

RCW 26.33.295 Open adoption agreements—Agreed orders—

Enforcement. (1) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit the parties to a proceeding under this chapter from entering into agreements regarding communication with or contact between child adoptees, adoptive parents, siblings of child adoptees, and a birth parent or parents.

(2) Agreements regarding communication with or contact between child adoptees, adoptive parents, siblings of child adoptees, and a birth parent or parents shall not be legally enforceable unless the terms of the agreement are set forth in a written court order entered in accordance with the provisions of this section. The court shall not enter a proposed order unless the terms of such order have been approved in writing by the prospective adoptive parents, any birth parent whose parental rights have not previously been terminated, and, if the child or siblings of the child are in the custody of the department or a licensed child-placing agency, a representative of the department or child-placing agency. If the child is represented by an attorney or guardian ad litem in a proceeding under this chapter or in any other child-custody proceeding, the terms of the proposed order also must be approved in writing by the child's representative. An agreement under this section need not disclose the identity of the parties to be legally enforceable. The court shall not enter a proposed order unless the court finds that the communication or contact with the child adoptee, as agreed upon and as set forth in the proposed order, would be in the child adoptee's best interests.

(3) Failure to comply with the terms of an agreed order regarding communication or contact that has been entered by the court pursuant to this section shall not be grounds for setting aside an adoption decree or revocation of a written consent to an adoption after that consent has been approved by the court as provided in this chapter.

(4) An agreed order entered pursuant to this section may be enforced by a civil action and the prevailing party in that action may be awarded, as part of the costs of the action, a reasonable amount to be fixed by the court as attorneys' fees. The court shall not modify an agreed order under this section unless it finds that the modification is necessary to serve the best interests of the child adoptee, and that: (a) The modification is agreed to by the adoptive parent and the birth parent or parents; or (b) exceptional circumstances have arisen since the agreed order was entered that justify modification of the order.

(5) This section does not require the department or other supervising agency to agree to any specific provisions in an open adoption agreement and does not create a new obligation for the department to provide supervision or transportation for visits between siblings separated by adoption from foster care. [2009 c 234 s 3; 1990 c 285 s 4.]

Findings—Purpose—Severability—1990 c 285: See notes following RCW 74.04.005.