

**RCW 13.34.260 Foster home placement—Parental preferences—Foster parent contact with birth parents encouraged.** (1) In an attempt to minimize the inherent intrusion in the lives of families involved in the foster care system and to maintain parental authority where appropriate, the department, absent good cause, shall follow the wishes of the natural parent regarding the placement of the child with a relative or other suitable person pursuant to RCW 13.34.130. Preferences such as family constellation, sibling relationships, ethnicity, and religion shall be considered when matching children to foster homes. Parental authority is appropriate in areas that are not connected with the abuse or neglect that resulted in the dependency and shall be integrated through the foster care team.

(2) When a child is placed in out-of-home care, relatives, other suitable persons, and foster parents are encouraged to:

(a) Provide consultation to the foster care team based upon their experience with the child placed in their care;

(b) Assist the birth parents by helping them understand their child's needs and correlating appropriate parenting responses;

(c) Participate in educational activities, and enter into community-building activities with birth families and other foster families;

(d) Transport children to family time visits with birth families and assist children and their families in maximizing the purposefulness of family time.

(3) For purposes of this section:

(a) "Foster care team" means the relative, other suitable person, or foster parent currently providing care, the currently assigned department employee, and the parent or parents; and

(b) "Birth family" means the persons described in RCW 74.15.020(2)(a). [2011 c 89 s 5; 2009 c 491 s 5; 2003 c 226 s 2; 2002 c 52 s 7; 2000 c 122 s 32; 1990 c 284 s 25.]

**Effective date—2011 c 89:** See note following RCW 18.320.005.

**Findings—2011 c 89:** See RCW 18.320.005.

**Findings—Intent—2003 c 226:** "The legislature finds that a large group of children spend a significant part of their lives in foster care. Each individual connected to a child in an out-of-home placement must have an abiding appreciation of the seriousness of the child's separation from his or her family and the past, whether that separation is short, long, or permanent in nature. It is the intent of the legislature to recognize and honor the history and the family connections that each child brings to an out-of-home placement.

The legislature finds that creating and sanctioning a connection between a child's birth parents and foster family, when appropriate, can result in better relationships among birth families, children, foster families, and social workers. Creating and sanctioning this connection can result in greater foster placement stability and fewer disruptions for children, as well as greater satisfaction for foster parents and social workers." [2003 c 226 s 1.]

**Intent—2002 c 52:** See note following RCW 13.34.025.

**Finding—Effective date—1990 c 284:** See notes following RCW 74.13.250.