first degree, murder in the second degree, or homicide by abuse as defined in chapter 9A.32 RCW against another child of the parent;

(b) Manslaughter in the first degree or manslaughter in the second degree, as defined in chapter 9A.32 RCW against another child of the parent;

(c) Attempting, conspiring, or soliciting another to commit one or more of the crimes listed in (a) or (b) of this subsection; or

(d) Assault in the first or second degree, as defined in chapter 9A.36 RCW, against the surviving child or another child of the parent.

(5) When a parent has been sentenced to a long-term incarceration and has maintained a meaningful role in the child's life considering the factors provided in RCW 13.34.145(5)(b), and it is in the best interest of the child, the department should consider a permanent placement that allows the parent to maintain a relationship with his or her child, such as, but not limited to, a guardianship pursuant to chapter 13.36 RCW.

(6) Notice of rights shall be served upon the parent, guardian, or legal custodian with the petition and shall be in substantially the following form:

"NOTICE

A petition for termination of parental rights has been filed against you. You have important legal rights and you must take steps to protect your interests. This petition could result in permanent loss of your parental rights.

1. You have the right to a fact-finding hearing before a judge.

2. You have the right to have a lawyer represent you at the hearing. A lawyer can look at the files in your case, talk to the department of children, youth, and families or

other agencies, tell you about the law, help you understand your rights, and help you at hearings. If you cannot afford a lawyer, the court will appoint one to represent you. To get a court-appointed lawyer you must contact: (explain local procedure) .

3. At the hearing, you have the right to speak on your own behalf, to introduce evidence, to examine witnesses, and to receive a decision based solely on the evidence presented to the judge.

You should be present at this hearing.

You may call (insert agency) for more information about your child. The agency's name and telephone number are (insert name and telephone number) ." [2022 c 127 s 2; 2018 c 284 s 20; (2018 c 284 s 19 expired July 1, 2018); 2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 308; 2013 c 173 s 4. Prior: 2009 c 520 s 34; 2009 c 477 s 5; 2001 c 332 s 4; 2000 c 122 s 25; 1998 c 314 s 4; 1997 c 280 s 2; prior: 1993 c 412 s 2; 1993 c 358 s 3; 1990 c 246 s 7; 1988 c 201 s 2; 1987 c 524 s 6; 1979 c 155 s 47; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 46.]

Effective date—2018 c 284 ss 3, 8, 13, 20, 33, 36, and 67: See note following RCW 13.34.030.

Expiration date—2018 c 284 ss 2, 7, 12, 19, 32, 35, and 66: See note following RCW 13.34.030.

Effective date—2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 ss 102, 104-115, 201-227, 301-337, 401-419, 501-513, 801-803, and 805-822: See note following RCW 43.216.025.

Conflict with federal requirements—2017 3rd sp.s. c 6: See RCW 43.216.908.

Findings—Intent—2009 c 477: See note following RCW 13.34.062.

Severability—1990 c 246: See note following RCW 13.34.060.

Effective date—Severability—1979 c 155: See notes following RCW 13.04.011.

Effective dates—Severability—1977 ex.s. c 291: See notes following RCW 13.04.005.