Chapter 13.34 RCW
JUVENILE COURT ACT—DEPENDENCY AND TERMINATION OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

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Information about rights: RCW 26.44.100 through 26.44.120.

Juvenile may be both dependent and an offender: RCW 13.04.300.

Out-of-home care—Social study required: RCW 74.13.065.

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Therapeutic family home program for youth in custody under chapter 13.34 RCW: RCW 74.13.170.

Transitional living programs for youth in the process of being emancipated: RCW 74.13.037.

RCW 13.34.010 Short title. This chapter shall be known as the "Juvenile Court Act in Cases Relating to Dependency of a Child and the Termination of a Parent and Child Relationship". [1977 ex.s. c 291 s 29.]

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

RCW 13.34.020 Legislative declaration of family unit as resource to be nurtured—Rights of child. The legislature declares that the family unit is a fundamental resource of American life which should be nurtured. Toward the continuance of this principle, the legislature declares that the family unit should remain intact unless a child's right to conditions of basic nurture, health, or safety is jeopardized. When the rights of basic nurture, physical and mental health, and safety of the child and the legal rights of the parents are in conflict, the rights and safety of the child should prevail. In making reasonable efforts under this chapter, the child's health and safety shall be the paramount concern. The right of a child to basic nurturing includes the right to a safe, stable, and permanent home and a speedy resolution of any proceeding under this chapter. [1998 c 314 s 1; 1990 c 284 s 31; 1987 c 524 s 2; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 30.]

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

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

RCW 13.34.025 Child dependency cases—Coordination of services—Remedial services. (1) The department and agencies shall develop methods for coordination of services to parents and children in child dependency cases. To the maximum extent possible under current funding levels, the department and agencies must:

(a) Coordinate and integrate services to children and families, using service plans and activities that address the children's and families' multiple needs, including ensuring that siblings have regular visits with each other, as appropriate. Assessment criteria should screen for multiple needs;

(b) Develop treatment plans for the individual needs of the client in a manner that minimizes the number of contacts the client is required to make; and

(c) Access training for department and agency staff to increase skills across disciplines to assess needs for mental health, substance abuse, developmental disabilities, and other areas.

(2) The department shall coordinate within the administrations of the department, and with contracted service providers, to ensure that parents in dependency proceedings under this chapter receive priority access to remedial services recommended by the department in its social study or ordered by the court for the purpose of correcting any parental deficiencies identified in the dependency proceeding that are capable of being corrected in the foreseeable future. Services may also be provided to caregivers other than the parents as identified in RCW 13.34.138.

(a) For purposes of this chapter, remedial services are those services defined in the federal adoption and safe families act as family reunification services that facilitate the reunification of the child safely and appropriately within a timely fashion. Remedial services include individual, group, and family counseling; substance abuse treatment services; mental health services; assistance to address domestic violence; services designed to provide temporary child care and therapeutic services for families; and transportation to or from any of the above services and activities.

(b) The department shall provide funds for remedial services if the parent is unable to pay to the extent funding is appropriated in the operating budget or otherwise available to the department for such specific services. As a condition for receiving funded remedial services, the court may inquire into the parent's ability to pay for all or part of such services or may require that the parent make appropriate applications for funding to alternative funding sources for such services.

(c) If court-ordered remedial services are unavailable for any reason, including lack of funding, lack of services, or language barriers, the department shall promptly notify the court that the parent is unable to engage in the treatment due to the inability to access such services.

(d) This section does not create an entitlement to services and does not create judicial authority to order the provision of services except for the specific purpose of making reasonable efforts to remedy parental deficiencies identified in a dependency proceeding under this

chapter. [2019 c 172 s 1; 2018 c 284 s 1; 2009 c 520 s 20; 2007 c 410 s 2; 2002 c 52 s 2; 2001 c 256 s 2.]

Short title—2007 c 410: See note following RCW 13.34.138.

Intent—2002 c 52: "It is the intent of the legislature to recognize that those sibling relationships a child has are an integral aspect of the family unit, which should be nurtured. The legislature presumes that nurturing the existing sibling relationships is in the best interest of a child, in particular in those situations where a child cannot be with their parents, guardians, or legal custodians as a result of court intervention." [2002 c 52 s 1.]

Finding—2001 c 256: "The department of social and health services serves parents and children with multiple needs, which cannot be resolved in isolation. Further, the complexity of service delivery systems is a barrier for families in crisis when a child is removed or a parent is removed from the home. The department must undertake efforts to streamline the delivery of services." [2001 c 256 s 1.]

RCW 13.34.030 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Abandoned" means when the child's parent, guardian, or other custodian has expressed, either by statement or conduct, an intent to forego, for an extended period, parental rights or responsibilities despite an ability to exercise such rights and responsibilities. If the court finds that the petitioner has exercised due diligence in attempting to locate the parent, no contact between the child and the child's parent, guardian, or other custodian for a period of three months creates a rebuttable presumption of abandonment, even if there is no expressed intent to abandon.

(2) "Child," "juvenile," and "youth" mean:

(a) Any individual under the age of eighteen years; or

(b) Any individual age 18 to 21 years who is eligible to receive and who elects to receive the extended foster care services authorized under RCW 74.13.031. A youth who remains dependent and who receives extended foster care services under RCW 74.13.031 shall not be considered a "child" under any other statute or for any other purpose.

(3) "Current placement episode" means the period of time that begins with the most recent date that the child was removed from the home of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian for purposes of placement in out-of-home care and continues until: (a) The child returns home; (b) an adoption decree, a permanent custody order, or guardianship order is entered; or (c) the dependency is dismissed, whichever occurs first.

(4) "Department" means the department of children, youth, and families.

(5) "Dependency guardian" means the person, nonprofit corporation, or Indian tribe appointed by the court pursuant to this chapter for the limited purpose of assisting the court in the supervision of the dependency.

(6) "Dependent child" means any child who:

(a) Has been abandoned;

(b) Is abused or neglected as defined in RCW 26.44.020 by a person legally responsible for the care of the child;

(c) Has no parent, guardian, or custodian capable of adequately caring for the child, such that the child is in circumstances which constitute a danger of substantial damage to the child's psychological or physical development;

(d) Is receiving extended foster care services, as authorized by RCW 74.13.031; or

(e) Is a victim of sex trafficking or severe forms of trafficking in persons under the trafficking victims protection act of 2000, 22 U.S.C. Sec. 7101 et seq., when the parent is involved in the trafficking, facilitating the trafficking, or should have known that the child is being trafficked.

(7) "Developmental disability" means a disability attributable to intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, or another neurological or other condition of an individual found by the secretary of the department of social and health services to be closely related to an intellectual disability or to require treatment similar to that required for individuals with intellectual disabilities, which disability originates before the individual attains age eighteen, which has continued or can be expected to continue indefinitely, and which constitutes a substantial limitation to the individual.

(8) "Educational liaison" means a person who has been appointed by the court to fulfill responsibilities outlined in RCW 13.34.046.

(9) "Experiencing homelessness" means lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including circumstances such as sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, fleeing domestic violence, or a similar reason as described in the federal McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act (Title 42 U.S.C., chapter 119, subchapter I) as it existed on January 1, 2021.

(10) "Extended foster care services" means residential and other support services the department is authorized to provide under RCW 74.13.031. These services may include placement in licensed, relative, or otherwise approved care, or supervised independent living settings; assistance in meeting basic needs; independent living services; supervised independent living subsidy; medical assistance; and counseling or treatment.

(11) "Guardian" means the person or agency that: (a) Has been appointed as the guardian of a child in a legal proceeding, including a guardian appointed pursuant to chapter 13.36 RCW; and (b) has the legal right to custody of the child pursuant to such appointment. The term "guardian" does not include a "dependency guardian" appointed pursuant to a proceeding under this chapter.

(12) "Guardian ad litem" means a person, appointed by the court to represent the best interests of a child in a proceeding under this chapter, or in any matter which may be consolidated with a proceeding under this chapter. A "court-appointed special advocate" appointed by the court to be the guardian ad litem for the child, or to perform substantially the same duties and functions as a guardian ad litem, shall be deemed to be guardian ad litem for all purposes and uses of this chapter.

(13) "Guardian ad litem program" means a court-authorized volunteer program, which is or may be established by the superior court of the county in which such proceeding is filed, to manage all aspects of volunteer guardian ad litem representation for children alleged or found to be dependent. Such management shall include but is

not limited to: Recruitment, screening, training, supervision, assignment, and discharge of volunteers.

(14) "Guardianship" means a guardianship pursuant to chapter 13.36 RCW or a limited guardianship of a minor pursuant to RCW 11.130.215 or equivalent laws of another state or a federally recognized Indian tribe.

(15) "High-potency synthetic opioid" means an unprescribed synthetic opioid classified as a Schedule II controlled substance or controlled substance analog in chapter 69.50 RCW or by the pharmacy quality assurance commission in rule including, but not limited to, fentanyl.

(16) "Housing assistance" means appropriate referrals by the department or other agencies to federal, state, local, or private agencies or organizations, assistance with forms, applications, or financial subsidies or other monetary assistance for housing. For purposes of this chapter, "housing assistance" is not a remedial service or family reunification service as described in RCW 13.34.025(2).

(17) "Indigent" means a person who, at any stage of a court proceeding, is:

(a) Receiving one of the following types of public assistance: Temporary assistance for needy families, aged, blind, or disabled assistance benefits, medical care services under RCW 74.09.035, pregnant women assistance benefits, poverty-related veterans' benefits, food stamps or food stamp benefits transferred electronically, refugee resettlement benefits, medicaid, or supplemental security income; or

(b) Involuntarily committed to a public mental health facility; or

(c) Receiving an annual income, after taxes, of 125 percent or less of the federally established poverty level; or

(d) Unable to pay the anticipated cost of counsel for the matter before the court because his or her available funds are insufficient to pay any amount for the retention of counsel.

(18) "Nonminor dependent" means any individual age 18 to 21 years who is participating in extended foster care services authorized under RCW 74.13.031.

(19) "Out-of-home care" means placement in a foster family home or group care facility licensed pursuant to chapter 74.15 RCW or placement in a home, other than that of the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian, not required to be licensed pursuant to chapter 74.15 RCW.

(20) "Parent" means the biological or adoptive parents of a child, or an individual who has established a parent-child relationship under RCW 26.26A.100, unless the legal rights of that person have been terminated by a judicial proceeding pursuant to this chapter, chapter 26.33 RCW, or the equivalent laws of another state or a federally recognized Indian tribe.

(21) "Prevention and family services and programs" means specific mental health prevention and treatment services, substance abuse prevention and treatment services, and in-home parent skill-based programs that qualify for federal funding under the federal family first prevention services act, P.L. 115-123. For purposes of this chapter, prevention and family services and programs are not remedial services or family reunification services as described in RCW 13.34.025(2).

(22) "Prevention services" means preservation services, as defined in chapter 74.14C RCW, and other reasonably available services, including housing assistance, capable of preventing the need for out-of-home placement while protecting the child. Prevention services include, but are not limited to, prevention and family services and programs as defined in this section.

(23) "Qualified residential treatment program" means a program that meets the requirements provided in RCW 13.34.420, qualifies for funding under the family first prevention services act under 42 U.S.C. Sec. 672(k), and, if located within Washington state, is licensed as a group care facility under chapter 74.15 RCW.

(24) "Relative" includes persons related to a child in the following ways:

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

(b) Stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, and stepsister;

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

(d) Spouses of any persons named in (a), (b), or (c) of this subsection, even after the marriage is terminated;

(e) Relatives, as named in (a), (b), (c), or (d) of this subsection, of any half sibling of the child; or

(f) Extended family members, as defined by the law or custom of the Indian child's tribe or, in the absence of such law or custom, a person who has reached the age of 18 and who is the Indian child's grandparent, aunt or uncle, brother or sister, brother-in-law or sister-in-law, niece or nephew, first or second cousin, or stepparent who provides care in the family abode on a 24 hour basis to an Indian child as defined in 25 U.S.C. Sec. 1903(4).

(25) "Shelter care" means temporary physical care in a facility licensed pursuant to RCW 74.15.030 or in a home not required to be licensed pursuant to RCW 74.15.030.

(26) "Sibling" means a child's birth brother, birth sister, adoptive brother, adoptive sister, half-brother, or half-sister, or as defined by the law or custom of the Indian child's tribe for an Indian child as defined in RCW 13.38.040.

(27) "Social study" means a written evaluation of matters relevant to the disposition of the case that contains the information required by RCW 13.34.430.

(28) "Supervised independent living setting" includes, but is not limited to, apartment living, room and board arrangements, college or university dormitories, and shared roommate settings. Supervised independent living settings must be approved by the department or the court.

(29) "Supervised independent living subsidy" has the same meaning as in RCW 74.13.020.

(30) "Voluntary placement agreement" has, for the purposes of extended foster care services, the same meaning as in RCW 74.13.336. [2024 c 328 s 101; 2024 c 298 s 4; 2024 c 192 s 2. Prior: 2021 c 304 s 1; 2021 c 67 s 2; 2020 c 312 s 114; prior: 2019 c 172 s 2; 2019 c 46 s 5016; prior: 2018 c 284 s 3; (2018 c 284 s 2 expired July 1, 2018); 2018 c 58 s 54; 2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 302; 2017 c 276 s 2; prior: 2013 c 332 s 2; 2013 c 182 s 2; prior: 2011 1st sp.s. c 36 s 13; prior:

2011 c 330 s 3; 2011 c 309 s 22; prior: 2010 1st sp.s. c 8 s 13; 2010 c 272 s 10; 2010 c 94 s 6; prior: 2009 c 520 s 21; 2009 c 397 s 1; 2003 c 227 s 2; 2002 c 52 s 3; 2000 c 122 s 1; 1999 c 267 s 6; 1998 c 130 s 1; 1997 c 386 s 7; 1995 c 311 s 23; 1994 c 288 s 1; 1993 c 241 s 1; 1988 c 176 s 901; 1987 c 524 s 3; 1983 c 311 s 2; 1982 c 129 s 4; 1979 c 155 s 37; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 31.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2024 c 192 s 2, 2024 c 298 s 4, and by 2024 c 328 s 101, without reference to one another. All amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

Findings—Intent—2024 c 328: See note following RCW 13.34.050.

Effective date—2024 c 298: See note following RCW 9A.40.100.

Findings—Intent—2024 c 192: "The legislature recognizes that the extended foster care program strives to help hundreds of young Washingtonians in foster care prepare for adulthood and to prevent them from experiencing homelessness.

The legislature finds that extended foster care can reduce homelessness, receipt of public assistance, use of medical emergency departments, diagnosis of substance abuse and treatment, criminal convictions, and involvement of children in the child welfare system. An analysis from the department of social and health services found that, at age 18, 41 percent of youth exiting the foster care system experienced homelessness or housing instability compared to 23 percent of youth in extended foster care.

The legislature finds that the Washington state institute for public policy's benefit-cost analysis found that the extended foster care program produces $3.95 of lifetime benefits for each $1 invested. Furthermore, of the total benefits, 40 percent represents savings and revenue that would accrue to state, local, and federal governments.

However, the legislature recognizes that young people in foster care still experience barriers to accessing the program: In 2022, 27 percent of young people leaving foster care did not participate in extended foster care. The legislature intends to improve outcomes for youth in the foster care system by improving access to the foster care program.

Therefore, the legislature resolves to reduce barriers that young people currently experience when seeking to participate in extended foster care and to make the transition from foster care to extended foster care as seamless as possible, such that all dependent youth are aware of the program when they turn 18 and all youth who want to participate are able to participate." [2024 c 192 s 1.]

Effective date—2020 c 312: See note following RCW 11.130.915.

Effective date—2018 c 284 ss 3, 8, 13, 20, 33, 36, and 67: "Sections 3, 8, 13, 20, 33, 36, and 66 [67] of this act take effect July 1, 2018." [2018 c 284 s 70.]

Expiration date—2018 c 284 ss 2, 7, 12, 19, 32, 35, and 66: "Sections 2, 7, 12, 19, 32, 35, and 65 [66] of this act expire July 1, 2018." [2018 c 284 s 71.]

Effective date—2018 c 58: See note following RCW 28A.655.080.

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—Recommendations—Application—2013 c 332: See notes following RCW 13.34.267.

Findings—2013 c 182: "The legislature believes that youth residing in foster care are capable of achieving success in school with appropriate support. Youth residing in foster care in Washington state lag behind their nonfoster youth peers in educational outcomes. Reasonable efforts by the department of social and health services to monitor educational outcomes and encourage academic achievement for youth in out-of-home care should be a responsibility of the child welfare system. When a youth is removed from his or her school district, it is the expectation of the legislature that the department of social and health services recognizes [recognize] the impact this move may have on a youth's academic success and provide the youth with necessary supports to be successful in school. The legislature believes that active oversight and advocacy by an educational liaison and collaborations will encourage youth to reach their fullest academic potential." [2013 c 182 s 1.]

Findings—Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 36: See RCW 74.62.005.

Effective date—2011 1st sp.s. c 36: See note following RCW 74.62.005.

Intent—2011 c 330: See note following RCW 13.04.011.

Findings—Intent—Short title—Effective date—2010 1st sp.s. c 8: See notes following RCW 74.04.225.

Purpose—2010 c 94: See note following RCW 44.04.280.

Intent—2003 c 227: See note following RCW 13.34.130.

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

Findings—Intent—Severability—1999 c 267: See notes following RCW 43.20A.790.

Conflict with federal requirements—1993 c 241: "If any part of this act is found to be in conflict with federal requirements that are a prescribed condition to the allocation of federal funds to the state, the conflicting part of this act is inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict and with respect to the agencies directly affected, and this finding does not affect the operation of the remainder of this act in its application to the agencies concerned. The rules under this act shall meet federal requirements that are a

necessary condition to the receipt of federal funds by the state." [1993 c 241 s 5.]

Legislative finding—1983 c 311: "The legislature finds that in order for the state to receive federal funds for family foster care under Title IV-B and Title IV-E of the social security act, all children in family foster care must be subjected to periodic court review. Unfortunately, this includes children who are developmentally disabled and who are placed in family foster care solely because their parents have determined that the children's service needs require out-of-home placement. Except for providing such needed services, the parents of these children are completely competent to care for the children. The legislature intends by this act to minimize the embarrassment and inconvenience of developmentally disabled persons and their families caused by complying with these federal requirements." [1983 c 311 s 1.]

Severability—1982 c 129: See note following RCW 9A.04.080.

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.

RCW 13.34.035 Standard court forms—Rules—Administrative office of the courts to develop and establish—Failure to use or follow—Distribution. (1) The administrative office of the courts shall develop standard court forms and format rules for mandatory use by parties in dependency matters commenced under this chapter or chapter 26.44 RCW. Forms shall be developed not later than November 1, 2009, and the mandatory use requirement shall be effective January 1, 2010. The administrative office of the courts has continuing responsibility to develop and revise mandatory forms and format rules as appropriate.

(2) According to rules established by the administrative office of the courts, a party may delete unnecessary portions of the forms and may supplement the mandatory forms with additional material.

(3) Failure by a party to use the mandatory forms or follow the format rules shall not be a reason to dismiss a case, refuse a filing, or strike a pleading. The court may, however, require the party to submit a corrected pleading and may impose terms payable to the opposing party or payable to the court, or both.

(4) The administrative office of the courts shall distribute a master copy of the mandatory forms to all county court clerks. Upon request, the administrative office of the courts and county clerks must distribute the forms to the public and may charge for the cost of production and distribution of the forms. Private vendors also may distribute the forms. Distribution of forms may be in printed or electronic form. [2009 c 491 s 6.]

RCW 13.34.040 Petition to court to deal with dependent child—Application of federal Indian child welfare act. (1) Any person may file with the clerk of the superior court a petition showing that there is within the county, or residing within the county, a dependent

child and requesting that the superior court deal with such child as provided in this chapter. There shall be no fee for filing such petitions.

(2) Except where the department is the petitioner, in counties having paid probation officers, these officers shall, to the extent possible, first determine if a petition is reasonably justifiable.

(3) Every petition filed in proceedings under this chapter shall contain a statement alleging whether there is a reason to know that the child is or may be an Indian child as defined in RCW 13.38.040. If there is a reason to know that the child is or may be an Indian child chapter 13.38 RCW shall apply.

(4) Every order or decree entered under this chapter shall contain a finding that the federal Indian child welfare act or chapter 13.38 RCW does or does not apply. Where there is a finding that the federal Indian child welfare act or chapter 13.38 RCW does apply, the decree or order must also contain a finding that all notice requirements and evidentiary requirements under the federal Indian child welfare act and chapter 13.38 RCW have been satisfied.

(5) Each petition shall be verified and contain a statement constituting a dependency, including the names, residence, and contact information, if known to the petitioner, of each parent, guardian, or custodian of the alleged dependent child. If the petitioner is seeking removal of the child from a parent, guardian, or custodian the petition shall contain a clear and specific statement as to the harm that will occur if the child remains in the care of the parent, guardian, or custodian, and the facts that support that conclusion. [2021 c 211 s 3; 2018 c 17 s 1; 2011 c 309 s 23; 2004 c 64 s 3; 2000 c 122 s 2; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 32; 1913 c 160 s 5; RRS s 1987-5. Formerly RCW 13.04.060.]

Effective date—2021 c 211: "Sections 1 through 10 of this act take effect July 1, 2023." [2021 c 211 s 12.]

Short title—2021 c 211: "This act may be known and cited as the keeping families together act." [2021 c 211 s 1.]

Finding—Intent—2021 c 211: "(1) The legislature recognizes that children and families are better served when the state provides support to allow children to be cared for by their loved ones and in their communities. The legislature finds that decades of research show that black and indigenous children are still disproportionately removed from their families and communities despite reform efforts.

(2) For these reasons, it is the intent of the legislature to safely reduce the number of children in foster care and reduce racial bias in the system by applying a standard criteria for determining whether to remove a child from a parent when necessary to prevent imminent physical harm to the child due to child abuse or neglect, including that which results from sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or a pattern of severe neglect." [2021 c 211 s 2.]

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

RCW 13.34.045 Educational liaison—Identification. (1) The department must identify an educational liaison for youth in grades

six through twelve who are subject to a proceeding under this chapter and who meet one of the following requirements:

(a) All parental rights have been terminated;

(b) Parents are unavailable because of incarceration or other limitations;

(c) The court has restricted contact between the youth and parents; or

(d) The youth is placed in a behavioral rehabilitative setting and the court has limited the educational rights of parents.

(2) If a child is placed in the custody of the department at the shelter care hearing, the department shall recommend the identified educational liaison at the shelter care hearing and all subsequent review hearings for the given case. The purpose of identifying the educational liaison at each hearing during the dependency case is to determine if the identified educational liaison remains appropriate for the case as youth change placements.

(3) It is presumed that the educational liaison is the youth's parent. If a youth's parent is not able to serve as the educational liaison, the department must identify another person to act as the educational liaison. It is preferred that the educational liaison be known to the youth and be a relative, other suitable person as described in RCW 13.34.130(1)(b), or the youth's foster parent. Birth parents with a primary plan of family reunification may serve as the educational liaison. The identified educational liaison should be a person committed to providing enduring educational support to the youth. If the department is not able to identify an adult with an existing relationship to the youth who is able to serve as the educational liaison, the court may appoint another adult as the educational liaison, such as the court-appointed special advocate if applicable, but may not appoint the youth's caseworker. In the event that any party disagrees with the department's recommendation, the court shall determine who will serve as the educational liaison based on who is most appropriate and available to act in the youth's educational interest. [2013 c 182 s 3.]

Findings—2013 c 182: See note following RCW 13.34.030.

RCW 13.34.046 Educational liaison—Responsibilities—Background checks. (1) Unless otherwise directed by the court, the responsibilities of the educational liaison for a youth subject to a proceeding under this chapter include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) To attend educational meetings and dependency hearings;

(b) To meet with local school personnel at regular intervals regarding the youth's educational performance and academic needs;

(c) To seek to understand the youth's academic strengths, areas of concern, and future life goals;

(d) To advocate for necessary educational services;

(e) To join in decision-making processes regarding appropriate school placements, school coursework, personal future, and educational planning;

(f) To explore opportunities and barriers for youth to participate in extracurricular activities;

(g) To involve youth in educational decisions as developmentally appropriate;

(h) To keep all information regarding the youth confidential except as required pursuant to lawful order of a court; and

(i) To provide a written or verbal report to the court during each dependency hearing. The report must include information about the youth's educational progress, experience in school, and the educational liaison's and youth's recommendations regarding needed services in school or the community.

(2) The educational liaison may serve as the surrogate parent or educational representative under federal law.

(3) The educational liaison may have access to all educational records pertaining to the youth involved in the case, without the consent of a parent or guardian of the child, or if the child is under thirteen years of age.

(4) The educational liaison is a volunteer and not compensated for services.

(5) The educational liaison must complete background checks as required by the department. [2013 c 182 s 5.]

Findings—2013 c 182: See note following RCW 13.34.030.

RCW 13.34.050 Court order to take child into custody, when—Hearing. (1) The court may enter an order directing a law enforcement officer, probation counselor, or child protective services official to take a child into custody if: (a) A petition is filed with the juvenile court with sufficient corroborating evidence to establish that the child is dependent; (b) an affidavit or declaration is filed by the department in support of the petition setting forth specific factual information evidencing insufficient time to serve a parent with a dependency petition and hold a hearing prior to removal; and (c) the allegations contained in the petition, if true, establish that there are reasonable grounds to believe that removal is necessary to prevent imminent physical harm to the child due to child abuse or neglect, including that which results from sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, a pattern of severe neglect, or a high-potency synthetic opioid. The court shall give great weight to the lethality of high-potency synthetic opioids and public health guidance from the department of health related to high-potency synthetic opioids in determining whether removal is necessary to prevent imminent physical harm to the child due to child abuse or neglect.

(2) Any petition that does not have the necessary affidavit or declaration demonstrating a risk of imminent harm requires that the parents are provided notice and an opportunity to be heard before the order may be entered.

(3) The petition and supporting documentation must be served on the parent, and if the child is in custody at the time the child is removed, on the entity with custody other than the parent. If the court orders that a child be taken into custody under subsection (1) of this section, the petition and supporting documentation must be served on the parent at the time of the child's removal unless, after diligent efforts, the parents cannot be located at the time of removal. If the parent is not served at the time of removal, the department shall make diligent efforts to personally serve the parent. Failure to effect service does not invalidate the petition if service was attempted and the parent could not be found. [2024 c 328 s 102;

2021 c 211 s 6; 2005 c 512 s 9; 2000 c 122 s 3; 1998 c 328 s 1; 1979 c 155 s 38; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 33.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 328: "(1) The legislature finds that since 2018 there has been a significant increase in the number of child fatalities and near fatalities involving fentanyl.

(2) The legislature finds that fentanyl and other highly potent synthetic opioids pose a unique and growing threat to the safety of children in Washington state. Fentanyl is a high-potency synthetic opioid and, according to the centers for disease control and prevention, is 50 times more potent than heroin and 100 times more potent than morphine. Even in very small quantities high-potency synthetic opioids may be lethal to a child.

(3) The legislature intends to provide clarity to judges, social workers, advocates, and families about the safety threat that high-potency synthetic opioids pose to vulnerable children. The legislature declares that the lethality of high-potency synthetic opioids and public health guidance from the department of health related to high-potency synthetic opioids should be given great weight in determining whether a child is at risk of imminent physical harm due to child abuse or neglect.

(4) The legislature recognizes the challenges for recovery and rehabilitation regarding opioid use and resolves to increase services and supports. The legislature further resolves to increase training and resources for state and judicial employees to accomplish their mission and goals in a safe and effective manner.

(5) The legislature recognizes that supporting families in crisis with interventions and services, including preventative services, voluntary services, and family assessment response, minimizes child trauma from further child welfare involvement and strengthens families." [2024 c 328 s 1.]

Effective date—Short title—Finding—Intent—2021 c 211: See notes following RCW 13.34.040.

Finding—Intent—Effective date—Short title—2005 c 512: See notes following RCW 26.44.100.

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.

RCW 13.34.055 Custody by law enforcement officer—Release from liability. (1) A law enforcement officer shall take into custody a child taken in violation of RCW 9A.40.060 or 9A.40.070. The law enforcement officer shall make every reasonable effort to avoid placing additional trauma on the child by obtaining such custody at times and in a manner least disruptive to the child. The law enforcement officer shall return the child to the person or agency having the right to physical custody unless the officer has reasonable grounds to believe the child should be taken into custody under RCW 13.34.050 or 26.44.050. If there is no person or agency having the right to physical custody available to take custody of the child, the

officer may place the child in shelter care as provided in RCW 13.34.060.

(2) A law enforcement officer or public employee acting reasonably and in good faith shall not be held liable in any civil action for returning the child to a person having the apparent right to physical custody. [1984 c 95 s 4.]

Severability—1984 c 95: See note following RCW 9A.40.060.

RCW 13.34.060 Shelter care—Placement—Custody—Duties of parties. (1) A child taken into custody pursuant to RCW 13.34.050 or 26.44.050 shall be immediately placed in shelter care. A child taken by a relative of the child in violation of RCW 9A.40.060 or 9A.40.070 shall be placed in shelter care only when permitted under RCW 13.34.055. No child may be held longer than seventy-two hours, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, after such child is taken into custody unless a court order has been entered for continued shelter care. In no case may a child who is taken into custody pursuant to RCW 13.34.055, 13.34.050, or 26.44.050 be detained in a secure detention facility.

(2) Unless there is reasonable cause based on specific evidence to believe that the health, safety, or welfare of the child would be jeopardized or that the efforts to reunite the parent and child will be hindered, priority placement for a child in shelter care, pending a court hearing, shall be with any person described in RCW 74.15.020(2)(a) or 13.34.130(1)(b). The person must be willing and available to care for the child and be able to meet any special needs of the child and the court must complete the inquiry required under RCW 13.34.065 to establish whether continued placement with the relative is appropriate. The person must be willing to facilitate the child's visitation with siblings, if such visitation is part of the department's plan or is ordered by the court. If a child is not initially placed with a relative or other suitable person requested by the parent pursuant to this section, the department shall make continuing efforts to place the child with a relative or other suitable person requested by the parent on the next business day after the child is taken into custody. The department shall document its effort to place the child with a relative or other suitable person requested by the parent pursuant to this section. Nothing within this subsection (2) establishes an entitlement to services or a right to a particular placement.

(3) Whenever a child is taken into custody pursuant to this section, the department may authorize evaluations of the child's physical or emotional condition, routine medical and dental examination and care, and all necessary emergency care, after informing the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian, unless the parent, guardian, or legal custodian cannot be reached. The child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian must be provided the opportunity to attend any appointments authorized under this subsection, unless prohibited by court order. [2021 c 211 s 8; 2007 c 413 s 3; 2002 c 52 s 4; 2000 c 122 s 4; 1999 c 17 s 2; 1998 c 328 s 2; 1990 c 246 s 1; 1987 c 524 s 4. Prior: 1984 c 188 s 3; 1984 c 95 s 5; 1983 c 246 s 1; 1982 c 129 s 5; 1979 c 155 s 39; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 34.]

Effective date—Short title—Finding—Intent—2021 c 211: See notes following RCW 13.34.040.

Severability—2007 c 413: See note following RCW 13.34.215.

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

Finding—1999 c 17: "The legislature has found that any intervention into the life of a child is also an intervention in the life of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian, and that the bond between child and parent is a critical element of child development. The legislature now also finds that children who cannot be with their parents, guardians, or legal custodians are best cared for, whenever possible and appropriate by family members with whom they have a relationship. This is particularly important when a child cannot be in the care of a parent, guardian, or legal custodian as a result of a court intervention." [1999 c 17 s 1.]

Severability—1990 c 246: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1990 c 246 s 11.]

Severability—1984 c 95: See note following RCW 9A.40.060.

Severability—1982 c 129: See note following RCW 9A.04.080.

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.

RCW 13.34.062 Shelter care—Notice of custody and rights. (1)(a) Whenever a child is taken into custody by child protective services pursuant to a court order issued under RCW 13.34.050 or when child protective services is notified that a child has been taken into custody pursuant to RCW 26.44.050 or 26.44.056, child protective services shall make diligent efforts to inform the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the fact that the child has been taken into custody, the reasons why the child was taken into custody, and their legal rights under this title, including the right to a shelter care hearing, as soon as possible. Notice must be provided in an understandable manner and take into consideration the parent's, guardian's, or legal custodian's primary language, level of education, and cultural issues.

(b) In no event shall the notice required by this section be provided to the parent, guardian, or legal custodian more than twenty-four hours after the child has been taken into custody or twenty-four hours after child protective services has been notified that the child has been taken into custody.

(2)(a) The notice of custody and rights may be given by any means reasonably certain of notifying the parents including, but not limited to, written, telephone, or in person oral notification. If the initial notification is provided by a means other than writing, child

protective services shall make reasonable efforts to also provide written notification.

(b) The written notice of custody and rights required by this section shall be in substantially the following form:

"NOTICE

Your child has been placed in temporary custody under the supervision of Child Protective Services (or other person or agency). You have important legal rights and you must take steps to protect your interests.

1. A court hearing will be held before a judge within 72 hours of the time your child is taken into custody excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. You should call the court at . . . (insert appropriate phone number here) for specific information about the date, time, and location of the court hearing.

2. You have the right to have a lawyer represent you at the hearing. Your right to representation continues after the shelter care hearing. You have the right to records the department intends to rely upon. A lawyer can look at the files in your case, talk to child protective services and 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.

4. If your hearing occurs before a court commissioner, you have the right to have the decision of the court commissioner reviewed by a superior court judge. To obtain that review, you must, within ten days after the entry of the decision of the court commissioner, file with the court a motion for revision of the decision, as provided in RCW 2.24.050.

You should be present at any shelter care hearing. If you do not come, the judge will not hear what you have to say.

You may call the Child Protective Services' caseworker for more information about your child. The caseworker's name and telephone number are: . . . (insert name and telephone number).

5. You have a right to a case conference to develop a written service agreement following the shelter care hearing. The service agreement may not conflict with the court's order of shelter care. You may request that a multidisciplinary team, family group conference, or prognostic staffing be convened for your child's case. You may participate in these processes with your counsel present.

6. If your child is placed in the custody of the department of children, youth, and families or other agency, immediately following the shelter care hearing, the court will enter an order granting the department or other agency the right to inspect and copy all health, medical, mental health, and education records of the child, directing health care providers to release such information without your further consent, and granting the department or agency or its designee the authority and responsibility, where applicable, to:

(1) Notify the child's school that the child is in out-of-home placement;

(2) Enroll the child in school;

(3) Request the school transfer records;

(4) Request and authorize evaluation of special needs;

(5) Attend parent or teacher conferences;
(6) Excuse absences;
(7) Grant permission for extracurricular activities;
(8) Authorize medications which need to be administered during school hours and sign for medical needs that arise during school hours; and
(9) Complete or update school emergency records.

7. If the court decides to place your child in the custody of the department of children, youth, and families or other agency, the department or agency will create a permanency plan for your child, including a primary placement goal and secondary placement goal. The department or agency also will recommend that the court order services for your child and for you, if needed. The department or agency is required to make reasonable efforts to provide you with services to address your parenting problems, and to provide you with visitation with your child according to court orders. Failure to promptly engage in services or to maintain contact with your child may lead to the filing of a petition to terminate your parental rights.

8. Primary and secondary permanency plans are intended to run at the same time so that your child will have a permanent home as quickly as possible. Absent good cause, and when appropriate, the department or other agency must follow the wishes of a natural parent regarding placement of a child. You should tell your lawyer and the court where you wish your child placed immediately, including whether you want your child placed with you, with a relative, or with another suitable person. You also should tell your lawyer and the court what services you feel are necessary and your wishes regarding visitation with your child. Even if you want another parent or person to be the primary placement choice for your child, you should tell your lawyer, the department or other agency, and the court if you want to be a secondary placement option, and you should comply with court orders for services and participate in visitation with your child. Early and consistent involvement in your child's case plan is important for the well-being of your child.

9. A dependency petition begins a judicial process, which, if the court finds your child dependent, could result in substantial restrictions including, the entry or modification of a parenting plan or residential schedule, previously existing nonparental custody order or decree, guardianship order, or permanent loss of your parental rights."

Upon receipt of the written notice, the parent, guardian, or legal custodian shall acknowledge such notice by signing a receipt prepared by child protective services. If the parent, guardian, or legal custodian does not sign the receipt, the reason for lack of a signature shall be written on the receipt. The receipt shall be made a part of the court's file in the dependency action.

If after making reasonable efforts to provide notification, child protective services is unable to determine the whereabouts of the parents, guardian, or legal custodian, the notice shall be delivered or sent to the last known address of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian.

(3) If child protective services is not required to give notice under this section, the juvenile court counselor assigned to the matter shall make all diligent efforts to advise the parents, guardian, or legal custodian of the time and place of any shelter care

hearing, request that they be present, and inform them of their basic rights as provided in RCW 13.34.090.

(4) Diligent efforts to advise and to give notice, as required in this section, shall include, at a minimum, investigation of the whereabouts of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian. If such diligent efforts are not successful, or the parent, guardian, or legal custodian does not appear at the shelter care hearing, the petitioner shall testify at the hearing or state in a declaration:

(a) The efforts made to investigate the whereabouts of, and to advise, the parent, guardian, or custodian; and

(b) Whether actual advice of rights was made, to whom it was made, and how it was made, including the substance of any oral communication or copies of written materials used. [2021 c 211 s 7; 2020 c 312 s 115; 2018 c 58 s 71; 2009 c 477 s 2. Prior: 2007 c 413 s 4; 2007 c 409 s 5; 2004 c 147 s 2; 2001 c 332 s 2; 2000 c 122 s 5.]

Effective date—Short title—Finding—Intent—2021 c 211: See notes following RCW 13.34.040.

Effective date—2020 c 312: See note following RCW 11.130.915.

Effective date—2018 c 58: See note following RCW 28A.655.080.

Findings—Intent—2009 c 477: "The legislature finds that when children have been found dependent and placed in out-of-home care, the likelihood of reunification with their parents diminishes significantly after fifteen months. The legislature also finds that early and consistent parental engagement in services and participation in appropriate parent-child contact and visitation increases the likelihood of successful reunifications. The legislature intends to promote greater awareness among parents in dependency cases of the importance of active participation in services, visitation, and case planning for the child, and the risks created by failure to participate in their child's case over the long term." [2009 c 477 s 1.]

Severability—2007 c 413: See note following RCW 13.34.215.

Effective date—2007 c 409: See note following RCW 13.34.096.

Effective date—2004 c 147: See note following RCW 13.34.067.

RCW 13.34.065 Shelter care—Hearing—Recommendation as to further need—Release. (1)(a) When a child is removed or when the petitioner is seeking the removal of a child from the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian, the court shall hold a shelter care hearing within 72 hours, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. The primary purpose of the shelter care hearing is to determine whether the child can be immediately and safely returned home while the adjudication of the dependency is pending. The court shall hold an additional shelter care hearing within 72 hours, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays if the child is removed from the care of a parent, guardian, or legal custodian at any time after an initial shelter care hearing under this section.

(b) Any child's attorney, parent, guardian, or legal custodian who for good cause is unable to attend or adequately prepare for the shelter care hearing may request that the initial shelter care hearing be continued or that a subsequent shelter care hearing be scheduled. The request shall be made to the clerk of the court where the petition is filed prior to the initial shelter care hearing. Upon the request of the child's attorney, parent, guardian, or legal custodian, the court shall schedule the hearing within 72 hours of the request, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. The clerk shall notify all other parties of the hearing by any reasonable means. If the parent, guardian, or legal custodian is not represented by counsel, the clerk shall provide information to the parent, guardian, or legal custodian regarding how to obtain counsel.

(2)(a) If it is likely that the child will remain in shelter care longer than 72 hours, the department shall submit a recommendation to the court as to the further need for shelter care in all cases in which the child will remain in shelter care longer than the 72 hour period. In all other cases, the recommendation shall be submitted by the juvenile court probation counselor.

(b) All parties have the right to present testimony to the court regarding the need or lack of need for shelter care.

(c) Hearsay evidence before the court regarding the need or lack of need for shelter care must be supported by sworn testimony, affidavit, or declaration of the person offering such evidence.

(3)(a) At the commencement of the hearing, the court shall notify the parent, guardian, or custodian of the following:

(i) The parent, guardian, or custodian has the right to a shelter care hearing;

(ii) The nature of the shelter care hearing, the rights of the parents, and the proceedings that will follow; and

(iii) If the parent, guardian, or custodian is not represented by counsel, the right to be represented. If the parent, guardian, or custodian is indigent, the court shall appoint counsel as provided in RCW 13.34.090; and

(b) If a parent, guardian, or legal custodian desires to waive the shelter care hearing, the court shall determine, on the record and with the parties present, whether such waiver is knowing and voluntary. A parent may not waive his or her right to the shelter care hearing unless he or she appears in court, in person, or by remote means, and the court determines that the waiver is knowing and voluntary. Regardless of whether the court accepts the parental waiver of the shelter care hearing, the court must provide notice to the parents of their rights required under (a) of this subsection and make the finding required under subsection (4) of this section.

(4) At the shelter care hearing the court shall examine the need for shelter care and inquire into the status of the case. The paramount consideration for the court shall be the health, welfare, and safety of the child. At a minimum, the court shall inquire into the following:

(a) Whether the notice required under RCW 13.34.062 was given to all known parents, guardians, or legal custodians of the child. The court shall make an express finding as to whether the notice required under RCW 13.34.062 was given to the parent, guardian, or legal custodian. If actual notice was not given to the parent, guardian, or legal custodian and the whereabouts of such person is known or can be ascertained, the court shall order the department to make diligent efforts to advise the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the

status of the case, including the date and time of any subsequent hearings, and their rights under RCW 13.34.090;

(b) Whether the child can be safely returned home while the adjudication of the dependency is pending;

(c) What efforts have been made to place the child with a relative. The court shall ask the parents whether the department discussed with them the placement of the child with a relative or other suitable person described in RCW 13.34.130(1)(b) and shall determine what efforts have been made toward such a placement;

(d) What services were provided to the family to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from the child's home. If the dependency petition or other information before the court alleges that experiencing homelessness or the lack of suitable housing was a significant factor contributing to the removal of the child, the court shall inquire as to whether housing assistance was provided to the family to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child or children;

(e) Is the placement proposed by the department the least disruptive and most family-like setting that meets the needs of the child;

(f) Whether it is in the best interest of the child to remain enrolled in the school, developmental program, or child care the child was in prior to placement and what efforts have been made to maintain the child in the school, program, or child care if it would be in the best interest of the child to remain in the same school, program, or child care;

(g) Appointment of a guardian ad litem or attorney;

(h) Whether the child is or may be an Indian child as defined in RCW 13.38.040, whether the provisions of the federal Indian child welfare act or chapter 13.38 RCW apply, and whether there is compliance with the federal Indian child welfare act and chapter 13.38 RCW, including notice to the child's tribe;

(i) Whether, as provided in RCW 26.44.063, restraining orders, or orders expelling an allegedly abusive household member from the home of a nonabusive parent, guardian, or legal custodian, will allow the child to safely remain in the home;

(j) Whether any orders for examinations, evaluations, or immediate services are needed. The court may not order a parent to undergo examinations, evaluation, or services at the shelter care hearing unless the parent agrees to the examination, evaluation, or service;

(k) The terms and conditions for parental, sibling, and family visitation.

(5)(a) The court shall release a child alleged to be dependent to the care, custody, and control of the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian unless the court finds there is reasonable cause to believe that:

(i) After consideration of the specific services that have been provided, reasonable efforts have been made to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from the child's home and to make it possible for the child to return home; and

(ii)(A) The child has no parent, guardian, or legal custodian to provide supervision and care for such child; or

(B)(I) Removal of the child is necessary to prevent imminent physical harm due to child abuse or neglect, including that which results from sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, a high-potency synthetic opioid, or a pattern of severe neglect, notwithstanding an

order entered pursuant to RCW 26.44.063. The evidence must show a causal relationship between the particular conditions in the home and imminent physical harm to the child. The existence of community or family poverty, isolation, single parenthood, age of the parent, crowded or inadequate housing, substance abuse, prenatal drug or alcohol exposure, mental illness, disability or special needs of the parent or child, or nonconforming social behavior does not by itself constitute imminent physical harm. The court shall give great weight to the lethality of high-potency synthetic opioids and public health guidance from the department of health related to high-potency synthetic opioids when determining whether removal of the child is necessary to prevent imminent physical harm due to child abuse or neglect;

(II) It is contrary to the welfare of the child to be returned home; and

(III) After considering the particular circumstances of the child, any imminent physical harm to the child outweighs the harm the child will experience as a result of removal; or

(C) The parent, guardian, or custodian to whom the child could be released has been charged with violating RCW 9A.40.060 or 9A.40.070.

(b) If the court finds that the elements of (a)(ii)(B) of this subsection require removal of the child, the court shall further consider:

(i) Whether participation by the parents, guardians, or legal custodians in any prevention services would prevent or eliminate the need for removal and, if so, shall inquire of the parent whether they are willing to participate in such services. If the parent agrees to participate in the prevention services identified by the court that would prevent or eliminate the need for removal, the court shall place the child with the parent. The court shall give great weight to the lethality of high-potency synthetic opioids and public health guidance from the department of health related to high-potency synthetic opioids when deciding whether to place the child with the parent. The court shall not order a parent to participate in prevention services over the objection of the parent, however, parents shall have the opportunity to consult with counsel prior to deciding whether to agree to proposed prevention services as a condition of having the child return to or remain in the care of the parent; and

(ii) Whether the issuance of a temporary order of protection directing the removal of a person or persons from the child's residence would prevent the need for removal of the child.

(c)(i) If the court does not release the child to his or her parent, guardian, or legal custodian, the court shall order placement with a relative or other suitable person as described in RCW 13.34.130(1)(b), unless the petitioner establishes that there is reasonable cause to believe that:

(A) Placement in licensed foster care is necessary to prevent imminent physical harm to the child due to child abuse or neglect, including that which results from sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, a high-potency synthetic opioid, or a pattern of severe neglect, because no relative or other suitable person is capable of ensuring the basic safety of the child; or

(B) The efforts to reunite the parent and child will be hindered.

(ii) In making the determination in (c)(i) of this subsection, the court shall:

(A) Inquire of the petitioner and any other person present at the hearing for the child whether there are any relatives or other

suitable persons who are willing to care for the child. This inquiry must include whether any relative or other suitable person:

(I) Has expressed an interest in becoming a caregiver for the child;

(II) Is able to meet any special needs of the child;

(III) Is willing to facilitate the child's sibling and parent visitation if such visitation is ordered by the court; and

(IV) Supports reunification of the parent and child once reunification can safely occur; and

(B) Give great weight to the stated preference of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian, and the child.

(iii) If a relative or other suitable person expressed an interest in caring for the child, can meet the child's special needs, can support parent-child reunification, and will facilitate court-ordered sibling or parent visitation, the following must not prevent the child's placement with such relative or other suitable person:

(A) An incomplete department or fingerprint-based background check, if such relative or other suitable person appears otherwise suitable and competent to provide care and treatment, but the background checks must be completed as soon as possible after placement;

(B) Uncertainty on the part of the relative or other suitable person regarding potential adoption of the child;

(C) Disbelief on the part of the relative or other suitable person that the parent, guardian, or legal custodian presents a danger to the child, provided the caregiver will protect the safety of the child and comply with court orders regarding contact with a parent, guardian, or legal custodian; or

(D) The conditions of the relative or other suitable person's home are not sufficient to satisfy the requirements of a licensed foster home. The court may order the department to provide financial or other support to the relative or other suitable person necessary to ensure safe conditions in the home.

(d) If the child was not initially placed with a relative or other suitable person, and the court does not release the child to his or her parent, guardian, or legal custodian, the department shall make reasonable efforts to locate a relative or other suitable person pursuant to RCW 13.34.060(1).

(e) If the court does not order placement with a relative or other suitable person, the court shall place the child in licensed foster care and shall set forth its reasons for the order. If the court orders placement of the child with a person not related to the child and not licensed to provide foster care, the placement is subject to all terms and conditions of this section that apply to relative placements.

(f) Any placement with a relative, or other suitable person approved by the court pursuant to this section, shall be contingent upon cooperation with the department's or agency's case plan and compliance with court orders related to the care and supervision of the child including, but not limited to, court orders regarding parent-child contacts, sibling contacts, and any other conditions imposed by the court. Noncompliance with the case plan or court order is grounds for removal of the child from the home of the relative or other suitable person, subject to review by the court.

(g) If the child is placed in a qualified residential treatment program as defined in this chapter, the court shall, within 60 days of placement, hold a hearing to:

(i) Consider the assessment required under RCW 13.34.420 and submitted as part of the department's social study, and any related documentation;

(ii) Determine whether placement in foster care can meet the child's needs or if placement in another available placement setting best meets the child's needs in the least restrictive environment; and

(iii) Approve or disapprove the child's placement in the qualified residential treatment program.

(h) Uncertainty by a parent, guardian, legal custodian, relative, or other suitable person that the alleged abuser has in fact abused the child shall not, alone, be the basis upon which a child is removed from the care of a parent, guardian, or legal custodian under (a) of this subsection, nor shall it be a basis, alone, to preclude placement with a relative or other suitable person under (c) of this subsection.

(i) If the court places with a relative or other suitable person, and that person has indicated a desire to become a licensed foster parent, the court shall order the department to commence an assessment of the home of such relative or other suitable person within 10 days and thereafter issue an initial license as provided under RCW 74.15.120 for such relative or other suitable person, if qualified, as a foster parent. The relative or other suitable person shall receive a foster care maintenance payment, starting on the date the department approves the initial license. If such home is found to be unqualified for licensure, the department shall report such fact to the court within one week of that determination. The department shall report on the status of the licensure process during the entry of any dispositional orders in the case.

(j) If the court places the child in licensed foster care:

(i) The petitioner shall report to the court, at the shelter care hearing, the location of the licensed foster placement the petitioner has identified for the child and the court shall inquire as to whether:

(A) The identified placement is the least restrictive placement necessary to meet the needs of the child;

(B) The child will be able to remain in the same school and whether any orders of the court are necessary to ensure educational stability for the child;

(C) The child will be placed with a sibling or siblings, and whether court-ordered sibling contact would promote the well-being of the child;

(D) The licensed foster placement is able to meet the special needs of the child;

(E) The location of the proposed foster placement will impede visitation with the child's parent or parents;

(ii) The court may order the department to:

(A) Place the child in a less restrictive placement;

(B) Place the child in a location in closer proximity to the child's parent, home, or school;

(C) Place the child with the child's sibling or siblings;

(D) Take any other necessary steps to ensure the child's health, safety, and well-being;

(iii) The court shall advise the petitioner that:

(A) Failure to comply with court orders while a child is in shelter care will be considered when determining whether reasonable efforts have been made by the department during a hearing under RCW 13.34.110; and

(B) Placement moves while a child is in shelter care will be considered when determining whether reasonable efforts have been made by the department during a hearing under RCW 13.34.110.

(6)(a) A shelter care order issued pursuant to this section shall include the requirement for a case conference as provided in RCW 13.34.067. However, if the parent is not present at the shelter care hearing, or does not agree to the case conference, the court shall not include the requirement for the case conference in the shelter care order.

(b) If the court orders a case conference, the shelter care order shall include notice to all parties and establish the date, time, and location of the case conference which shall be no later than 30 days before the fact-finding hearing.

(c) The court may order another conference, case staffing, or hearing as an alternative to the case conference required under RCW 13.34.067 so long as the conference, case staffing, or hearing ordered by the court meets all requirements under RCW 13.34.067, including the requirement of a written agreement specifying the services to be provided to the parent.

(7)(a)(i) A shelter care order issued pursuant to this section may be amended at any time with notice and hearing thereon. The shelter care decision of placement shall be modified only upon a showing of change in circumstances. No child may be placed in shelter care for longer than thirty days without an order, signed by the judge, authorizing continued shelter care.

(ii) If the court previously ordered that visitation between a parent and child be supervised or monitored, there shall be a presumption that such supervision or monitoring will no longer be necessary following a continued shelter care order under (a)(i) of this subsection. To overcome this presumption, a party must provide a report to the court including evidence establishing that removing visit supervision or monitoring would create a risk to the child's safety, and the court shall make a determination as to whether visit supervision or monitoring must continue.

(b)(i) An order releasing the child on any conditions specified in this section may at any time be amended, with notice and hearing thereon, so as to return the child to shelter care for failure of the parties to conform to the conditions originally imposed.

(ii) The court shall consider whether nonconformance with any conditions resulted from circumstances beyond the control of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian and give weight to that fact before ordering return of the child to shelter care.

(8) The department and its employees shall not be held liable in any civil action for complying with an order issued under this section for placement: With a parent who has agreed to accept services, a relative, or a suitable person.

(9)(a) If a child is placed out of the home of a parent, guardian, or legal custodian following a shelter care hearing, the court shall order the petitioner to provide regular visitation with the parent, guardian, or legal custodian, and siblings. Early, consistent, and frequent visitation is crucial for maintaining parent-child relationships and allowing family reunification. The court shall order a visitation plan individualized to the needs of the family with a goal of providing the maximum parent, child, and sibling contact possible.

(b) Visitation under this subsection shall not be limited as a sanction for a parent's failure to comply with recommended services during shelter care.

(c) Visitation under this subsection may only be limited where necessary to ensure the health, safety, or welfare of the child.

(d) The first visit must take place within 72 hours of the child being delivered into the custody of the department, unless the court finds that extraordinary circumstances require delay.

(e) If the first visit under (d) of this subsection occurs in an in-person format, this first visit must be supervised unless the department determines that visit supervision is not necessary. [2024 c 328 s 103. Prior: 2021 c 211 s 9; 2021 c 208 s 1; 2021 c 67 s 4; 2019 c 172 s 11; 2018 c 284 s 4; 2013 c 162 s 6; 2011 c 309 s 24; prior: 2009 c 520 s 22; 2009 c 491 s 1; 2009 c 477 s 3; 2009 c 397 s 2; 2008 c 267 s 2; 2007 c 413 s 5; 2001 c 332 s 3; 2000 c 122 s 7.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 328: See note following RCW 13.34.050.

Effective date—Short title—Finding—Intent—2021 c 211: See notes following RCW 13.34.040.

Effective date—2019 c 172 ss 3, 4, and 10-15: See note following RCW 13.34.420.

Findings—Rules—2013 c 162: See notes following RCW 74.13.700.

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

Severability—2007 c 413: See note following RCW 13.34.215.

RCW 13.34.067 Shelter care—Case conference—Service agreement. (1)(a) Following shelter care and no later than thirty days prior to fact-finding, the department shall convene a case conference as required in the shelter care order to develop and specify in a written service agreement the expectations of both the department and the parent regarding voluntary services for the parent.

(b) The case conference shall include the parent, counsel for the parent, caseworker, counsel for the state, guardian ad litem, counsel for the child, and any other person agreed upon by the parties. Once the shelter care order is entered, the department is not required to provide additional notice of the case conference to any participants in the case conference.

(c) The written service agreement expectations must correlate with the court's findings at the shelter care hearing. The written service agreement must set forth specific services to be provided to the parent.

(d) The case conference agreement must be agreed to and signed by the parties. The court shall not consider the content of the discussions at the case conference at the time of the fact-finding hearing for the purposes of establishing that the child is a dependent child, and the court shall not consider any documents or written materials presented at the case conference but not incorporated into the case conference agreement, unless the documents or written materials were prepared for purposes other than or as a result of the

case conference and are otherwise admissible under the rules of evidence.

(2) At any other stage in a dependency proceeding, the department, upon the parent's request, shall convene a case conference.

(3) If a case conference is convened pursuant to subsection (1) or (2) of this section and the parent is unable to participate in person due to incarceration, the parent must have the option to participate through the use of a teleconference or videoconference. [2018 c 284 s 5; 2013 c 173 s 1; 2009 c 520 s 23; 2004 c 147 s 1; 2001 c 332 s 1.]

Effective date—2004 c 147: "This act takes effect July 1, 2004." [2004 c 147 s 5.]

RCW 13.34.069 Shelter care—Order and authorization of health care and education records. If a child is placed in the custody of the department of children, youth, and families or other *supervising agency, immediately following the shelter care hearing, an order and authorization regarding health care and education records for the child shall be entered. The order shall:

(1) Provide the department or other *supervising agency with the right to inspect and copy all health, medical, mental health, and education records of the child;

(2) Authorize and direct any agency, hospital, doctor, nurse, dentist, orthodontist, or other health care provider, therapist, drug or alcohol treatment provider, psychologist, psychiatrist, or mental health clinic, or health or medical records custodian or document management company, or school or school organization to permit the department or other *supervising agency to inspect and to obtain copies of any records relating to the child involved in the case, without the further consent of the parent or guardian of the child;

(3) Identify the person who will serve as the educational liaison; and

(4) Grant the department or other *supervising agency or its designee the authority and responsibility, where applicable, to:

(a) Notify the child's school that the child is in out-of-home placement;

(b) Enroll the child in school;

(c) Request the school transfer records;

(d) Request and authorize evaluation of special needs;

(e) Attend parent or teacher conferences;

(f) Excuse absences;

(g) Grant permission for extracurricular activities;

(h) Authorize medications which need to be administered during school hours and sign for medical needs that arise during school hours; and

(i) Complete or update school emergency records.

Access to records under this section is subject to the child's consent where required by other state and federal laws. [2018 c 58 s 72; 2013 c 182 s 4; 2007 c 409 s 2.]

***Reviser's note:** The definition for "supervising agency" for chapter 13.34 RCW was deleted by 2018 c 284 s 3.

Effective date—2018 c 58: See note following RCW 28A.655.080.

Findings—2013 c 182: See note following RCW 13.34.030.

Effective date—2007 c 409: See note following RCW 13.34.096.

RCW 13.34.070 Summons when petition filed—Service procedure—Hearing, when—Contempt upon failure to appear—Required notice regarding Indian children. (1) Upon the filing of the petition, the petitioner shall issue a summons, one directed to the child, if the child is twelve or more years of age, and another to the parents, guardian, or custodian, and such other persons as appear to the court to be proper or necessary parties to the proceedings, requiring them to appear personally before the court at the time fixed to hear the petition. If the child is developmentally disabled and not living at home, the notice shall be given to the child's custodian as well as to the child's parent. The developmentally disabled child shall not be required to appear unless requested by the court. When the custodian is summoned, the parent or guardian or both shall also be served with a summons. The fact-finding hearing on the petition shall be held no later than seventy-five days after the filing of the petition, unless exceptional reasons for a continuance are found. The party requesting the continuance shall have the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that exceptional circumstances exist. To ensure that the hearing on the petition occurs within the seventy-five day time limit, the court shall schedule and hear the matter on an expedited basis.

(2) A copy of the petition shall be attached to each summons.

(3) The summons shall advise the parties of the right to counsel. The summons shall also inform the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian of his or her right to appointed counsel, if indigent, and of the procedure to use to secure appointed counsel.

(4) The summons shall advise the parents that they may be held responsible for the support of the child if the child is placed in out-of-home care.

(5) The judge may endorse upon the summons an order directing any parent, guardian, or custodian having the custody or control of the child to bring the child to the hearing.

(6) If it appears from affidavit or sworn statement presented to the judge that there is probable cause for the issuance of a warrant of arrest or that the child needs to be taken into custody pursuant to RCW 13.34.050, the judge may endorse upon the summons an order that an officer serving the summons shall at once take the child into custody and take him or her to the place of shelter designated by the court.

(7) If the person summoned as provided in this section is subject to an order of the court pursuant to subsection (5) or (6) of this section, and if the person fails to abide by the order, he or she may be proceeded against as for contempt of court. The order endorsed upon the summons shall conspicuously display the following legend:

NOTICE:
VIOLATION OF THIS ORDER
IS SUBJECT TO PROCEEDING
FOR CONTEMPT OF COURT
PURSUANT TO RCW 13.34.070.

(8) If a party to be served with a summons can be found within the state, the summons shall be served upon the party personally as

soon as possible following the filing of the petition, but in no case later than fifteen court days before the fact-finding hearing, or such time as set by the court. If the party is within the state and cannot be personally served, but the party's address is known or can with reasonable diligence be ascertained, the summons may be served upon the party by mailing a copy by certified mail as soon as possible following the filing of the petition, but in no case later than fifteen court days before the hearing, or such time as set by the court. If a party other than the child is without the state but can be found or the address is known, or can with reasonable diligence be ascertained, service of the summons may be made either by delivering a copy to the party personally or by mailing a copy thereof to the party by certified mail at least ten court days before the fact-finding hearing, or such time as set by the court.

(9) Service of summons may be made under the direction of the court by any person eighteen years of age or older who is not a party to the proceedings or by any law enforcement officer, probation counselor, or department employee.

(10) Whenever the court or the petitioning party in a proceeding under this chapter knows or has reason to know that an Indian child as defined in RCW 13.38.040 is involved, the petitioning party shall promptly provide notice to the child's parent or Indian custodian and to the agent designated by the child's Indian tribe to receive such notices. Notice shall comply with RCW 13.38.070. [2016 c 93 s 7; 2011 c 309 s 25; 2004 c 64 s 4; 2000 c 122 s 8; 1993 c 358 s 1; 1990 c 246 s 2; 1988 c 194 s 2; 1983 c 311 s 3; 1983 c 3 s 16; 1979 c 155 s 40; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 35; 1913 c 160 s 6; RRS s 1987-6. Formerly RCW 13.04.070.]

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

Legislative finding—1983 c 311: See note following RCW 13.34.030.

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.

RCW 13.34.080 Summons when petition filed—Publication of notice. (1) The court shall direct the petitioner to publish notice in a legal newspaper, as described under RCW 65.16.020, once a week for three consecutive weeks, with the first publication of the notice to be at least twenty-five days prior to the date fixed for the hearing when it appears by the petition or verified statement that:

(a)(i) The parent or guardian is a nonresident of this state; or

(ii) The name or place of residence or whereabouts of the parent or guardian is unknown; and

(b) After due diligence, the person attempting service of the summons or notice provided for in RCW 13.34.070 has been unable to make service, and a copy of the notice has been deposited in the post office, postage prepaid, directed to such person at his or her last known place of residence. If the parent, guardian, or legal custodian is believed to be a resident of another state or a county other than

the county in which the petition has been filed, notice also shall be published in the county in which the parent, guardian, or legal custodian is believed to reside.

(2) Publication may proceed simultaneously with efforts to provide service in person or by mail, when the court determines there is reason to believe that service in person or by mail will not be successful. Notice shall be directed to the parent, parents, or other person claiming the right to the custody of the child, if their names are known. If their names are unknown, the phrase "To whom it may concern" shall be used, apply to, and be binding upon, those persons whose names are unknown. The name of the court, the name of the child (or children if of one family), the date of the filing of the petition, the date of hearing, and the object of the proceeding in general terms shall be set forth. There shall be filed with the clerk an affidavit showing due publication of the notice.

(3)(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, the cost of publication shall be paid by the petitioner at a rate not greater than the rate paid for other legal notices.

(b) If the petitioner is a minor child or the court finds that the petitioner is an indigent parent or legal guardian, the cost of publication shall be paid or reimbursed by the office of civil legal aid where the petitioner is a minor child, or the office of public defense where the petitioner is a parent or legal guardian, pursuant to procedures set by each agency.

(4) The publication of notice shall be deemed equivalent to personal service upon all persons, known or unknown, who have been designated as provided in this section. [2024 c 312 s 1; 2000 c 122 s 9; 1990 c 246 s 3; 1988 c 201 s 1; 1979 c 155 s 41; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 36; 1961 c 302 s 4; 1913 c 160 s 7; RRS s 1987-7. Formerly RCW 13.04.080.]

Effective date—2024 c 312: "This act takes effect January 31, 2026." [2024 c 312 s 3.]

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.

RCW 13.34.090 Rights under chapter proceedings. (1) Any party has a right to be represented by an attorney in all proceedings under this chapter, to introduce evidence, to be heard in his or her own behalf, to examine witnesses, to receive a decision based solely on the evidence adduced at the hearing, and to an unbiased fact finder.

(2) At all stages of a proceeding in which a child is alleged to be dependent, the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian has the right to be represented by counsel, and if indigent, to have counsel appointed for him or her by the court. Unless waived in court, counsel shall be provided to the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian, if such person (a) has appeared in the proceeding or requested the court to appoint counsel and (b) is financially unable to obtain counsel because of indigency.

(3) At all stages of a proceeding in which a child is alleged to be dependent, the child has the right to be represented by counsel. Counsel shall be provided at public expense subject to the phase-in schedule as provided in RCW 13.34.212.

(4) If a party to an action under this chapter is represented by counsel, no order shall be provided to that party for his or her signature without prior notice and provision of the order to counsel.

(5) Copies of department records to which the child and the child's parents have legal access pursuant to chapter 13.50 RCW shall be given to the child or child's counsel, and the parents, guardian, legal custodian, or his or her legal counsel, prior to any shelter care hearing and within 15 days after the department receives a written request for such records from the child or child's counsel, and the parents, guardian, legal custodian, or his or her legal counsel. These records shall be provided to the child's parents, guardian, legal custodian, or legal counsel a reasonable period of time prior to the shelter care hearing in order to allow an opportunity to review the records prior to the hearing. These records shall be legible and shall be provided at no expense to the child or child's counsel, and the parents, guardian, legal custodian, or his or her counsel. When the records are served on legal counsel, legal counsel shall have the opportunity to review the records with the client and shall review the records with the client prior to the shelter care hearing. The department shall make every effort to provide all other discoverable material to the child's parent, guardian, legal custodian, or his or her legal counsel prior to any shelter care hearing. [2021 c 211 s 10; 2021 c 210 s 2; 2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 303; 2000 c 122 s 10. Prior: 1998 c 328 s 3; 1998 c 141 s 1; 1990 c 246 s 4; 1979 c 155 s 42; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 37.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2021 c 210 s 2 and by 2021 c 211 s 10, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

Effective date—Short title—Finding—Intent—2021 c 211: See note following RCW 13.34.040.

Findings—Intent—2021 c 210: "(1) The legislature recognizes that dependency proceedings determine many critical aspects of a child's future, including whether the child may remain at home with their family, whether and how often the child sees their parents and siblings if they do not remain with their family, where the child attends school, and how long the child remains in state care. Children and youth, regardless of age, have many legal rights at stake in these proceedings, including a right to maintain family relationships, a right to freedom from harm, and a right to reasonable safety. Standards-based representation by a well-qualified attorney can be invaluable in protecting and advancing the child's legal rights and, where articulable, stated interests. Attorneys can advise and assist children and youth in presenting their experiences and position to the court, improving the court's comprehensive decision making.

(2) The legislature further recognizes that appointing attorneys to provide standards-based legal representation for children and youth in dependency proceedings has been shown to result in more timely permanency for children and youth, increased school and placement stability, and increased contact with parents and siblings.

(3) The legislature finds that the current system for child legal representation is inadequate and has resulted in a patchwork system that varies by county leading to many children and youth not having equal access to the court process. This is particularly true when significant events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, result in sudden changes to court rules and procedures.

(4) The legislature further finds that black and indigenous children and youth and other youth of color are much more likely to be removed from their parents' care, placed into foster care, and remain in the child welfare system longer than white children. Systemic racism contributes to this overrepresentation and to the lack of meaningful access to the court process for children and their families. It is the intent of the legislature to ensure that any expansion of legal representation actively combat this disproportionality." [2021 c 210 s 1.]

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.

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.

Notice of rights: RCW 26.44.105.

RCW 13.34.092 Rights under chapter proceedings—Appointment of counsel—Notice. At the commencement of the shelter care hearing the court shall advise the parties of basic rights as provided in RCW 13.34.090 and appoint counsel to the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian pursuant to RCW 13.34.090 if the parent, guardian, or legal custodian is indigent unless counsel has been retained by the parent, guardian, or legal custodian or the court finds that the right to counsel has been expressly and voluntarily waived in court. [2021 c 210 s 3; 2000 c 122 s 6.]

Findings—Intent—2021 c 210: See note following RCW 13.34.090.

RCW 13.34.094 Description of services provided to parents. The department shall, within existing resources, provide to parents requesting or participating in a multidisciplinary team, family group conference, case conference, or prognostic staffing information that describes these processes prior to the processes being undertaken. [2018 c 284 s 6; 2009 c 520 s 24; 2004 c 147 s 3; 2001 c 332 s 6.]

Effective date—2004 c 147: See note following RCW 13.34.067.

RCW 13.34.096 Right to be heard—Notice. (1) The department shall provide the child's foster parents, preadoptive parents, or other caregivers with timely and adequate notice of their right to be heard prior to each proceeding held with respect to the child in juvenile court under this chapter. For purposes of this section, "timely and adequate notice" means notice at the time the department would be required to give notice to parties to the case and by any means reasonably certain of notifying the foster parents, preadoptive parents, or other caregivers, including but not limited to written, telephone, or in person oral notification. For emergency hearings, the department shall give notice to foster parents, preadoptive parents, or other caregivers as soon as is practicable. For six-month review and annual permanency hearings, the department shall give notice to foster parents upon placement or as soon as practicable.

(2) The court shall establish and include in the court record after every hearing for which the department is required to provide notice to the child's foster parents, preadoptive parents, and caregivers whether the department provided adequate and timely notice, whether a caregiver's report was received by the court, and whether the court provided the child's foster parents, preadoptive parents, or caregivers with an opportunity to be heard in court. For purposes of this section, "caregiver's report" means a form provided by the department to a child's foster parents, preadoptive parents, or caregivers that provides an opportunity for those individuals to share information about the child with the court before a court hearing. A caregiver's report shall not include information related to a child's biological parent that is not directly related to the child's well-being.

(3) Absent exigent circumstances, the department shall provide the child's foster family home notice of expected placement changes as required by RCW 74.13.300.

(4) The rights to notice and to be heard apply only to persons with whom a child has been placed by the department or agency and who are providing care to the child at the time of the proceeding. This section shall not be construed to grant party status to any person solely on the basis of such notice and right to be heard. [2018 c 284 s 8; (2018 c 284 s 7 expired July 1, 2018); 2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 304; 2016 c 180 s 1; 2009 c 520 s 25; 2007 c 409 s 1.]

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.

Effective date—2007 c 409: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect July 1, 2007." [2007 c 409 s 8.]

RCW 13.34.100 Appointment of guardian ad litem—Background information—Rights—Notification and inquiry—Review and removal. (1) The court shall appoint a guardian ad litem for a child who is the subject of an action under this chapter, unless a court for good cause finds the appointment unnecessary. The requirement of a guardian ad litem may be deemed satisfied if the child is represented by an independent attorney in the proceedings. The court shall attempt to match a child with special needs with a guardian ad litem who has specific training or education related to the child's individual needs.

(2) If the court does not have available to it a guardian ad litem program with a sufficient number of volunteers, the court may appoint a suitable person to act as guardian ad litem for the child under this chapter. Another party to the proceeding or the party's employee or representative shall not be so appointed.

(3) Each guardian ad litem program shall maintain a background information record for each guardian ad litem in the program. The background information record shall include, but is not limited to, the following information:

(a) Level of formal education;

(b) General training related to the guardian ad litem's duties;

(c) Specific training related to issues potentially faced by children in the dependency system;

(d) Specific training or education related to child disability or developmental issues;

(e) Number of years' experience as a guardian ad litem;

(f) Number of appointments as a guardian ad litem and the county or counties of appointment;

(g) The names of any counties in which the person was removed from a guardian ad litem registry pursuant to a grievance action, and the name of the court and the cause number of any case in which the court has removed the person for cause;

(h) Founded allegations of abuse or neglect as defined in RCW 26.44.020;

(i) The results of an examination of state and national criminal identification data. The examination shall consist of a background check as allowed through the Washington state criminal records privacy act under RCW 10.97.050, the Washington state patrol criminal identification system under RCW 43.43.832 through 43.43.834, and the federal bureau of investigation. The background check shall be done through the Washington state patrol criminal identification section and must include a national check from the federal bureau of investigation based on the submission of fingerprints; and

(j) Criminal history, as defined in RCW 9.94A.030, for the period covering 10 years prior to the appointment.

The background information record shall be updated annually and fingerprint-based background checks shall be updated every three years. As a condition of appointment, the guardian ad litem's background information record shall be made available to the court. If the appointed guardian ad litem is not a member of a guardian ad litem program a suitable person appointed by the court to act as guardian ad litem shall provide the background information record to the court.

Upon appointment, the guardian ad litem, or guardian ad litem program, shall provide the parties or their attorneys with a copy of the background information record. The portion of the background information record containing the results of the criminal background

check and the criminal history shall not be disclosed to the parties or their attorneys. The background information record shall not include identifying information that may be used to harm a guardian ad litem, such as home addresses and home telephone numbers, and for volunteer guardians ad litem the court may allow the use of maiden names or pseudonyms as necessary for their safety.

(4) The appointment of the guardian ad litem shall remain in effect until the court discharges the appointment or no longer has jurisdiction, whichever comes first. The guardian ad litem may also be discharged upon entry of an order of guardianship.

(5) A guardian ad litem through an attorney, or as otherwise authorized by the court, shall have the right to present evidence, examine and cross-examine witnesses, and to be present at all hearings. A guardian ad litem shall receive copies of all pleadings and other documents filed or submitted to the court, and notice of all hearings according to court rules. The guardian ad litem shall receive all notice contemplated for a parent or other party in all proceedings under this chapter.

(6) For the purposes of child abuse prevention and treatment act (42 U.S.C. Secs. 5101 et seq.) grants to this state under P.L. 93-247, or any related state or federal legislation, a person appointed pursuant to this section shall be deemed a guardian ad litem.

(7) When a court-appointed special advocate or volunteer guardian ad litem is requested on a case, the program shall give the court the name of the person it recommends. The program shall attempt to match a child with special needs with a guardian ad litem who has specific training or education related to the child's individual needs. The court shall immediately appoint the person recommended by the program.

(8) If a party in a case reasonably believes the court-appointed special advocate or volunteer guardian ad litem is inappropriate or unqualified, the party may request a review of the appointment by the program. The program must complete the review within five judicial days and remove any appointee for good cause. If the party seeking the review is not satisfied with the outcome of the review, the party may file a motion with the court for the removal of the court-appointed special advocate or volunteer guardian ad litem on the grounds the advocate or volunteer is inappropriate or unqualified.

(9) The court shall remove any person from serving as a court-appointed special advocate or volunteer guardian ad litem if the court is notified that the person has been removed from another county's registry pursuant to the disposition of a grievance or if the court is otherwise made aware that the individual was found by a court to have made a materially false statement that he or she knows to be false during an official proceeding under oath. [2021 c 210 s 4; 2019 c 57 s 1; 2017 c 99 s 2; 2014 c 108 s 2; 2010 c 180 s 2; 2009 c 480 s 2; 2000 c 124 s 2; 1996 c 249 s 13; 1994 c 110 s 2; 1993 c 241 s 2; 1988 c 232 s 1; 1979 c 155 s 43; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 38.]

Findings—Intent—2021 c 210: See note following RCW 13.34.090.

Finding—Intent—2017 c 99: "The legislature finds that the integrity of court-appointed special advocates and volunteer guardians ad litem is necessary to protect the best interest of children in child welfare proceedings.

Although courts must be notified regarding the removal of a guardian ad litem from a county's registry pursuant to a grievance,

there is no requirement that a county must act on that information. For that reason, the legislature intends to require counties to remove child welfare volunteer guardians ad litem from their registries when counties are notified that the person has been removed from another county's registry pursuant to the disposition of a grievance or if the court is otherwise made aware that a guardian ad litem has been found by a court to have made a materially false statement that he or she knows to be false during an official proceeding under oath." [2017 c 99 s 1.]

Finding—Construction—2014 c 108: "(1) The legislature recognizes that some children may remain in foster care following the termination of the parent and child relationship. These children have legal rights and no longer have a parent to advocate on their behalf, and no other party represents their legal interests. The legislature finds that providing attorneys for children following the termination of the parent and child relationship is fundamental to protecting the child's legal rights and to accelerate permanency.

(2) Although the legislature recognizes that many jurisdictions provide attorneys to children prior to termination of the parent and child relationship, nothing in this act may be construed against the parent's fundamental liberty interest in parenting the child prior to termination of the parent and child relationship as stated in *In re Dependency of K.N.J.*, 171 Wn.2d 568, 574 (2011) and *In re Welfare of Luscier*, 84 Wn.2d 135, 136-37 (1974), unless such a position would jeopardize the child's right to conditions of basic nurture, health, or safety." [2014 c 108 s 1.]

Effective date—2014 c 108: "This act takes effect July 1, 2014." [2014 c 108 s 4.]

Findings—2010 c 180: "(1) The legislature recognizes that inconsistent practices in and among counties in Washington have resulted in few children being notified of their right to request legal counsel in their dependency and termination proceedings under RCW 13.34.100.

(2) The legislature recognizes that when children are provided attorneys in their dependency and termination proceedings, it is imperative to provide them with well-trained advocates so that their legal rights around health, safety, and well-being are protected. Attorneys, who have different skills and obligations than guardians ad litem and court-appointed special advocates, especially in forming a confidential and privileged relationship with a child, should be trained in meaningful and effective child advocacy, the child welfare system and services available to a child client, child and adolescent brain development, child and adolescent mental health, and the distinct legal rights of dependent youth, among other things. Well-trained attorneys can provide legal counsel to a child on issues such as placement options, visitation rights, educational rights, access to services while in care and services available to a child upon aging out of care. Well-trained attorneys for a child can:

(a) Ensure the child's voice is considered in judicial proceedings;

(b) Engage the child in his or her legal proceedings;

(c) Explain to the child his or her legal rights;

(d) Assist the child, through the attorney's counseling role, to consider the consequences of different decisions; and

(e) Encourage accountability, when appropriate, among the different systems that provide services to children." [2010 c 180 s 1.]

Grievance rules—2000 c 124: "Each superior court shall adopt rules establishing and governing procedures for filing, investigating, and adjudicating grievances made by or against guardians ad litem under Titles 11, 13, and 26 RCW." [2000 c 124 s 16.]

Intent—1996 c 249: See note following RCW 2.56.030.

Conflict with federal requirements—1993 c 241: See note following RCW 13.34.030.

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.

RCW 13.34.102 Guardian ad litem—Training—Registry—Selection—Substitution—Exception. (1) All guardians ad litem must comply with the training requirements established under RCW 2.56.030(15), prior to their appointment in cases under Title 13 RCW, except that volunteer guardians ad litem or court-appointed special advocates may comply with alternative training requirements approved by the administrative office of the courts that meet or exceed the statewide requirements.

(2)(a) Each guardian ad litem program for compensated guardians ad litem shall establish a rotational registry system for the appointment of guardians ad litem. If a judicial district does not have a program the court shall establish the rotational registry system. Guardians ad litem shall be selected from the registry except in exceptional circumstances as determined and documented by the court. The parties may make a joint recommendation for the appointment of a guardian ad litem from the registry.

(b) In judicial districts with a population over one hundred thousand, a list of three names shall be selected from the registry and given to the parties along with the background information as specified in RCW 13.34.100(3), including their hourly rate for services. Each party may, within three judicial days, strike one name from the list. If more than one name remains on the list, the court shall make the appointment from the names on the list. In the event all three names are stricken the person whose name appears next on the registry shall be appointed.

(c) If a party reasonably believes that the appointed guardian ad litem lacks the necessary expertise for the proceeding, charges an hourly rate higher than what is reasonable for the particular proceeding, or has a conflict of interest, the party may, within three judicial days from the appointment, move for substitution of the appointed guardian ad litem by filing a motion with the court.

(d) The superior court shall remove any person from the guardian ad litem registry who misrepresents his or her qualifications pursuant to a grievance procedure established by the court.

(3) The rotational registry system shall not apply to court-appointed special advocate programs. [2005 c 282 s 26; 2000 c 124 s 3; 1997 c 41 s 6; 1996 c 249 s 17.]

Intent—1996 c 249: See note following RCW 2.56.030.

RCW 13.34.105 Guardian ad litem—Duties—Immunity—Access to information. (1) Unless otherwise directed by the court, the duties of the guardian ad litem for a child subject to a proceeding under this chapter, including an attorney specifically appointed by the court to serve as a guardian ad litem, include but are not limited to the following:

(a) To investigate, collect relevant information about the child's situation, and report to the court factual information regarding the best interests of the child;

(b) To meet with, interview, or observe the child, depending on the child's age and developmental status, and report to the court any views or positions expressed by the child on issues pending before the court;

(c) To monitor all court orders for compliance and to bring to the court's attention any change in circumstances that may require a modification of the court's order;

(d) To report to the court information on the legal status of a child's membership in any Indian tribe or band;

(e) Court-appointed special advocates and guardians ad litem may make recommendations based upon an independent investigation regarding the best interests of the child, which the court may consider and weigh in conjunction with the recommendations of all of the parties;

(f) To represent and be an advocate for the best interests of the child;

(g) To inform the child, if the child is twelve years old or older, of his or her right to request counsel and to ask the child whether he or she wishes to have counsel, pursuant to *RCW 13.34.100(6). The guardian ad litem shall report to the court that the child was notified of this right and indicate the child's position regarding appointment of counsel. The guardian ad litem shall report to the court his or her independent recommendation as to whether appointment of counsel is in the best interest of the child; and

(h) In the case of an Indian child as defined in RCW 13.38.040, know, understand, and advocate the best interests of the Indian child.

(2) A guardian ad litem shall be deemed an officer of the court for the purpose of immunity from civil liability.

(3) Except for information or records specified in RCW 13.50.100(7), the guardian ad litem shall have access to all information available to the state or agency on the case. Upon presentation of the order of appointment by the guardian ad litem, any agency, hospital, school organization, division or department of the state, doctor, nurse, or other health care provider, psychologist, psychiatrist, police department, or mental health clinic shall permit the guardian ad litem to inspect and copy any records relating to the child or children involved in the case, without the consent of the parent or guardian of the child, or of the child if the child is under the age of thirteen years, unless such access is otherwise specifically prohibited by law.

(4) A guardian ad litem may release confidential information, records, and reports to the office of the family and children's ombuds for the purposes of carrying out its duties under chapter 43.06A RCW.

(5) The guardian ad litem shall release case information in accordance with the provisions of RCW 13.50.100. [2013 c 23 s 5; 2011 c 309 s 26; 2010 c 180 s 3; 2008 c 267 s 13; 2000 c 124 s 4; 1999 c 390 s 2; 1993 c 241 s 3.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 13.34.100 was amended by 2014 c 108 s 2, changing subsection (6) to subsection (7)(c) through (g). RCW 13.34.100 was subsequently amended by 2021 c 210 s 4, deleting subsection (7)(c) through (g).

Findings—2010 c 180: See note following RCW 13.34.100.

Conflict with federal requirements—1993 c 241: See note following RCW 13.34.030.

RCW 13.34.107 Guardian ad litem—Ex parte communications—Removal. A guardian ad litem or court-appointed special advocate shall not engage in ex parte communications with any judicial officer involved in the matter for which he or she is appointed during the pendency of the proceeding, except as permitted by court rule or statute for ex parte motions. Ex parte motions shall be heard in open court on the record. The record may be preserved in a manner deemed appropriate by the county where the matter is heard. The court, upon its own motion, or upon the motion of a party, may consider the removal of any guardian ad litem or court-appointed special advocate who violates this section from any pending case or from any court-authorized registry, and if so removed may require forfeiture of any fees for professional services on the pending case. [2000 c 124 s 11.]

RCW 13.34.108 Guardian ad litem—Fees. The court shall specify the hourly rate the guardian ad litem may charge for his or her services, and shall specify the maximum amount the guardian ad litem may charge without additional court review and approval. The court shall specify rates and fees in the order of appointment or at the earliest date the court is able to determine the appropriate rates and fees and prior to the guardian ad litem billing for his or her services. This section shall apply except as provided by local court rule. [2000 c 124 s 14.]

RCW 13.34.110 Hearings—Fact-finding and disposition—Time and place, notice. (1) The court shall hold a fact-finding hearing on the petition and, unless the court dismisses the petition, shall make written findings of fact, stating the reasons therefor. The rules of evidence shall apply at the fact-finding hearing and the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the child shall have all of the rights provided in RCW 13.34.090(1). The petitioner shall have the burden of establishing by a preponderance of the evidence that the child is dependent within the meaning of RCW 13.34.030.

(2) The court in a fact-finding hearing may consider the history of past involvement of child protective services or law enforcement

agencies with the family for the purpose of establishing a pattern of conduct, behavior, or inaction with regard to the health, safety, or welfare of the child on the part of the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian, or for the purpose of establishing that reasonable efforts have been made by the department to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from the child's home. No report of child abuse or neglect that has been destroyed or expunged under RCW 26.44.031 may be used for such purposes.

(3)(a) The parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the child may waive his or her right to a fact-finding hearing by stipulating or agreeing to the entry of an order of dependency establishing that the child is dependent within the meaning of RCW 13.34.030. The parent, guardian, or legal custodian may also stipulate or agree to an order of disposition pursuant to RCW 13.34.130 at the same time. Any stipulated or agreed order of dependency or disposition must be signed by the parent, guardian, or legal custodian and his or her attorney, unless the parent, guardian, or legal custodian has waived his or her right to an attorney in open court, and by the petitioner and the attorney, guardian ad litem, or court-appointed special advocate for the child, if any. If the department is not the petitioner and is required by the order to supervise the placement of the child or provide services to any party, the department must also agree to and sign the order.

(b) Entry of any stipulated or agreed order of dependency or disposition is subject to approval by the court. The court shall receive and review a social study before entering a stipulated or agreed order and shall consider whether the order is consistent with the allegations of the dependency petition and the problems that necessitated the child's placement in out-of-home care. No social file or social study may be considered by the court in connection with the fact-finding hearing or prior to factual determination, except as otherwise admissible under the rules of evidence.

(c) Prior to the entry of any stipulated or agreed order of dependency, the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the child and his or her attorney must appear before the court and the court within available resources must inquire and establish on the record that:

(i) The parent, guardian, or legal custodian understands the terms of the order or orders he or she has signed, including his or her responsibility to participate in remedial services as provided in any disposition order;

(ii) The parent, guardian, or legal custodian understands that entry of the order starts a process that could result in the filing of a petition to terminate his or her relationship with the child within the time frames required by state and federal law if he or she fails to comply with the terms of the dependency or disposition orders or fails to substantially remedy the problems that necessitated the child's placement in out-of-home care;

(iii) The parent, guardian, or legal custodian understands that the entry of the stipulated or agreed order of dependency is an admission that the child is dependent within the meaning of RCW 13.34.030 and shall have the same legal effect as a finding by the court that the child is dependent by at least a preponderance of the evidence, and that the parent, guardian, or legal custodian shall not have the right in any subsequent proceeding for termination of parental rights pursuant to this chapter or guardianship pursuant to chapters [chapter] 13.36 or 11.130 RCW to challenge or dispute the fact that the child was found to be dependent; and

(iv) The parent, guardian, or legal custodian knowingly and willingly stipulated and agreed to and signed the order or orders, without duress, and without misrepresentation or fraud by any other party.

If a parent, guardian, or legal custodian fails to appear before the court after stipulating or agreeing to entry of an order of dependency, the court may enter the order upon a finding that the parent, guardian, or legal custodian had actual notice of the right to appear before the court and chose not to do so. The court may require other parties to the order, including the attorney for the parent, guardian, or legal custodian, to appear and advise the court of the parent's, guardian's, or legal custodian's notice of the right to appear and understanding of the factors specified in this subsection. A parent, guardian, or legal custodian may choose to waive his or her presence at the in-court hearing for entry of the stipulated or agreed order of dependency by submitting to the court through counsel a completed stipulated or agreed dependency fact-finding/disposition statement in a form determined by the Washington state supreme court pursuant to General Rule GR 9.

(4) Immediately after the entry of the findings of fact, the court shall hold a disposition hearing, unless there is good cause for continuing the matter for up to fourteen days. If good cause is shown, the case may be continued for longer than fourteen days. Notice of the time and place of the continued hearing may be given in open court. If notice in open court is not given to a party, that party shall be notified by certified mail of the time and place of any continued hearing. Unless there is reasonable cause to believe the health, safety, or welfare of the child would be jeopardized or efforts to reunite the parent and child would be hindered, the court shall direct the department to notify those adult persons who: (a) Are related by blood or marriage to the child in the following degrees: Parent, grandparent, brother, sister, stepparent, stepbrother, stepsister, uncle, or aunt; (b) are known to the department as having been in contact with the family or child within the past twelve months; and (c) would be an appropriate placement for the child. Reasonable cause to dispense with notification to a parent under this section must be proved by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence.

The parties need not appear at the fact-finding or dispositional hearing if the parties, their attorneys, the guardian ad litem, and court-appointed special advocates, if any, are all in agreement. [2020 c 312 s 116; 2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 305; 2007 c 220 s 9; 2001 c 332 s 7; 2000 c 122 s 11. Prior: 1995 c 313 s 1; 1995 c 311 s 27; 1993 c 412 s 7; 1991 c 340 s 3; 1983 c 311 s 4; 1979 c 155 s 44; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 39; 1961 c 302 s 5; prior: 1913 c 160 s 10, part; RCW 13.04.090, part. Formerly RCW 13.04.091.]

Effective date—2020 c 312: See note following RCW 11.130.915.

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.

Legislative finding—1983 c 311: See note following RCW 13.34.030.

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.

RCW 13.34.115 Hearings—Public excluded when in the best interests of the child—Notes and records—Video recordings. (1) All hearings shall be public, and conducted at any time or place within the limits of the county, except if the judge finds that excluding the public is in the best interests of the child.

(2) Either parent, or the child's attorney or guardian ad litem, may move to close a hearing at any time. If the judge finds that it is in the best interests of the child the court shall exclude the public.

(3) If the public is excluded from the hearing, the following people may attend the closed hearing unless the judge finds it is not in the best interests of the child:

(a) The child's relatives;

(b) The child's foster parents if the child resides in foster care; and

(c) Any person requested by the parent.

(4) Stenographic notes or any device which accurately records the proceedings may be required as provided in other civil cases pursuant to RCW 2.32.200.

(5) Any video recording of the proceedings may be released pursuant to RCW 13.50.100, however, the video recording may not be televised, broadcast, or further disseminated to the public. [2003 c 228 s 1; 2000 c 122 s 12.]

RCW 13.34.120 Social study and reports made available at disposition hearing—Contents—Notice to parents. (1) To aid the court in its decision on disposition, a social study shall be made by the person or agency filing the petition. A parent may submit a counselor's or health care provider's evaluation of the parent, which shall either be included in the social study or considered in conjunction with the social study. The study shall include all social files and may also include facts relating to the child's cultural heritage, and shall be made available to the court. The court shall consider the social file, social study, guardian ad litem report, the court-appointed special advocate's report, if any, and any reports filed by a party at the disposition hearing in addition to evidence produced at the fact-finding hearing. At least ten working days before the disposition hearing, the department shall mail to the parent and his or her attorney a copy of the agency's social study and proposed service plan, which shall be in writing or in a form understandable to the parents or custodians. In addition, the department shall provide an opportunity for parents to review and comment on the plan at the local office closest to the parents' residence. If the parents disagree with the agency's plan or any part thereof, the parents shall submit to the court at least twenty-four hours before the hearing, in writing, or signed oral statement, an alternative plan to correct the

problems which led to the finding of dependency. This section shall not interfere with the right of the parents or custodians to submit oral arguments regarding the disposition plan at the hearing.

(2)(a) The guardian ad litem or court-appointed special advocate shall file his or her report with the court and with the parties pursuant to court rule prior to a hearing for which a report is required. The report shall include a written list of persons interviewed and reports or documentation considered. If the report makes particular recommendations, the report shall include specific information on which the guardian ad litem or court-appointed special advocate relied in making each particular recommendation.

(b) The parties to the proceeding may file written responses to the guardian ad litem's or court-appointed special advocate's report with the court and deliver such responses to the other parties at a reasonable time or pursuant to court rule before the hearing. The court shall consider any written responses to the guardian ad litem's or court-appointed special advocate's report, including any factual information or recommendations provided in the report. [2000 c 124 s 5; 2000 c 122 s 13; 1998 c 328 s 4; 1996 c 249 s 14; 1994 c 288 s 2; 1993 c 412 s 8; 1987 c 524 s 5; 1979 c 155 s 45; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 40.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2000 c 122 s 13 and by 2000 c 124 s 5, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

Intent—1996 c 249: See note following RCW 2.56.030.

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.

RCW 13.34.125 Voluntary adoption plan—Consideration of preferences for proposed placement. In those cases where an alleged father, birth parent, or parent has indicated his or her intention to make a voluntary adoption plan for the child and has agreed to the termination of his or her parental rights, the department shall follow the wishes of the alleged father, birth parent, or parent regarding the proposed adoptive placement of the child, if the court determines that the adoption is in the best interest of the child, and the prospective adoptive parents chosen by the alleged father, birth parent, or parent are properly qualified to adopt in compliance with the standards in this chapter and chapter 26.33 RCW. If the department has filed a termination petition, an alleged father's, birth parent's, or parent's preferences regarding the proposed adoptive placement of the child shall be given consideration. [2018 c 284 s 9; 2009 c 520 s 26; 1999 c 173 s 2.]

Severability—1999 c 173: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1999 c 173 s 4.]

RCW 13.34.130 Order of disposition for a dependent child, alternatives—Petition seeking termination of parent-child relationship—Placement with relatives, foster family home, group care facility, qualified residential treatment program, or other suitable persons—Placement of an Indian child in out-of-home care—Contact with siblings. If, after a fact-finding hearing pursuant to RCW 13.34.110, it has been proven by a preponderance of the evidence that the child is dependent within the meaning of RCW 13.34.030 after consideration of the social study prepared pursuant to RCW 13.34.110 and after a disposition hearing has been held pursuant to RCW 13.34.110, the court shall enter an order of disposition pursuant to this section.

(1) The court shall order one of the following dispositions of the case:

(a) Order a disposition that maintains the child in his or her home, which shall provide a program designed to alleviate the immediate danger to the child, to mitigate or cure any damage the child has already suffered, and to aid the parents so that the child will not be endangered in the future. In determining the disposition, the court should choose services to assist the parents in maintaining the child in the home, including housing assistance, if appropriate, that least interfere with family autonomy and are adequate to protect the child.

(b)(i) Order the child to be removed from his or her home and into the custody, control, and care of a relative or other suitable person, the department, or agency responsible for supervision of the child's placement. If the court orders that the child be placed with a caregiver over the objections of the parent or the department, the court shall articulate, on the record, his or her reasons for ordering the placement. The court may not order an Indian child, as defined in RCW 13.38.040, to be removed from his or her home unless the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence including testimony of qualified expert witnesses, that the continued custody of the child by the parent or Indian custodian is likely to result in serious emotional or physical damage to the child.

(ii) The department has the authority to place the child, subject to review and approval by the court (A) with a relative as defined in RCW 74.15.020(2)(a), (B) in the home of another suitable person if the child or family has a preexisting relationship with that person, and the person has completed all required criminal history background checks and otherwise appears to the department to be suitable and competent to provide care for the child, or (C) in a foster family home or group care facility licensed pursuant to chapter 74.15 RCW.

(iii) The department may also consider placing the child, subject to review and approval by the court, with a person with whom the child's sibling or half-sibling is residing or a person who has adopted the sibling or half-sibling of the child being placed as long as the person has completed all required criminal history background checks and otherwise appears to the department to be competent to provide care for the child.

(2) Absent good cause, the department shall follow the wishes of the natural parent regarding the placement of the child in accordance with RCW 13.34.260.

(3) The department may only place a child with a person not related to the child as defined in RCW 74.15.020(2)(a), including a placement provided for in subsection (1)(b)(iii) of this section, when the court finds that such placement is in the best interest of the

child. Unless there is reasonable cause to believe that the health, safety, or welfare of the child would be jeopardized or that efforts to reunite the parent and child will be hindered, the child shall be placed with a person who is willing, appropriate, and available to care for the child, and who is: (I) Related to the child as defined in RCW 74.15.020(2)(a) with whom the child has a relationship and is comfortable; or (II) a suitable person as described in subsection (1)(b) of this section. The court shall consider the child's existing relationships and attachments when determining placement.

(4) If the child is placed in a qualified residential treatment program as defined in this chapter, the court shall, within sixty days of placement, hold a hearing to:

(a) Consider the assessment required under RCW 13.34.420 and submitted as part of the department's social study, and any related documentation;

(b) Determine whether placement in foster care can meet the child's needs or if placement in another available placement setting best meets the child's needs in the least restrictive environment; and

(c) Approve or disapprove the child's placement in the qualified residential treatment program.

(5) When placing an Indian child in out-of-home care, the department shall follow the placement preference characteristics in RCW 13.38.180.

(6) Placement of the child with a relative or other suitable person as described in subsection (1)(b) of this section shall be given preference by the court. An order for out-of-home placement may be made only if the court finds that reasonable efforts have been made to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from the child's home and to make it possible for the child to return home, specifying the services, including housing assistance, that have been provided to the child and the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian, and that prevention services have been offered or provided and have failed to prevent the need for out-of-home placement, unless the health, safety, and welfare of the child cannot be protected adequately in the home, and that:

(a) There is no parent or guardian available to care for such child;

(b) The parent, guardian, or legal custodian is not willing to take custody of the child; or

(c) The court finds, by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence, a manifest danger exists that the child will suffer serious abuse or neglect if the child is not removed from the home and an order under RCW 26.44.063 would not protect the child from danger. The court shall give great weight to the lethality of high-potency synthetic opioids and public health guidance from the department of health related to high-potency synthetic opioids, including fentanyl, when deciding whether a manifest danger exists.

(7) If the court has ordered a child removed from his or her home pursuant to subsection (1)(b) of this section, the court shall consider whether it is in a child's best interest to be placed with, have contact with, or have visits with siblings.

(a) There shall be a presumption that such placement, contact, or visits are in the best interests of the child provided that:

(i) The court has jurisdiction over all siblings subject to the order of placement, contact, or visitation pursuant to petitions filed under this chapter or the parents of a child for whom there is no jurisdiction are willing to agree; and

(ii) There is no reasonable cause to believe that the health, safety, or welfare of any child subject to the order of placement, contact, or visitation would be jeopardized or that efforts to reunite the parent and child would be hindered by such placement, contact, or visitation. In no event shall parental visitation time be reduced in order to provide sibling visitation.

(b) The court may also order placement, contact, or visitation of a child with a stepbrother or stepsister provided that in addition to the factors in (a) of this subsection, the child has a relationship and is comfortable with the stepsibling.

(8) If the court has ordered a child removed from his or her home pursuant to subsection (1)(b) of this section and placed into nonparental or nonrelative care, the court shall order a placement that allows the child to remain in the same school he or she attended prior to the initiation of the dependency proceeding when such a placement is practical and in the child's best interest.

(9) If the court has ordered a child removed from his or her home pursuant to subsection (1)(b) of this section, the court may order that a petition seeking termination of the parent and child relationship be filed if the requirements of RCW 13.34.132 are met.

(10) If there is insufficient information at the time of the disposition hearing upon which to base a determination regarding the suitability of a proposed placement with a relative or other suitable person, the child shall remain in foster care and the court shall direct the department to conduct necessary background investigations as provided in chapter 74.15 RCW and report the results of such investigation to the court within thirty days. However, if such relative or other person appears otherwise suitable and competent to provide care and treatment, the criminal history background check need not be completed before placement, but as soon as possible after placement. Any placements with relatives or other suitable persons, pursuant to this section, shall be contingent upon cooperation by the relative or other suitable person with the agency case plan and compliance with court orders related to the care and supervision of the child including, but not limited to, court orders regarding parent-child contacts, sibling contacts, and any other conditions imposed by the court. Noncompliance with the case plan or court order shall be grounds for removal of the child from the relative's or other suitable person's home, subject to review by the court. [2024 c 328 s 104; 2019 c 172 s 12; 2018 c 284 s 10; 2013 c 254 s 1. Prior: 2011 c 309 s 27; 2011 c 292 s 1; 2010 c 288 s 1; prior: 2009 c 520 s 27; 2009 c 491 s 2; 2009 c 397 s 3; prior: 2007 c 413 s 6; 2007 c 412 s 2; 2003 c 227 s 3; 2002 c 52 s 5; 2000 c 122 s 15; prior: 1999 c 267 s 16; 1999 c 267 s 9; 1999 c 173 s 3; prior: 1998 c 314 s 2; 1998 c 130 s 2; 1997 c 280 s 1; prior: 1995 c 313 s 2; 1995 c 311 s 19; 1995 c 53 s 1; 1994 c 288 s 4; 1992 c 145 s 14; 1991 c 127 s 4; prior: 1990 c 284 s 32; 1990 c 246 s 5; 1989 1st ex.s. c 17 s 17; prior: 1988 c 194 s 1; 1988 c 190 s 2; 1988 c 189 s 2; 1984 c 188 s 4; prior: 1983 c 311 s 5; 1983 c 246 s 2; 1979 c 155 s 46; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 41.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 328: See note following RCW 13.34.050.

Effective date—2019 c 172 ss 3, 4, and 10-15: See note following RCW 13.34.420.

Severability—2007 c 413: See note following RCW 13.34.215.

Intent—2003 c 227: "It is the intent of the legislature to recognize the importance of emotional ties formed by siblings with each other, especially in those circumstances which warrant court intervention into family relationships. It is the intent of the legislature to encourage the courts and public agencies which deal with families to acknowledge and give thoughtful consideration to the quality and nature of sibling relationships when intervening in family relationships. It is not the intent of the legislature to create legal obligations or responsibilities between siblings and other family members whether by blood or marriage, step families, foster families, or adopted families that do not already exist. Neither is it the intent of the legislature to mandate sibling placement, contact, or visitation if there is reasonable cause to believe that the health, safety, or welfare of a child or siblings would be jeopardized. Finally, it is not the intent of the legislature to manufacture or anticipate family relationships which do not exist at the time of the court intervention, or to disrupt already existing positive family relationships." [2003 c 227 s 1.]

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

Findings—Intent—Severability—1999 c 267: See notes following RCW 43.20A.790.

Short title—Purpose—Entitlement not granted—Federal waivers—1999 c 267 ss 10-26: See RCW 74.15.900 and 74.15.901.

Severability—1999 c 173: See note following RCW 13.34.125.

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

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

Legislative finding—1983 c 311: See note following RCW 13.34.030.

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.

RCW 13.34.132 Petition seeking termination of parent-child relationship—Requirements. A court may order that a petition seeking termination of the parent and child relationship be filed if the following requirements are met:

(1) The court has removed the child from his or her home pursuant to RCW 13.34.130;

(2) Termination is recommended by the department;

(3) Termination is in the best interests of the child; and

(4) Because of the existence of aggravated circumstances, reasonable efforts to unify the family are not required. Notwithstanding the existence of aggravated circumstances, reasonable efforts may be required if the court or department determines it is in

the best interests of the child. In determining whether aggravated circumstances exist by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence, the court shall consider one or more of the following:

(a) Conviction of the parent of rape of the child in the first, second, or third degree as defined in RCW 9A.44.073, 9A.44.076, and 9A.44.079;

(b) Conviction of the parent of criminal mistreatment of the child in the first or second degree as defined in RCW 9A.42.020 and 9A.42.030;

(c) Conviction of the parent of one of the following assault crimes, when the child is the victim: Assault in the first or second degree as defined in RCW 9A.36.011 and 9A.36.021 or assault of a child in the first or second degree as defined in RCW 9A.36.120 or 9A.36.130;

(d) Conviction of the parent of murder, manslaughter, or homicide by abuse of the child's other parent, sibling, or another child;

(e) Conviction of the parent of trafficking, or promoting commercial sexual abuse of a minor when the victim of the crime is the child, the child's other parent, a sibling of the child, or another child;

(f) Conviction of the parent of attempting, soliciting, or conspiring to commit a crime listed in (a), (b), (c), or (d) of this subsection;

(g) A finding by a court that a parent is a sexually violent predator as defined in RCW 71.09.020;

(h) Failure of the parent to complete available treatment ordered under this chapter or the equivalent laws of another state, where such failure has resulted in a prior termination of parental rights to another child and the parent has failed to effect significant change in the interim. In the case of a parent of an Indian child, as defined in RCW 13.38.040, the court shall also consider tribal efforts to assist the parent in completing treatment and make it possible for the child to return home;

(i) An infant under three years of age has been abandoned;

(j) Conviction of the parent, when a child has been born of the offense, of: (A) A sex offense under chapter 9A.44 RCW; or (B) incest under RCW 9A.64.020. [2018 c 284 s 11; 2013 c 302 s 11; 2011 c 309 s 28; 2000 c 122 s 16.]

Effective date—2013 c 302: See note following RCW 9.68A.090.

RCW 13.34.134 Permanent placement of child. If reasonable efforts are not ordered under RCW 13.34.132, a permanency planning hearing shall be held within thirty days of the court order to file a petition to terminate parental rights. Reasonable efforts shall be made to place the child in a timely manner in accordance with the permanency plan, and to complete whatever steps are necessary to finalize the permanent placement of the child. [2000 c 122 s 17.]

RCW 13.34.136 Permanency plan of care. (1) Whenever a child is ordered to be removed from the home, a permanency plan shall be developed no later than 60 days from the time the department assumes responsibility for providing services, including placing the child, or at the time of a hearing under RCW 13.34.130, whichever occurs first.

The permanency planning process continues until a permanency planning goal is achieved or dependency is dismissed. The planning process shall include reasonable efforts to return the child to the parent's home.

(2) The department shall submit a written permanency plan to all parties and the court not less than 14 days prior to the scheduled hearing. Responsive reports of parties not in agreement with the department's proposed permanency plan must be provided to the department, all other parties, and the court at least seven days prior to the hearing.

The permanency plan shall include:

(a) A permanency plan of care that shall identify one of the following outcomes as a primary goal and may identify additional outcomes as alternative goals: Return of the child to the home of the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian; adoption, including a tribal customary adoption as defined in RCW 13.38.040; guardianship pursuant to chapter 13.36 RCW; guardianship of a minor pursuant to RCW 11.130.215; long-term relative or foster care, if the child is between ages 16 and 18, with a written agreement between the parties and the care provider; successful completion of a responsible living skills program; or independent living, if appropriate and if the child is age 16 or older. Although a permanency plan of care may only identify long-term relative or foster care for children between ages 16 and 18, children under 16 may remain placed with relatives or in foster care. The department shall not discharge a child to an independent living situation before the child is 18 years of age unless the child becomes emancipated pursuant to chapter 13.64 RCW;

(b) Unless the court has ordered, pursuant to RCW 13.34.130(8), that a termination petition be filed, a specific plan as to where the child will be placed, what steps will be taken to return the child home, what steps the department will take to promote existing appropriate sibling relationships and/or facilitate placement together or contact in accordance with the best interests of each child, and what actions the department will take to maintain parent-child ties. All aspects of the plan shall include the goal of achieving permanence for the child.

(i) The department's plan shall specify what services the parents will be offered to enable them to resume custody, what requirements the parents must meet to resume custody, and a time limit for each service plan and parental requirement.

(A) If the parent is incarcerated, the plan must address how the parent will participate in the case conference and permanency planning meetings and, where possible, must include treatment that reflects the resources available at the facility where the parent is confined. The plan must provide for visitation opportunities, unless visitation is not in the best interests of the child.

(B) If a parent has a developmental disability according to the definition provided in RCW 71A.10.020, and that individual is eligible for services provided by the department of social and health services developmental disabilities administration, the department shall make reasonable efforts to consult with the department of social and health services developmental disabilities administration to create an appropriate plan for services. For individuals who meet the definition of developmental disability provided in RCW 71A.10.020 and who are eligible for services through the developmental disabilities administration, the plan for services must be tailored to correct the parental deficiency taking into consideration the parent's disability

and the department shall also determine an appropriate method to offer those services based on the parent's disability.

(ii)(A) Visitation is the right of the family, including the child and the parent, in cases in which visitation is in the best interest of the child. Early, consistent, and frequent visitation is crucial for maintaining parent-child relationships and making it possible for parents and children to safely reunify. The department shall encourage the maximum parent and child and sibling contact possible, when it is in the best interest of the child, including regular visitation and participation by the parents in the care of the child while the child is in placement.

(B) Visitation shall not be limited as a sanction for a parent's failure to comply with court orders or services where the health, safety, or welfare of the child is not at risk as a result of the visitation.

(C) Visitation may be limited or denied only if the court determines that such limitation or denial is necessary to protect the child's health, safety, or welfare. Visitation must occur in the least restrictive setting and be unsupervised unless the presence of threats or danger to the child requires the constant presence of an adult to ensure the safety of the child. When a parent or sibling has been identified as a suspect in an active criminal investigation for a violent crime that, if the allegations are true, would impact the safety of the child, the department shall make a concerted effort to consult with the assigned law enforcement officer in the criminal case before recommending any changes in parent/child or child/sibling contact. In the event that the law enforcement officer has information pertaining to the criminal case that may have serious implications for child safety or well-being, the law enforcement officer shall provide this information to the department during the consultation. The department may only use the information provided by law enforcement during the consultation to inform family visitation plans and may not share or otherwise distribute the information to any person or entity. Any information provided to the department by law enforcement during the consultation is considered investigative information and is exempt from public inspection pursuant to RCW 42.56.240. The results of the consultation shall be communicated to the court.

(D) The court and the department should rely upon community resources, relatives, foster parents, and other appropriate persons to provide transportation and supervision for visitation to the extent that such resources are available, and appropriate, and the child's safety would not be compromised.

(E) If the court previously ordered that visitation between a parent and child be supervised or monitored, there shall be a presumption that such supervision or monitoring will no longer be necessary when the permanency plan is entered. To overcome this presumption, a party must provide a report to the court including evidence establishing that removing visit supervision or monitoring would create a risk to the child's safety, and the court shall make a determination as to whether visit supervision or monitoring must continue.

(F) The court shall advise the petitioner that the failure to provide court-ordered visitation may result in a finding that the petitioner failed to make reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan. The lack of sufficient contracted visitation providers will not excuse the failure to provide court-ordered visitation.

(iii)(A) The department, court, or caregiver in the out-of-home placement may not limit visitation or contact between a child and sibling as a sanction for a child's behavior or as an incentive to the child to change his or her behavior.

(B) Any exceptions, limitation, or denial of contacts or visitation must be approved by the supervisor of the department caseworker and documented. The child, parent, department, guardian ad litem, or court-appointed special advocate may challenge the denial of visits in court.

(iv) A child shall be placed as close to the child's home as possible, preferably in the child's own neighborhood, unless the court finds that placement at a greater distance is necessary to promote the child's or parents' well-being.

(v) The plan shall state whether both in-state and, where appropriate, out-of-state placement options have been considered by the department.

(vi) Unless it is not in the best interests of the child, whenever practical, the plan should ensure the child remains enrolled in the school the child was attending at the time the child entered foster care.

(vii) The department shall provide all reasonable services that are available within the department, or within the community, or those services which the department has existing contracts to purchase. It shall report to the court if it is unable to provide such services; and

(c) If the court has ordered, pursuant to RCW 13.34.130(9), that a termination petition be filed, a specific plan as to where the child will be placed, what steps will be taken to achieve permanency for the child, services to be offered or provided to the child, and, if visitation would be in the best interests of the child, a recommendation to the court regarding visitation between parent and child pending a fact-finding hearing on the termination petition. The department shall not be required to develop a plan of services for the parents or provide services to the parents if the court orders a termination petition be filed. However, reasonable efforts to ensure visitation and contact between siblings shall be made unless there is reasonable cause to believe the best interests of the child or siblings would be jeopardized.

(3) Permanency planning goals should be achieved at the earliest possible date. If the child has been in out-of-home care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, and the court has not made a good cause exception, the court shall require the department to file a petition seeking termination of parental rights in accordance with RCW 13.34.145(4)(b)(vi). In cases where parental rights have been terminated, the child is legally free for adoption, and adoption has been identified as the primary permanency planning goal, it shall be a goal to complete the adoption within six months following entry of the termination order.

(4) If the court determines that the continuation of reasonable efforts to prevent or eliminate the need to remove the child from his or her home or to safely return the child home should not be part of the permanency plan of care for the child, reasonable efforts shall be made to place the child in a timely manner and to complete whatever steps are necessary to finalize the permanent placement of the child.

(5) The identified outcomes and goals of the permanency plan may change over time based upon the circumstances of the particular case.

(6) The court shall consider the child's relationships with the child's siblings in accordance with RCW 13.34.130(7). Whenever the permanency plan for a child is adoption, the court shall encourage the prospective adoptive parents, birth parents, foster parents, kinship caregivers, and the department or other agency to seriously consider the long-term benefits to the child adoptee and his or her siblings of providing for and facilitating continuing postadoption contact between the siblings. To the extent that it is feasible, and when it is in the best interests of the child adoptee and his or her siblings, contact between the siblings should be frequent and of a similar nature as that which existed prior to the adoption. If the child adoptee or his or her siblings are represented by an attorney or guardian ad litem in a proceeding under this chapter or in any other child custody proceeding, the court shall inquire of each attorney and guardian ad litem regarding the potential benefits of continuing contact between the siblings and the potential detriments of severing contact. This section does not require the department or other 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.

(7) For purposes related to permanency planning, "guardianship" means a guardianship pursuant to chapter 13.36 RCW or a guardianship of a minor pursuant to RCW 11.130.215, or equivalent laws of another state or a federally recognized Indian tribe. [2021 c 208 s 2; 2020 c 312 s 117; 2018 c 284 s 13; (2018 c 284 s 12 expired July 1, 2018); 2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 306; 2015 c 270 s 1; 2014 c 163 s 2. Prior: 2013 c 316 s 2; 2013 c 254 s 2; 2013 c 173 s 2; 2011 c 309 s 29; prior: 2009 c 520 s 28; 2009 c 234 s 5; prior: 2008 c 267 s 3; 2008 c 152 s 2; 2007 c 413 s 7; 2004 c 146 s 1; 2003 c 227 s 4; 2002 c 52 s 6; 2000 c 122 s 18.]

Effective date—2020 c 312: See note following RCW 11.130.915.

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.

Intent—Finding—2014 c 163: "The legislature intends to assure that for parents with developmental disabilities, the department of social and health services takes into consideration the parent's disability when offering services to correct parental deficiencies. To do so, the legislature finds that the department must contact the developmental disabilities administration." [2014 c 163 s 1.]

Intent—2013 c 316: "The Washington state legislature recognizes the importance of frequent and meaningful contact for siblings

separated due to involvement in the foster care system. The legislature also recognizes that children and youth in foster care have not always been provided adequate opportunities for visitation with their siblings. It is the intent of the legislature to encourage appropriate facilitation of sibling visits." [2013 c 316 s 1.]

Findings—Intent—2008 c 152: "The legislature finds that meeting the needs of vulnerable children who enter the child welfare system includes protecting the child's right to a safe, stable, and permanent home where the child receives basic nurturing. The legislature also finds that according to measures of timely dependency case processing, many children's cases are not meeting the federal and state standards intended to promote child-centered decision making in dependency cases. The legislature intends to encourage a greater focus on children's developmental needs and to promote closer adherence to timeliness standards in the resolution of dependency cases." [2008 c 152 s 1.]

Severability—2007 c 413: See note following RCW 13.34.215.

Intent—2003 c 227: See note following RCW 13.34.130.

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

RCW 13.34.138 Review hearings—Findings—Duties of parties involved—In-home placement requirements—Housing assistance. (1) The status of all children found to be dependent shall be reviewed by the court at least every six months from the beginning date of the placement episode or the date dependency is established, whichever is first. The purpose of the hearing shall be to review the progress of the parties and determine whether court supervision should continue.

(a) The initial review hearing shall be an in-court review and shall be set six months from the beginning date of the placement episode or no more than 90 days from the entry of the disposition order, whichever comes first. The requirements for the initial review hearing, including the in-court review requirement, shall be accomplished within existing resources.

(b) The initial review hearing may be a permanency planning hearing when necessary to meet the time frames set forth in RCW 13.34.145(1)(a) or 13.34.134.

(2)(a) A child shall not be returned home at the review hearing unless the court finds that a reason for removal as set forth in RCW 13.34.130 no longer exists. The parents, guardian, or legal custodian shall report to the court the efforts they have made to correct the conditions which led to removal. If a child is returned, casework supervision by the department shall continue for a period of six months, at which time there shall be a hearing on the need for continued intervention.

(b) Prior to the child returning home, the department must complete the following:

(i) Identify all adults residing in the home and conduct background checks on those persons;

(ii) Identify any persons who may act as a caregiver for the child in addition to the parent with whom the child is being placed and determine whether such persons are in need of any services in

order to ensure the safety of the child, regardless of whether such persons are a party to the dependency. The department may recommend to the court and the court may order that placement of the child in the parent's home be contingent on or delayed based on the need for such persons to engage in or complete services to ensure the safety of the child prior to placement. If services are recommended for the caregiver, and the caregiver fails to engage in or follow through with the recommended services, the department must promptly notify the court; and

(iii) Notify the parent with whom the child is being placed that he or she has an ongoing duty to notify the department of all persons who reside in the home or who may act as a caregiver for the child both prior to the placement of the child in the home and subsequent to the placement of the child in the home as long as the court retains jurisdiction of the dependency proceeding or the department is providing or monitoring either remedial services to the parent or services to ensure the safety of the child to any caregivers.

Caregivers may be required to engage in services under this subsection solely for the purpose of ensuring the present and future safety of a child who is a ward of the court. This subsection does not grant party status to any individual not already a party to the dependency proceeding, create an entitlement to services or a duty on the part of the department to provide services, or create judicial authority to order the provision of services to any person other than for the express purposes of this section or RCW 13.34.025 or if the services are unavailable or unsuitable or the person is not eligible for such services.

(c) If the child is not returned home, the court shall establish in writing:

(i) Whether the department is making reasonable efforts to provide services to the family and eliminate the need for placement of the child. If additional services, including housing assistance, are needed to facilitate the return of the child to the child's parents, the court shall order that reasonable services be offered specifying such services;

(ii) Whether there has been compliance with the case plan by the child, the child's parents, and the agency supervising the placement;

(iii) Whether progress has been made toward correcting the problems that necessitated the child's placement in out-of-home care;

(iv) Whether the services set forth in the case plan and the responsibilities of the parties need to be clarified or modified due to the availability of additional information or changed circumstances;

(v) Whether there is a continuing need for placement;

(vi) Within 60 days of the placement of a child in a qualified residential treatment program as defined in this chapter, and at each review hearing thereafter if the child remains in such a program, the following:

(A) Whether ongoing assessment of the child's strengths and needs continues to support the determination that the child's needs cannot be met through placement in a foster family home;

(B) Whether the child's placement provides the most effective and appropriate level of care in the least restrictive environment;

(C) Whether the placement is consistent with the child's permanency plan;

(D) What specific treatment or service needs will be met in the placement, and how long the child is expected to need the treatment or services; and

(E) What efforts the department has made to prepare the child to return home or be placed with a fit and willing relative as defined in RCW 13.34.030, a Title 13 RCW legal guardian, an adoptive parent, or in a foster family home;

(vii) Whether a parent's experiencing homelessness or lack of suitable housing is a significant factor delaying permanency for the child by preventing the return of the child to the home of the child's parent and whether housing assistance should be provided by the department;

(viii) Whether the child is in an appropriate placement which adequately meets all physical, emotional, and educational needs;

(ix) Whether preference has been given to placement with the child's relatives if such placement is in the child's best interests;

(x) Whether both in-state and, where appropriate, out-of-state placements have been considered;

(xi) Whether the parents have visited the child and any reasons why visitation has not occurred or has been infrequent;

(xii) Whether terms of visitation need to be modified. If the court previously ordered that visitation between a parent and child must be supervised or monitored, there shall be a presumption that such supervision or monitoring will no longer be necessary after the review hearing. To overcome this presumption, a party must provide a report to the court including evidence establishing that removing visit supervision or monitoring would create a risk to the child's safety, and the court shall make a determination as to whether visit supervision or monitoring must continue;

(xiii) Whether the court-approved long-term permanent plan for the child remains the best plan for the child;

(xiv) Whether any additional court orders need to be made to move the case toward permanency; and

(xv) The projected date by which the child will be returned home or other permanent plan of care will be implemented.

(d) The court at the review hearing may order that a petition seeking termination of the parent and child relationship be filed.

(3)(a) In any case in which the court orders that a dependent child may be returned to or remain in the child's home, the in-home placement shall be contingent upon the following:

(i) The compliance of the parents with court orders related to the care and supervision of the child, including compliance with the department's case plan; and

(ii) The continued participation of the parents, if applicable, in available substance abuse or mental health treatment if substance abuse or mental illness was a contributing factor to the removal of the child.

(b) The following may be grounds for removal of the child from the home, subject to review by the court:

(i) Noncompliance by the parents with the department's case plan or court order;

(ii) The parent's inability, unwillingness, or failure to participate in available services or treatment for themselves or the child, including substance abuse treatment if a parent's substance abuse was a contributing factor to the abuse or neglect; or

(iii) The failure of the parents to successfully and substantially complete available services or treatment for themselves

or the child, including substance abuse treatment if a parent's substance abuse was a contributing factor to the abuse or neglect.

(c) In a pending dependency case in which the court orders that a dependent child may be returned home and that child is later removed from the home, the court shall hold a review hearing within thirty days from the date of removal to determine whether the permanency plan should be changed, a termination petition should be filed, or other action is warranted. The best interests of the child shall be the court's primary consideration in the review hearing.

(4) The court's authority to order housing assistance under this chapter is: (a) Limited to cases in which a parent's experiencing homelessness or lack of suitable housing is a significant factor delaying permanency for the child and housing assistance would aid the parent in providing an appropriate home for the child; and (b) subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this specific purpose. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to create an entitlement to housing assistance nor to create judicial authority to order the provision of such assistance to any person or family if the assistance or funding are unavailable or the child or family are not eligible for such assistance.

(5) The court shall consider the child's relationship with siblings in accordance with RCW 13.34.130(7).

(6) The court shall advise the petitioner that the failure to provide court-ordered visitation may result in a finding that the petitioner failed to make reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan. The lack of sufficient contracted visitation providers will not excuse the failure to provide court-ordered visitation. [2021 c 208 s 3; 2021 c 67 s 5; 2019 c 172 s 13; 2018 c 284 s 14. Prior: 2009 c 520 s 29; 2009 c 491 s 3; 2009 c 397 s 4; 2009 c 152 s 1; prior: 2007 c 413 s 8; 2007 c 410 s 1; 2005 c 512 s 3; 2003 c 227 s 5; 2001 c 332 s 5; 2000 c 122 s 19.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2021 c 67 s 5 and by 2021 c 208 s 3, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

Effective date—2019 c 172 ss 3, 4, and 10-15: See note following RCW 13.34.420.

Severability—2007 c 413: See note following RCW 13.34.215.

Short title—2007 c 410: "This act may be known and cited as Sirita's law." [2007 c 410 s 9.]

Finding—Intent—Effective date—Short title—2005 c 512: See notes following RCW 26.44.100.

Intent—2003 c 227: See note following RCW 13.34.130.

RCW 13.34.141 Entry, order of disposition—Parent, guardian, or custodian of child to engage in services and maintain contact with child—Notice. (1) After entry of a dispositional order pursuant to RCW 13.34.130 ordering placement of a child in out-of-home care, the department shall continue to encourage the parent, guardian, or

custodian of the child to engage in services and maintain contact with the child, which shall be accomplished by attaching a standard notice to the services and safety plan to be provided in advance of hearings conducted pursuant to RCW 13.34.138.

(2) The notice shall be photocopied on contrasting paper to distinguish it from the services and safety plan to which it is attached, and shall be in substantially the following form:

"NOTICE

If you have not been maintaining consistent contact with your child in out-of-home care, your ability to reunify with your child may be jeopardized. If this is your situation, you need to be aware that you have important legal rights and must take steps to protect your interests.

1. The department of children, youth, and families (or other *supervising agency) and the court have created a permanency plan for your child, including a primary placement plan and a secondary placement plan, and recommending services needed before your child can be placed in the primary or secondary placement. If you want the court to order that your child be reunified with you, you should notify your lawyer and the department, and you should carefully comply with court orders for services and participate regularly in visitation with your child. Failure to promptly engage in services or to maintain contact with your child may lead to the filing of a petition to terminate your rights as a parent.

2. Primary and secondary permanency plans are intended to run at the same time so that your child will have a permanent home as quickly as possible. Even if you want another parent or person to be the primary placement choice for your child, you should tell your lawyer, the department, and the court if you want to be the secondary placement option, and you should comply with any court orders for services and participate in visitation with your child. Early and consistent involvement in your child's case plan is important for the well-being of your child.

3. Dependency review hearings, and all other dependency case hearings, are legal proceedings with potentially serious consequences. Failure to participate, respond, or comply with court orders may lead to the loss of your parental rights." [2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 307; 2009 c 484 s 1.]

***Reviser's note:** The definition for "supervising agency" for chapter 13.34 RCW was deleted by 2018 c 284 s 3.

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.

RCW 13.34.142 Current placement episode—Calculation. If the most recent date that a child was removed from the home of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian for purposes of placement in out-of-home care occurred prior to the filing of a dependency petition or after filing but prior to entry of a disposition order, such time periods

shall be included when calculating the length of the child's current placement episode. [2000 c 122 s 14.]

RCW 13.34.145 Permanency planning hearing—Purpose—Time limits—Goals—Review hearing—Petition for termination of parental rights—Guardianship petition—Agency responsibility to provide services to parents—Due process rights. (1) The purpose of a permanency planning hearing is to review the permanency plan for the child, inquire into the welfare of the child and progress of the case, and reach decisions regarding the permanent placement of the child.

(a) A permanency planning hearing shall be held in all cases where the child has remained in out-of-home care for at least nine months and an adoption decree, guardianship order, or permanent custody order has not previously been entered. The hearing shall take place no later than 12 months following commencement of the current placement episode.

(b) Whenever a child is removed from the home of a dependency guardian or long-term relative or foster care provider, and the child is not returned to the home of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian but is placed in out-of-home care, a permanency planning hearing shall take place no later than 12 months, as provided in this section, following the date of removal unless, prior to the hearing, the child returns to the home of the dependency guardian or long-term care provider, the child is placed in the home of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian, an adoption decree, guardianship order, or a permanent custody order is entered, or the dependency is dismissed. Every effort shall be made to provide stability in long-term placement, and to avoid disruption of placement, unless the child is being returned home or it is in the best interest of the child.

(c) Permanency planning goals should be achieved at the earliest possible date, preferably before the child has been in out-of-home care for 15 months. In cases where parental rights have been terminated, the child is legally free for adoption, and adoption has been identified as the primary permanency planning goal, it shall be a goal to complete the adoption within six months following entry of the termination order.

(2) No later than 10 working days prior to the permanency planning hearing, the agency having custody of the child shall submit a written permanency plan to the court and shall mail a copy of the plan to all parties and their legal counsel, if any.

(3) When the youth is at least age 17 years but not older than 17 years and six months, the department shall provide the youth with written documentation which explains the availability of extended foster care services and detailed instructions regarding how the youth may access such services after he or she reaches age 18 years.

(4) At the permanency planning hearing, the court shall conduct the following inquiry:

(a) If a goal of long-term foster or relative care has been achieved prior to the permanency planning hearing, the court shall review the child's status to determine whether the placement and the plan for the child's care remain appropriate. The court shall find, as of the date of the hearing, that the child's placement and plan of care is the best permanency plan for the child and provide compelling reasons why it continues to not be in the child's best interest to (i) return home; (ii) be placed for adoption; (iii) be placed with a legal

guardian; or (iv) be placed with a fit and willing relative. If the child is present at the hearing, the court should ask the child about his or her desired permanency outcome.

(b) In cases where the primary permanency planning goal has not been achieved, the court shall inquire regarding the reasons why the primary goal has not been achieved and determine what needs to be done to make it possible to achieve the primary goal. The court shall review the permanency plan prepared by the agency and make explicit findings regarding each of the following:

(i) The continuing necessity for, and the safety and appropriateness of, the placement;

(ii) The extent of compliance with the permanency plan by the department and any other service providers, the child's parents, the child, and the child's guardian, if any;

(iii) The extent of any efforts to involve appropriate service providers in addition to department staff in planning to meet the special needs of the child and the child's parents;

(iv) The progress toward eliminating the causes for the child's placement outside of his or her home and toward returning the child safely to his or her home or obtaining a permanent placement for the child;

(v) The date by which it is likely that the child will be returned to his or her home or placed for adoption, with a guardian or in some other alternative permanent placement; and

(vi) If the child has been placed outside of his or her home for 15 of the most recent 22 months, not including any period during which the child was a runaway from the out-of-home placement or the first six months of any period during which the child was returned to his or her home for a trial home visit, the appropriateness of the permanency plan, whether reasonable efforts were made by the department to achieve the goal of the permanency plan, and the circumstances which prevent the child from any of the following:

(A) Being returned safely to his or her home;

(B) Having a petition for the involuntary termination of parental rights filed on behalf of the child;

(C) Being placed for adoption;

(D) Being placed with a guardian;

(E) Being placed in the home of a fit and willing relative of the child; or

(F) Being placed in some other alternative permanent placement, including independent living or long-term foster care.

(c) Regardless of whether the primary permanency planning goal has been achieved, for a child who remains placed in a qualified residential treatment program as defined in this chapter for at least 60 days, and remains placed there at subsequent permanency planning hearings, the court shall establish in writing:

(i) Whether ongoing assessment of the child's strengths and needs continues to support the determination that the child's needs cannot be met through placement in a foster family home;

(ii) Whether the child's placement provides the most effective and appropriate level of care in the least restrictive environment;

(iii) Whether the placement is consistent with the child's short and long-term goals as stated in the child's permanency plan;

(iv) What specific treatment or service needs will be met in the placement, and how long the child is expected to need the treatment or services; and

(v) What efforts the department has made to prepare the child to return home or be placed with a fit and willing relative as defined in RCW 13.34.030, a Title 13 RCW guardian, a guardian pursuant to RCW 11.130.215, an adoptive parent, or in a foster family home.

(5) Following this inquiry, at the permanency planning hearing, the court shall order the department to file a petition seeking termination of parental rights if the child has been in out-of-home care for 15 of the last 22 months since the date the dependency petition was filed unless the court makes a good cause exception as to why the filing of a termination of parental rights petition is not appropriate. Any good cause finding shall be reviewed at all subsequent hearings pertaining to the child.

(a) For purposes of this subsection, "good cause exception" includes but is not limited to the following:

(i) The child is being cared for by a relative;

(ii) The department has not provided to the child's family such services as the court and the department have deemed necessary for the child's safe return home;

(iii) The department has documented in the case plan a compelling reason for determining that filing a petition to terminate parental rights would not be in the child's best interests;

(iv) The parent is incarcerated, or the parent's prior incarceration is a significant factor in why the child has been in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months, the parent maintains a meaningful role in the child's life, and the department has not documented another reason why it would be otherwise appropriate to file a petition pursuant to this section;

(v) Where a parent has been accepted into a dependency treatment court program or long-term substance abuse or dual diagnoses treatment program and is demonstrating compliance with treatment goals;

(vi) Where a parent who has been court ordered to complete services necessary for the child's safe return home files a declaration under penalty of perjury stating the parent's financial inability to pay for the same court-ordered services, and also declares the department was unwilling or unable to pay for the same services necessary for the child's safe return home; or

(vii) The department has not yet met with the caregiver for the child to discuss guardianship as an alternative to adoption or the court has determined that guardianship is an appropriate permanent plan.

(b) The court's assessment of whether a parent who is incarcerated maintains a meaningful role in the child's life may include consideration of the following:

(i) The parent's expressions or acts of manifesting concern for the child, such as letters, telephone calls, visits, and other forms of communication with the child;

(ii) The parent's efforts to communicate and work with the department or other individuals for the purpose of complying with the service plan and repairing, maintaining, or building the parent-child relationship;

(iii) A positive response by the parent to the reasonable efforts of the department;

(iv) Information provided by individuals or agencies in a reasonable position to assist the court in making this assessment, including but not limited to the parent's attorney, correctional and mental health personnel, or other individuals providing services to the parent;

(v) Limitations in the parent's access to family support programs, therapeutic services, and visiting opportunities, restrictions to telephone and mail services, inability to participate in foster care planning meetings, and difficulty accessing lawyers and participating meaningfully in court proceedings; and

(vi) Whether the continued involvement of the parent in the child's life is in the child's best interest.

(c) The constraints of a parent's current or prior incarceration and associated delays or barriers to accessing court-mandated services may be considered in rebuttal to a claim of aggravated circumstances under RCW 13.34.132(4)(h) for a parent's failure to complete available treatment.

(6)(a) If the permanency plan identifies independent living as a goal, the court at the permanency planning hearing shall make a finding that the provision of services to assist the child in making a transition from foster care to independent living will allow the child to manage his or her financial, personal, social, educational, and nonfinancial affairs prior to approving independent living as a permanency plan of care. The court will inquire whether the child has been provided information about extended foster care services.

(b) The permanency plan shall also specifically identify the services, including extended foster care services, where appropriate, that will be provided to assist the child to make a successful transition from foster care to independent living.

(c) The department shall not discharge a child to an independent living situation before the child is eighteen years of age unless the child becomes emancipated pursuant to chapter 13.64 RCW.

(7) If the child has resided in the home of a foster parent or relative for more than six months prior to the permanency planning hearing, the court shall:

(a) Enter a finding regarding whether the foster parent or relative was informed of the hearing as required in RCW 74.13.280, 13.34.215(6), and 13.34.096; and

(b) Instruct the department to discuss guardianship as a permanent option for the child with the child's parents and caregiver as an alternative to termination of parental rights and adoption. No child who is placed with a relative or other suitable person may be moved, unless, pursuant to the criteria established in RCW 13.34.130, the court finds that a change in circumstances necessitates a change in placement.

(8) In all cases, at the permanency planning hearing, the court shall:

(a)(i) Order the permanency plan prepared by the department to be implemented; or

(ii) Modify the permanency plan, and order implementation of the modified plan; and

(b)(i) Order the child returned home only if the court finds that a reason for removal as set forth in RCW 13.34.130 no longer exists; or

(ii) Order the child to remain in out-of-home care for a limited specified time period while efforts are made to implement the permanency plan.

(9) Following the first permanency planning hearing, the court shall hold a further permanency planning hearing in accordance with this section at least once every 12 months until a permanency planning goal is achieved or the dependency is dismissed, whichever occurs first.

(10) Prior to the second permanency planning hearing, the agency that has custody of the child shall consider whether to file a petition for termination of parental rights.

(11) If the court orders the child returned home, casework supervision by the department shall continue for at least six months, at which time a review hearing shall be held pursuant to RCW 13.34.138, and the court shall determine the need for continued intervention.

(12) The juvenile court may hear a petition for permanent legal custody when: (a) The court has ordered implementation of a permanency plan that includes permanent legal custody; and (b) the party pursuing the permanent legal custody is the party identified in the permanency plan as the prospective legal custodian. During the pendency of such proceeding, the court shall conduct review hearings and further permanency planning hearings as provided in this chapter. At the conclusion of the legal guardianship or permanent legal custody proceeding, a juvenile court hearing shall be held for the purpose of determining whether dependency should be dismissed. If a guardianship or permanent custody order has been entered, the dependency shall be dismissed.

(13) Continued juvenile court jurisdiction under this chapter shall not be a barrier to the entry of an order establishing a legal guardianship or permanent legal custody when the requirements of subsection (12) of this section are met.

(14) Nothing in this chapter may be construed to limit the ability of the agency that has custody of the child to file a petition for termination of parental rights or a guardianship petition at any time following the establishment of dependency. Upon the filing of such a petition, a fact-finding hearing shall be scheduled and held in accordance with this chapter unless the department requests dismissal of the petition prior to the hearing or unless the parties enter an agreed order terminating parental rights, establishing guardianship, or otherwise resolving the matter.

(15) The approval of a permanency plan that does not contemplate return of the child to the parent does not relieve the department of its obligation to provide reasonable services, under this chapter, intended to effectuate the return of the child to the parent, including but not limited to, visitation rights. The court shall consider the child's relationships with siblings in accordance with RCW 13.34.130.

(16) Nothing in this chapter may be construed to limit the procedural due process rights of any party in a termination or guardianship proceeding filed under this chapter. [2022 c 127 s 1; 2020 c 312 s 118; 2019 c 172 s 15; 2018 c 284 s 15. Prior: 2015 c 270 s 2; 2015 c 257 s 1; prior: 2013 c 332 s 3; 2013 c 206 s 1; 2013 c 173 s 3; 2011 c 330 s 6; prior: 2009 c 520 s 30; 2009 c 491 s 4; 2009 c 477 s 4; 2008 c 152 s 3; 2007 c 413 s 9; 2003 c 227 s 6; prior: 2000 c 135 s 4; 2000 c 122 s 20; 1999 c 267 s 17; prior: 1998 c 314 s 3; 1998 c 130 s 3; prior: 1995 c 311 s 20; 1995 c 53 s 2; 1994 c 288 s 5; 1993 c 412 s 1; 1989 1st ex.s. c 17 s 18; 1988 c 194 s 3.]

Effective date—2020 c 312: See note following RCW 11.130.915.

Effective date—2019 c 172 ss 3, 4, and 10-15: See note following RCW 13.34.420.

Short title—2015 c 257: "This act may be known and cited as the Roger Freeman act." [2015 c 257 s 2.]

Effective date—2015 c 257: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect June 30, 2015." [2015 c 257 s 3.]

Findings—Recommendations—Application—2013 c 332: See notes following RCW 13.34.267.

Intent—2011 c 330: See note following RCW 13.04.011.

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

Findings—Intent—2008 c 152: See note following RCW 13.34.136.

Severability—2007 c 413: See note following RCW 13.34.215.

Intent—2003 c 227: See note following RCW 13.34.130.

Findings—Intent—Severability—1999 c 267: See notes following RCW 43.20A.790.

Short title—Purpose—Entitlement not granted—Federal waivers—1999 c 267 ss 10-26: See RCW 74.15.900 and 74.15.901.

RCW 13.34.147 Case review panel—Creation—Duties. (1) Within the department's appropriations, the department shall ensure that a case review panel reviews cases involving dependent children where permanency is not achieved for children within eighteen months after being placed in out-of-home care.

(2) The case review panel shall be comprised of, at a minimum, a lead social services specialist and either the office of the family and children's ombuds or another external organization with child welfare experience.

(3) Beginning September 1, 2018, the panel shall review all cases where, after October 19, 2017, a dependent child reaches eighteen months in out-of-home placement and has not achieved permanency. This review must occur by the child's nineteenth month in out-of-home placement. At each case review, the panel must develop a plan of action, including recommended next steps for the department to take, to achieve permanency.

(4) The department is encouraged to convene the case review panel regularly to review other cases involving dependent children as needed to ensure stability and permanency is achieved and length of stay for children in out-of-home placement is reduced. [2017 3rd sp.s. c 20 s 6.]

Construction—Competitive procurement process and contract provisions—Conflict with federal requirements and Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978—2017 3rd sp.s. c 20: See notes following RCW 74.13.270.

RCW 13.34.150 Modification of orders. Any order made by the court in the case of a dependent child may be changed, modified, or set aside, only upon a showing of a change in circumstance or as provided in RCW 13.34.120. [1993 c 412 s 9; 1990 c 246 s 6; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 43; 1913 c 160 s 15; RRS s 1987-15. Formerly RCW 13.04.150.]

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

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

RCW 13.34.155 Concurrent jurisdiction over nonparental actions for child custody—Establishment or modification of parenting plan. (1) The court hearing the dependency petition may hear and determine issues related to a guardianship of a minor under RCW 11.130.215 in a dependency proceeding as necessary to facilitate a permanency plan for the child or children as part of the dependency disposition order or a dependency review order or as otherwise necessary to implement a permanency plan of care for a child. Any modification or establishment of a guardianship of a minor must be made in conformity with the standards in chapter 11.130 RCW. The parents, guardians, or legal custodian of the child must agree, subject to court approval, to establish or modify a guardianship of a minor, but the court may decide any contested issues implementing the guardianship. This agreed guardianship of a minor may have the concurrence of the other parties to the dependency, the guardian ad litem of the child, and the child if age twelve or older, and must also be in the best interests of the child. If the petitioner for a guardianship of a minor order under RCW 11.130.215 is not a party to the dependency proceeding, he or she must agree on the record or by the filing of a declaration to the entry of a guardianship of a minor. Once a guardianship of a minor order is entered under RCW 11.130.215, and the dependency petition dismissed, the department shall not continue to supervise the placement.

(2)(a) The court hearing the dependency petition may establish or modify a parenting plan under chapter 26.09, 26.26A, or 26.26B RCW as part of a disposition order or at a review hearing when doing so will implement a permanent plan of care for the child and result in dismissal of the dependency.

(b) The dependency court shall adhere to procedural requirements under chapter 26.09 RCW and must make a written finding that the parenting plan established or modified by the dependency court under this section is in the child's best interests.

(c) Unless the whereabouts of one of the parents is unknown to either the department or the court, the parents must agree, subject to court approval, to establish the parenting plan or modify an existing parenting plan.

(d) Whenever the court is asked to establish or modify a parenting plan, the child's residential schedule, the allocation of decision-making authority, and dispute resolution under this section, the dependency court may:

(i) Appoint a guardian ad litem to represent the interests of the child when the court believes the appointment is necessary to protect the best interests of the child; and

(ii) Appoint an attorney to represent the interests of the child with respect to provisions for the parenting plan.

(e) The dependency court must make a written finding that the parenting plan established or modified by the dependency court under this section is in the child's best interests.

(f) The dependency court may interview the child in chambers to ascertain the child's wishes as to the child's residential schedule in a proceeding for the entry or modification of a parenting plan under this section. The court may permit counsel to be present at the interview. The court shall cause a record of the interview to be made and to become part of the court record of the dependency case and the case under chapter 26.09, 26.26A, or 26.26B RCW.

(g) In the absence of agreement by a parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the child to allow the juvenile court to hear and determine issues related to the establishment or modification of a parenting plan under chapter 26.09, 26.26A, or 26.26B RCW, a party may move the court to transfer such issues to the family law department of the superior court for further resolution. The court may only grant the motion upon entry of a written finding that it is in the best interests of the child.

(h) In any parenting plan agreed to by the parents and entered or modified in juvenile court under this section, all issues pertaining to child support and the division of marital property shall be referred to or retained by the family law department of the superior court.

(3) Any order entered in the dependency court establishing or modifying a guardianship of a minor under RCW 11.130.215, parenting plan, or residential schedule under chapter 26.09, 26.26A, or 26.26B RCW shall also be filed in the chapter 11.130, 26.09, 26.26A, or 26.26B RCW action by the moving or prevailing party. If the petitioning or moving party has been found indigent and appointed counsel at public expense in the dependency proceeding, no filing fees shall be imposed by the clerk. Once filed, any guardianship of a minor order, parenting plan, or residential schedule establishing or modifying permanent legal custody of a child shall survive dismissal of the dependency proceeding. [2020 c 312 s 119; 2019 c 46 s 5017; 2018 c 284 s 16. Prior: 2009 c 526 s 2; 2009 c 520 s 31; 2000 c 135 s 1.]

Effective date—2020 c 312: See note following RCW 11.130.915.

RCW 13.34.160 Order of support for dependent child. (1) In an action brought under this chapter, the court may inquire into the ability of the parent or parents of the child to pay child support and may enter an order of child support as set forth in chapter 26.19 RCW. The court may enforce the same by execution, or in any way in which a court of equity may enforce its decrees. All child support orders entered pursuant to this chapter shall be in compliance with the provisions of RCW 26.23.050.

(2) For purposes of this section, if a dependent child's parent is an unmarried minor parent or pregnant minor applicant, then the parent or parents of the minor shall also be deemed a parent or parents of the dependent child. However, liability for child support under this subsection only exists if the parent or parents of the unmarried minor parent or pregnant minor applicant are provided the

opportunity for a hearing on their ability to provide support. Any child support order requiring such a parent or parents to provide support for the minor parent's child may be effective only until the minor parent reaches eighteen years of age.

(3) In the absence of a court order setting support, the department may establish an administrative order for support upon receipt of a referral or application for support enforcement services. [2004 c 183 s 1; 1997 c 58 s 505; 1993 c 358 s 2; 1987 c 435 s 14; 1981 c 195 s 8; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 44; 1969 ex.s. c 138 s 1; 1961 c 302 s 7; 1913 c 160 s 8; RRS s 1987-8. Formerly RCW 13.04.100.]

Effective date—2004 c 183: "This act takes effect July 1, 2004." [2004 c 183 s 6.]

Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58: See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

Effective date—1987 c 435: See RCW 26.23.900.

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

Good cause exceptions to the establishment and enforcement of child support from parents of children in out-of-home placement: RCW 13.32A.178.

RCW 13.34.161 Order of support for dependent child—Noncompliance—Enforcement of judgment. In any case in which the court has ordered a parent or parents, guardian, or other person having custody of a child to pay support under RCW 13.34.160 and the order has not been complied with, the court may, upon such person or persons being duly summoned or voluntarily appearing, proceed to inquire into the amount due upon the order and enter judgment for that amount against the defaulting party or parties, and the judgment shall be docketed as are other judgments for the payment of money.

In such judgments, the county in which the order is entered shall be the judgment creditor, or the state may be the judgment creditor where the child is in the custody of a state agency. Judgments may be enforced by the prosecuting attorney of the county, or the attorney general where the state is the judgment creditor and any moneys recovered shall be paid into the registry of the juvenile court and shall be disbursed to such person, persons, agency, or governmental department as the court finds is entitled to it.

Such judgments shall remain valid and enforceable for a period of ten years after the date of entry. [2000 c 122 s 22; 1981 c 195 s 9; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 45; 1961 c 302 s 8; 1955 c 188 s 1. Formerly RCW 13.34.170, 13.04.105.]

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

RCW 13.34.165 Civil contempt—Grounds—Motion—Penalty—Detention review hearing. (1) Failure by a party to comply with an order entered under this chapter is civil contempt of court as provided in RCW 7.21.030(2).

(2) A motion for contempt may be made by a parent, juvenile court personnel, or by any public agency, organization, or person having custody of the child under a court order entered pursuant to this chapter.

(3)(a) Subject to (b) of this subsection, whenever the court finds probable cause to believe, based upon consideration of a motion and the information set forth in a supporting declaration, that a child is missing from care, the court may issue an order directing law enforcement to pick up and return the child to department custody.

(b) If the department is notified of the child's whereabouts and authorizes the child's location, the court must withdraw the order directing law enforcement to pick up and return the child to department custody.

(4) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the court's inherent contempt power or curtail its exercise. [2019 c 312 s 12; 2019 c 312 s 11; 2000 c 122 s 21; 1998 c 296 s 38; 1996 c 133 s 29; 1989 c 373 s 17; 1985 c 257 s 1]

Effective date—2019 c 312 ss 4, 8, and 12: See note following RCW 7.21.030.

Effective date—Findings—Intent—2019 c 312: See notes following RCW 7.21.080.

Findings—Intent—Part headings not law—Short title—1998 c 296: See notes following RCW 74.13.025.

Findings—Short title—Intent—Construction—1996 c 133: See notes following RCW 13.32A.197.

Severability—1985 c 257: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1985 c 257 s 12.]

RCW 13.34.174 Order of alcohol or substance abuse diagnostic investigation and evaluation—Treatment plan—Breach of plan—Reports. (1) The provisions of this section shall apply when a court orders a party to undergo an alcohol or substance abuse diagnostic investigation and evaluation.

(2) The facility conducting the investigation and evaluation shall make a written report to the court stating its findings and recommendations including family-based services or treatment when appropriate. If its findings and recommendations support treatment, it shall also recommend a treatment plan setting out:

(a) Type of treatment;

(b) Nature of treatment;

(c) Length of treatment;

(d) A treatment time schedule; and

(e) Approximate cost of the treatment.

The affected person shall be included in developing the appropriate treatment plan. The treatment plan must be signed by the treatment provider and the affected person. The initial written progress report based on the treatment plan shall be sent to the appropriate persons six weeks after initiation of treatment. Subsequent progress reports shall be provided after three months, six months, twelve months, and thereafter every six months if treatment exceeds twelve months. Reports are to be filed with the court in a timely manner. Closeout of the treatment record must include summary of pretreatment and posttreatment, with final outcome and disposition. The report shall also include recommendations for ongoing stability and decrease in destructive behavior.

Each report shall also be filed with the court and a copy given to the person evaluated and the person's counsel. A copy of the treatment plan shall also be given to the department's caseworker and to the guardian ad litem. Any program for chemical dependency shall meet the program requirements contained in *chapter 70.96A RCW.

(3) If the court has ordered treatment pursuant to a dependency proceeding it shall also require the treatment program to provide, in the reports required by subsection (2) of this section, status reports to the court, the department, and the person or person's counsel regarding the person's cooperation with the treatment plan proposed and the person's progress in treatment.

(4) If a person subject to this section fails or neglects to carry out and fulfill any term or condition of the treatment plan, the program or agency administering the treatment shall report such breach to the court, the department, the guardian ad litem, and the person or person's counsel, within twenty-four hours, together with its recommendation. These reports shall be made as a declaration by the person who is personally responsible for providing the treatment.

(5) Nothing in this chapter may be construed as allowing the court to require the department to pay for the cost of any alcohol or substance abuse evaluation or treatment program. [2018 c 284 s 17; 2009 c 520 s 32; 2000 c 122 s 23; 1993 c 412 s 5.]

***Reviser's note:** Chapter 70.96A RCW was repealed and/or recodified in its entirety pursuant to 2016 sp.s. c 29 ss 301, 601, and 701.

RCW 13.34.176 Violation of alcohol or substance abuse treatment conditions—Hearing—Notice—Modification of order. (1) The court, upon receiving a report under RCW 13.34.174(4) or at the department's request, may schedule a show cause hearing to determine whether the person is in violation of the treatment conditions. All parties shall be given notice of the hearing. The court shall hold the hearing within ten days of the request for a hearing. At the hearing, testimony, declarations, reports, or other relevant information may be presented on the person's alleged failure to comply with the treatment plan and the person shall have the right to present similar information on his or her own behalf.

(2) If the court finds that there has been a violation of the treatment conditions it shall modify the dependency order, as necessary, to ensure the safety of the child. The modified order shall remain in effect until the party is in full compliance with the treatment requirements. [2018 c 284 s 18; 2009 c 520 s 33; 2000 c 122 s 24; 1993 c 412 s 6.]

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.

RCW 13.34.190 Order terminating parent and child relationship—Findings. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, after hearings pursuant to RCW 13.34.110 or 13.34.130, the court may enter an order terminating all parental rights to a child only if the court finds that:

(a)(i) The allegations contained in the petition as provided in RCW 13.34.180(1) are established by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence; or

(ii) The provisions of RCW 13.34.180(1) (a), (b), (e), and (f) are established beyond a reasonable doubt and if so, then RCW 13.34.180(1) (c) and (d) may be waived. When an infant has been abandoned, as defined in RCW 13.34.030, and the abandonment has been

proved beyond a reasonable doubt, then RCW 13.34.180(1) (c) and (d) may be waived; or

(iii) The allegation under *RCW 13.34.180(2) is established beyond a reasonable doubt. In determining whether RCW 13.34.180(1) (e) and (f) are established beyond a reasonable doubt, the court shall consider whether one or more of the aggravated circumstances listed in RCW 13.34.132 exist; or

(iv) The allegation under *RCW 13.34.180(3) is established beyond a reasonable doubt; and

(b) Such an order is in the best interests of the child.

(2) The provisions of chapter 13.38 RCW must be followed in any proceeding under this chapter for termination of the parent-child relationship of an Indian child as defined in RCW 13.38.040. [2011 c 309 s 30; 2010 c 288 s 2; 2000 c 122 s 26; 1998 c 314 s 5; 1993 c 412 s 3; 1992 c 145 s 15; 1990 c 284 s 33; 1979 c 155 s 48; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 47.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 13.34.180 was amended by 2013 c 173 s 4, changing subsections (2) and (3) to subsections (3) and (4), respectively.

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

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.

RCW 13.34.200 Order terminating parent and child relationship—Rights of parties when granted. (1) Upon the termination of parental rights pursuant to RCW 13.34.180, all rights, powers, privileges, immunities, duties, and obligations, including any rights to custody, control, visitation, or support existing between the child and parent shall be severed and terminated and the parent shall have no standing to appear at any further legal proceedings concerning the child, except as provided in RCW 13.34.215: PROVIDED, That any support obligation existing prior to the effective date of the order terminating parental rights shall not be severed or terminated. The rights of one parent may be terminated without affecting the rights of the other parent and the order shall so state.

(2) An order terminating the parent and child relationship shall not disentitle a child to any benefit due the child from any third person, agency, state, or the United States, nor shall any action under this chapter be deemed to affect any rights and benefits that an Indian child derives from the child's descent from a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe.

(3) An order terminating the parent-child relationship shall include a statement addressing the status of the child's sibling relationships and the nature and extent of sibling placement, contact, or visits. [2007 c 413 s 2; 2003 c 227 s 7; 2000 c 122 s 27; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 48.]

Severability—2007 c 413: See note following RCW 13.34.215.

Intent—2003 c 227: See note following RCW 13.34.130.

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

RCW 13.34.210 Order terminating parent and child relationship—Custody where no one has parental rights. If, upon entering an order terminating the parental rights of a parent, there remains no parent having parental rights, the court shall commit the child to the custody of the department willing to accept custody for the purpose of placing the child for adoption. If an adoptive home has not been identified, the department shall place the child in a licensed foster home, or take other suitable measures for the care and welfare of the child. The placement standards provided in RCW 13.34.130 continue to apply throughout the life of the case, except that the court need not consider whether reunification with the parent will be hindered when evaluating relative placements. The custodian shall have authority to consent to the adoption of the child consistent with chapter 26.33 RCW, the marriage of the child, the enlistment of the child in the armed forces of the United States, necessary surgical and other medical treatment for the child, and to consent to such other matters as might normally be required of the parent of the child.

If a child has not been adopted within six months after the date of the order and a guardianship of the child under chapter 13.36 RCW or a guardianship of a minor under RCW 11.130.215 has not been entered by the court, the court shall review the case every six months until a decree of adoption is entered. The department shall take reasonable steps to ensure that the child maintains relationships with siblings as provided in RCW 13.34.130(7) and shall report to the court the status and extent of such relationships. [2022 c 127 s 3; 2020 c 312 s 120; 2018 c 284 s 21; 2010 c 272 s 13. Prior: 2009 c 520 s 35; 2009 c 152 s 2; 2003 c 227 s 8; 2000 c 122 s 28; 1991 c 127 s 6; 1988 c 203 s 2; 1979 c 155 s 49; 1977 ex.s. c 291 s 49.]

Effective date—2020 c 312: See note following RCW 11.130.915.

Intent—2003 c 227: See note following RCW 13.34.130.

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.

RCW 13.34.212 Court-appointed attorney for a child in a dependency proceeding. (1)(a) The court shall appoint an attorney for a child in a dependency proceeding six months after granting a petition to terminate the parent and child relationship pursuant to RCW 13.34.180 and when there is no remaining parent with parental rights.

(b) The court may appoint one attorney to a group of siblings, unless there is a conflict of interest, or such representation is otherwise inconsistent with the rules of professional conduct.

(c) Subject to availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the state shall pay the costs of legal services provided by an attorney appointed pursuant to (a) of this subsection if the legal services are provided in accordance with the rules of professional conduct, the standards of practice, caseload limits, and training guidelines adopted by the statewide children's representation work group pursuant to section 5, chapter 180, Laws of 2010 until such time that new recommendations are adopted by the children's representation work group established in section 9, chapter 210, Laws of 2021.

(d) The office of civil legal aid is responsible for implementation of (c) of this subsection as provided in RCW 2.53.045.

(e) Legal services provided by an attorney pursuant to (a) of this subsection do not include representation of the child in any appellate proceedings relative to the termination of the parent and child relationship.

(2)(a) The court may appoint an attorney to represent the child's position in any dependency action on its own initiative, or upon the request of a parent, the child, a guardian ad litem, a caregiver, or the department.

(b)(i) If the court has not already appointed an attorney for a child, or the child is not represented by a privately retained attorney:

(A) The child's caregiver, or any individual, may refer the child to an attorney for the purposes of filing a motion to request appointment of an attorney at public expense; or

(B) The child or any individual may retain an attorney for the child for the purposes of filing a motion to request appointment of an attorney at public expense.

(ii) Nothing in this subsection changes or alters the confidentiality provisions of RCW 13.50.100.

(c) The department and the child's guardian ad litem shall each notify a child of the child's right to request an attorney and shall ask the child whether the child wishes to have an attorney. The department and the child's guardian ad litem shall notify the child and make this inquiry immediately after:

(i) The date of the child's 12th birthday; or

(ii) Assignment of a case involving a child age 12 or older.

(d) The department and the child's guardian ad litem shall repeat the notification and inquiry at least annually and upon the filing of any motion or petition affecting the child's placement, services, or familial relationships.

(e) The notification and inquiry is not required if the child has already been appointed an attorney.

(f) The department shall note in the child's individual service and safety plan, and the guardian ad litem shall note in his or her report to the court, that the child was notified of the right to request an attorney and indicate the child's position regarding appointment of an attorney.

(g) At the first regularly scheduled hearing after:

(i) The date of the child's 12th birthday; or

(ii) The date that a dependency petition is filed pursuant to this chapter on a child age 12 or older;

the court shall inquire whether the child has received notice of his or her right to request an attorney from the department and the child's guardian ad litem. The court shall make an additional inquiry at the first regularly scheduled hearing after the child's 15th

birthday. No inquiry is necessary if the child has already been appointed an attorney.

(3) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose:

(a) Pursuant to the phase-in schedule set forth in (c) of this subsection (3), the court must appoint an attorney for every child in a dependency proceeding as follows:

(i) For a child under the age of eight, appointment must be made for the dependency and termination action upon the filing of a termination petition. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to limit the ability of the court to appoint an attorney to represent the child's position in a dependency action on its own initiative, or upon the request of a parent, the child, a guardian ad litem, a caregiver, or the department, prior to the filing of a termination petition.

(ii) For a child between the ages of eight through 17, appointment must be made upon the filing of a new dependency petition at or before the commencement of the shelter care hearing.

(iii) For any pending or open dependency case where the child is unrepresented and is entitled to the appointment of an attorney under (a)(i) or (ii) of this subsection, appointment must be made at or before the next hearing if the child is eligible for representation pursuant to the phase-in schedule. At the next hearing, the court shall inquire into the status of attorney representation for the child, and if the child is not yet represented, appointment must be made at the hearing.

(b) Appointment is not required if the court has already appointed an attorney for the child, or the child is represented by a privately retained attorney.

(c) The statewide children's legal representation program shall develop a schedule for court appointment of attorneys for every child in dependency proceedings that will be phased in on a county-by-county basis over an 11-year period. The schedule required under this subsection must not add more than 1,250 cases each fiscal year and:

(i) To the extent practicable, prioritize implementation in counties that have:

(A) No current practice of appointment of attorneys for children in dependency cases; or

(B) Significant prevalence of racial disproportionality or disparities in the number of dependent children compared to the general population, or both;

(ii) Include representation in at least:

(A) Three counties beginning July 1, 2022;

(B) Eight counties beginning January 1, 2023;

(C) Fifteen counties beginning January 1, 2024;

(D) Twenty counties beginning January 1, 2025;

(E) Thirty counties beginning January 1, 2030;

(F) Thirty-six counties beginning January 1, 2031; and

(iii) Achieve full statewide implementation by January 1, 2032.

(d) In cases where the statewide children's legal representation program provides funding and where consistent with its administration and oversight responsibilities, the statewide children's legal representation program should prioritize continuity of counsel for children who are already represented at county expense when the statewide children's legal representation program becomes effective in a county. The statewide children's legal representation program shall coordinate with relevant county stakeholders to determine how best to prioritize this continuity of counsel.

(e) The statewide children's legal representation program is responsible for the recruitment, training, and oversight of attorneys providing standards-based representation pursuant to (a) and (c) of this subsection as provided in RCW 2.53.045 and shall ensure that attorneys representing children pursuant to this section provide legal services according to the rules of professional conduct, the standards of practice, caseload limits, and training guidelines adopted by the children's representation work group established in section 9, chapter 210, Laws of 2021. [2025 c 413 s 1; 2024 c 25 s 1; 2021 c 210 s 6.]

Findings—Intent—2021 c 210: See note following RCW 13.34.090.

RCW 13.34.215 Petition reinstating terminated parental rights—Notice—Achievement of permanency plan—Effect of granting the petition—Hearing—Child support liability—Retroactive application—Limitation on liability. (1) A child may petition the juvenile court to reinstate the previously terminated parental rights of his or her parent under the following circumstances:

(a) The child was previously found to be a dependent child under this chapter;

(b) The child's parent's rights were terminated in a proceeding under this chapter;

(c)(i) The child has not achieved his or her permanency plan; or

(ii) While the child achieved a permanency plan, it has not since been sustained;

(d) Three years have passed since the final order of termination was entered; and

(e) The child must be at least twelve years old at the time the petition is filed. Upon the child's motion for good cause shown, or on its own motion, the court may hear a petition filed by a child younger than twelve years old.

(2) If the child is eligible to petition the juvenile court under subsection (1) of this section and a parent whose rights have been previously terminated contacts the department or the child's guardian ad litem regarding reinstatement, the department or the guardian ad litem must notify the eligible child about his or her right to petition for reinstatement of parental rights.

(3) A child seeking to petition under this section shall be provided counsel at no cost to the child.

(4) The petition must be signed by the child in the absence of a showing of good cause as to why the child could not do so.

(5) If, after a threshold hearing to consider the parent's apparent fitness and interest in reinstatement of parental rights, the court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the best interests of the child may be served by reinstatement of parental rights, the juvenile court shall order that a hearing on the merits of the petition be held.

(6) The court shall give prior notice for any proceeding under this section, or cause prior notice to be given, to the department, the child's attorney, and the child. The court shall also order the department to give prior notice of any hearing to the child's former parent whose parental rights are the subject of the petition, any parent whose rights have not been terminated, the child's current foster parent, relative caregiver, guardian or custodian, and the child's tribe, if applicable.

(7) The juvenile court shall conditionally grant the petition if it finds by clear and convincing evidence that the child has not achieved his or her permanency plan and is not likely to imminently achieve his or her permanency plan and that reinstatement of parental rights is in the child's best interest. In determining whether reinstatement is in the child's best interest the court shall consider, but is not limited to, the following:

(a) Whether the parent whose rights are to be reinstated is a fit parent and has remedied his or her deficits as provided in the record of the prior termination proceedings and prior termination order;

(b) The age and maturity of the child, and the ability of the child to express his or her preference;

(c) Whether the reinstatement of parental rights will present a risk to the child's health, welfare, or safety; and

(d) Other material changes in circumstances, if any, that may have occurred which warrant the granting of the petition.

(8) In determining whether the child has or has not achieved his or her permanency plan or whether the child is likely to achieve his or her permanency plan, the department shall provide the court, and the court shall review, information related to any efforts to achieve the permanency plan including efforts to achieve adoption or a permanent guardianship.

(9)(a) If the court conditionally grants the petition under subsection (7) of this section, the case will be continued for six months and a temporary order of reinstatement entered. During this period, the child shall be placed in the custody of the parent. The department shall develop a permanency plan for the child reflecting the plan to be reunification and shall provide transition services to the family as appropriate.

(b) If the child must be removed from the parent due to abuse or neglect allegations prior to the expiration of the conditional six-month period, the court shall dismiss the petition for reinstatement of parental rights if the court finds the allegations have been proven by a preponderance of the evidence.

(c) If the child has been successfully placed with the parent for six months, the court order reinstating parental rights remains in effect and the court shall dismiss the dependency.

(10) After the child has been placed with the parent for six months, the court shall hold a hearing. If the placement with the parent has been successful, the court shall enter a final order of reinstatement of parental rights, which shall restore all rights, powers, privileges, immunities, duties, and obligations of the parent as to the child, including those relating to custody, control, and support of the child. The court shall dismiss the dependency and direct the clerk's office to provide a certified copy of the final order of reinstatement of parental rights to the parent at no cost.

(11) The granting of the petition under this section does not vacate or otherwise affect the validity of the original termination order.

(12) Any parent whose rights are reinstated under this section shall not be liable for any child support owed to the department pursuant to RCW 13.34.160 or Title 26 RCW or costs of other services provided to a child for the time period from the date of termination of parental rights to the date parental rights are reinstated.

(13) A proceeding to reinstate parental rights is a separate action from the termination of parental rights proceeding and does not vacate the original termination of parental rights. An order granted

under this section reinstates the parental rights to the child. This reinstatement is a recognition that the situation of the parent and child have changed since the time of the termination of parental rights and reunification is now appropriate.

(14) This section is retroactive and applies to any child who is under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court at the time of the hearing regardless of the date parental rights were terminated.

(15) The state, the department, and its employees are not liable for civil damages resulting from any act or omission in the provision of services under this section, unless the act or omission constitutes gross negligence. This section does not create any duty and shall not be construed to create a duty where none exists. This section does not create a cause of action against the state, the department, or its employees concerning the original termination. [2018 c 284 s 22; 2011 c 292 s 2; 2010 c 180 s 4; 2009 c 520 s 36; 2008 c 267 s 1; 2007 c 413 s 1.]

Findings—2010 c 180: See note following RCW 13.34.100.

Severability—2007 c 413: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [2007 c 413 s 13.]

RCW 13.34.232 Guardianship for dependent child—Order, contents—Rights and duties of dependency guardian. (1) An order establishing a dependency guardianship shall:

(a) Appoint a person or agency to serve as dependency guardian for the limited purpose of assisting the court to supervise the dependency;

(b) Specify the dependency guardian's rights and responsibilities concerning the care, custody, and control of the child. A dependency guardian shall not have the authority to consent to the child's adoption;

(c) Specify the dependency guardian's authority, if any, to receive, invest, and expend funds, benefits, or property belonging to the child;

(d) Specify an appropriate frequency of visitation between the parent and the child; and

(e) Specify the need for any continued involvement of the *supervising agency and the nature of that involvement, if any.

(2) Unless the court specifies otherwise in the guardianship order, the dependency guardian shall maintain the physical custody of the child and have the following rights and duties:

(a) Protect, discipline, and educate the child;

(b) Provide food, clothing, shelter, education as required by law, and routine health care for the child;

(c) Consent to necessary health and surgical care and sign a release of health care information to appropriate authorities, pursuant to law;

(d) Consent to social and school activities of the child; and

(e) Provide an annual written accounting to the court regarding receipt by the dependency guardian of any funds, benefits, or property belonging to the child and expenditures made therefrom.

(3) As used in this section, the term "health care" includes, but is not limited to, medical, dental, psychological, and psychiatric care and treatment.

(4) The child shall remain dependent for the duration of the guardianship. While the guardianship remains in effect, the dependency guardian shall be a party to any dependency proceedings pertaining to the child.

(5) The guardianship shall remain in effect only until the child is eighteen years of age or until the court terminates the guardianship order, whichever occurs sooner. [2010 c 272 s 14; 1994 c 288 s 7; 1993 c 412 s 4; 1981 c 195 s 3.]

***Reviser's note:** The definition for "supervising agency" for chapter 13.34 RCW was deleted by 2018 c 284 s 3.

RCW 13.34.233 Guardianship for dependent child—Modification or termination of order—Hearing—Termination of guardianship. (1) Any party may request the court under RCW 13.34.150 to modify or terminate a dependency guardianship order. Notice of any motion to modify or terminate the guardianship shall be served on all other parties, including any agency that was responsible for supervising the child's placement at the time the guardianship petition was filed. Notice in all cases shall be served upon the department. If the department was not previously a party to the guardianship proceeding, the department shall nevertheless have the right to: (a) Initiate a proceeding to modify or terminate a guardianship; and (b) intervene at any stage of such a proceeding.

(2) The guardianship may be modified or terminated upon the motion of any party, or the department if the court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that there has been a substantial change of circumstances subsequent to the establishment of the guardianship and that it is in the child's best interest to modify or terminate the guardianship. The court shall hold a hearing on the motion before modifying or terminating a guardianship.

(3) Upon entry of an order terminating the guardianship, the dependency guardian shall not have any rights or responsibilities with respect to the child and shall not have legal standing to participate as a party in further dependency proceedings pertaining to the child. The court may allow the child's dependency guardian to attend dependency review proceedings pertaining to the child for the sole purpose of providing information about the child to the court.

(4) Upon entry of an order terminating the guardianship, the child shall remain dependent and the court shall either return the child to the child's parent or order the child into the custody, control, and care of the department for placement in a foster home or group care facility licensed pursuant to chapter 74.15 RCW or in a home not required to be licensed pursuant to such chapter. The court shall not place a child in the custody of the child's parent unless the court finds that reasons for removal as set forth in RCW 13.34.130 no longer exist and that such placement is in the child's best interest. The court shall thereafter conduct reviews as provided in RCW 13.34.138 and, where applicable, shall hold a permanency planning hearing in accordance with RCW 13.34.145. [2018 c 284 s 23; 2009 c 520 s 38; 2000 c 122 s 30; 1995 c 311 s 24; 1994 c 288 s 8; 1981 c 195 s 4.]

RCW 13.34.234 Guardianship for dependent child—Dependency guardianship subsidies. A dependency guardian who is a licensed foster parent at the time the guardianship is established under this chapter and who has been the child's foster parent for a minimum of six consecutive months preceding entry of the guardianship order may be eligible for a guardianship subsidy on behalf of the child. [2010 c 272 s 15; 2009 c 235 s 6; 1994 c 288 s 9; 1981 c 195 s 5.]

Findings—Intent—2009 c 235: See note following RCW 74.13.031.

RCW 13.34.235 Guardianship for dependent child—Review hearing requirements not applicable—Exception. A dependency guardianship is not subject to the review hearing requirements of RCW 13.34.138 unless ordered by the court under RCW 13.34.232(1)(e). [2000 c 122 s 31; 1981 c 195 s 6.]

RCW 13.34.237 Guardianship for dependent child—Subject to dependency and termination of parent-child relationship provisions—Exceptions—Request to convert dependency guardianship to guardianship—Dismissal of dependency. (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 13.36 RCW, a dependency guardianship established by court order under this chapter and in force on June 10, 2010, shall remain subject to the provisions of this chapter unless: (a) The dependency guardianship is modified or terminated under the provisions of this chapter; or (b) the dependency guardianship is converted by court order to a guardianship pursuant to a petition filed under RCW 13.36.030.

(2) A dependency guardian or the department or *supervising agency may request the juvenile court to convert a dependency guardianship established under this chapter to a guardianship under chapter 13.36 RCW by filing a petition under RCW 13.36.030. If both the dependency guardian and the department or *supervising agency agree that the dependency guardianship should be converted to a guardianship under this chapter, and if the court finds that such conversion is in the child's best interests, the court shall grant the petition and enter an order of guardianship in accordance with RCW 13.36.050.

(3) The court shall dismiss the dependency established under this chapter upon the entry of a guardianship order under chapter 13.36 RCW. [2010 c 272 s 11.]

***Reviser's note:** The definition for "supervising agency" for chapter 13.34 RCW was deleted by 2018 c 284 s 3.

RCW 13.34.240 Acts, records, and proceedings of Indian tribe or band given full faith and credit. The courts of this state shall give full faith and credit as provided for in the United States Constitution to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of any Indian tribe or band in any proceeding brought pursuant to this chapter to the same extent that full faith and credit is given to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of any other state. [1979 c 155 s 52.]

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

RCW 13.34.245 Voluntary consent to foster care placement for Indian child—Validation—Withdrawal of consent—Termination. (1) Where any parent or Indian custodian voluntarily consents to foster care placement of an Indian child and a petition for dependency has not been filed regarding the child, such consent shall not be valid unless executed in writing before the court and filed with the court. The consent shall be accompanied by the written certification of the court that the terms and consequences of the consent were fully explained in detail to the parent or Indian custodian during the court proceeding and were fully understood by the parent or Indian custodian. The court shall also certify in writing either that the parent or Indian custodian fully understood the explanation in English or that it was interpreted into a language that the parent or Indian custodian understood. Any consent given prior to, or within ten days after, the birth of the Indian child shall not be valid.

(2) To obtain court validation of a voluntary consent to foster care placement, any person may file a petition for validation alleging that there is located or residing within the county an Indian child whose parent or Indian custodian wishes to voluntarily consent to foster care placement of the child and requesting that the court validate the consent as provided in this section. The petition shall contain the name, date of birth, and residence of the child, the names and residences of the consenting parent or Indian custodian, and the name and location of the Indian tribe in which the child is a member or eligible for membership. The petition shall state whether the placement preferences of 25 U.S.C. Sec. 1915 (b) or (c) will be followed. Reasonable attempts shall be made by the petitioner to ascertain and set forth in the petition the identity, location, and custodial status of any parent or Indian custodian who has not consented to foster care placement and why that parent or Indian custodian cannot assume custody of the child.

(3) Upon filing of the petition for validation, the clerk of the court shall schedule the petition for a hearing on the court validation of the voluntary consent no later than forty-eight hours after the petition has been filed, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. Notification of time, date, location, and purpose of the validation hearing shall be provided as soon as possible to the consenting parent or Indian custodian, the department which is to assume responsibility for the child's placement and care pursuant to the consent to foster care placement, and the Indian tribe in which the child is enrolled or eligible for enrollment as a member. If the identity and location of any nonconsenting parent or Indian custodian is known, reasonable attempts shall be made to notify the parent or Indian custodian of the consent to placement and the validation hearing. Notification under this subsection may be given by the most expedient means, including, but not limited to, mail, personal service, telephone, and telegraph.

(4) Any parent or Indian custodian may withdraw consent to a voluntary foster care placement, made under this section, at any time. Unless the Indian child has been taken in custody pursuant to RCW 13.34.050 or 26.44.050, placed in shelter care pursuant to RCW 13.34.060, or placed in foster care pursuant to RCW 13.34.130, the

Indian child shall be returned to the parent or Indian custodian upon withdrawal of consent to foster care placement of the child.

(5) Upon termination of the voluntary foster care placement and return of the child to the parent or Indian custodian, the department which had assumed responsibility for the child's placement and care pursuant to the consent to foster care placement shall file with the court written notification of the child's return and shall also send such notification to the Indian tribe in which the child is enrolled or eligible for enrollment as a member and to any other party to the validation proceeding including any noncustodial parent. [2018 c 284 s 24; 2009 c 520 s 39; 1997 c 386 s 18; 1987 c 170 s 2.]

Application—1997 c 386: See note following RCW 13.50.010.

Severability—1987 c 170: See note following RCW 13.04.030.

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.

RCW 13.34.265 Foster home placement—Considerations. If a child has been previously placed in out-of-home care and is subsequently returned to out-of-home care, and the department cannot locate an appropriate and available relative or other suitable person, the preferred placement for the child is in a foster family home where the child previously was placed, if the following conditions are met:

(1) The foster family home is available and willing to care for the child;

(2) The foster family is appropriate and able to meet the child's needs; and

(3) The placement is in the best interest of the child. [2009 c 482 s 2.]

RCW 13.34.267 Extended foster care services—Maintenance of dependency proceeding—Placement, care of youth—Appointment of counsel—Case plan. (1) In order to facilitate the delivery of extended foster care services, the court, upon the agreement of the youth to participate in the extended foster care program, shall maintain the dependency proceeding for any youth who is dependent at the age of 18 years until the youth turns 21 or withdraws their agreement to participate.

(2) For the purposes of pursuing federal reimbursement only, the department may request judicial findings that a youth is:

(a) Enrolled in a secondary education program or a secondary education equivalency program;

(b) Enrolled and participating in a postsecondary academic or postsecondary vocational program, or has applied for and can demonstrate that he or she intends to timely enroll in a postsecondary academic or postsecondary vocational program;

(c) Participating in a program or activity designed to promote employment or remove barriers to employment;

(d) Engaged in employment for 80 hours or more per month; or

(e) Not able to engage in any of the activities described in (a) through (d) of this subsection due to a documented medical condition.

(3) When the court maintains the dependency proceeding of a youth pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, the youth is eligible to

receive extended foster care services pursuant to RCW 74.13.031, subject to the youth's continuing agreement to participate.

(4) A dependent youth receiving extended foster care services is a party to the dependency proceeding. The youth's parent or guardian must be dismissed from the dependency proceeding when the youth reaches the age of 18.

(5) The court shall dismiss the dependency proceeding for any youth who is a dependent and who, at the age of 18 years, does not agree to participate in the program.

(6) The court shall order a youth participating in extended foster care services to be under the placement and care authority of the department, subject to the youth's continuing agreement to participate in extended foster care services. The department may establish foster care rates appropriate to the needs of the youth participating in extended foster care services. The department's placement and care authority over a youth receiving extended foster care services is solely for the purpose of providing services and does not create a legal responsibility for the actions of the youth receiving extended foster care services.

(7)(a) If a youth does not already have counsel, the court shall appoint counsel to represent a youth, as defined in RCW 13.34.030(2)(b), in dependency proceedings under this section. Subject to amounts appropriated, the state shall pay the costs of legal services provided by an attorney appointed pursuant to this subsection based on the phase-in schedule outlined in RCW 13.34.212, provided that the legal services are provided in accordance with the rules of professional conduct, the standards of practice, caseload limits, and training guidelines adopted by the children's representation work group established in section 9, chapter 210, Laws of 2021.

(b) In cases where the statewide children's legal representation program provides funding and where consistent with its administration and oversight responsibilities, the statewide children's legal representation program should prioritize continuity of counsel for children who are already represented at county expense when the statewide children's legal representation program becomes effective in a county. The statewide children's legal representation program shall coordinate with relevant county stakeholders to determine how best to prioritize continuity of counsel.

(8) The case plan for and delivery of services to a youth receiving extended foster care services is subject to the review requirements set forth in RCW 13.34.138 and 13.34.145, and should be applied in a developmentally appropriate manner, as they relate to youth age 18 to 21 years. Additionally, the court shall consider:

(a) Whether the youth is safe in his or her placement;

(b) Whether the current placement is developmentally appropriate for the youth;

(c) The youth's development of independent living skills; and

(d) The youth's overall progress toward transitioning to full independence and the projected date for achieving such transition.

(9) Prior to the review hearing, the youth's attorney shall indicate whether there are any contested issues and may provide additional information necessary for the court's review. [2024 c 192 s 3; 2021 c 210 s 10; 2018 c 34 s 1; 2015 c 240 s 1; 2014 c 122 s 1; 2013 c 332 s 4; 2012 c 52 s 4; 2011 c 330 s 7.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 192: See note following RCW 13.34.030.

Findings—Intent—2021 c 210: See note following RCW 13.34.090.

Effective date—2018 c 34: "This act takes effect July 1, 2018." [2018 c 34 s 6.]

Effective date—2015 c 240: "This act takes effect July 1, 2016." [2015 c 240 s 6.]

Effective date—2014 c 122: "This act takes effect March 1, 2015." [2014 c 122 s 3.]

Findings—2013 c 332: "(1) The legislature finds that the federal fostering connections to success and increasing adoptions act of 2008 provides important new opportunities to increase the impact of state funding through maximizing the amount of federal funding available to promote permanency and positive outcomes for dependent youth.

(2) The legislature also finds that children and adolescents who are legal dependents of Washington state have experienced significant trauma and loss, putting them at increased risk for poor life outcomes. Longitudinal research on the adult functioning of former foster youth indicates a disproportionate likelihood that youth aging out of foster care and those who spent several years in care will experience poor outcomes in a variety of areas, including limited human capital upon which to build economic security and inability to fully take advantage of secondary and postsecondary educational opportunities, untreated mental or behavioral health problems, involvement in the criminal justice and corrections systems, and early parenthood combined with second-generation child welfare involvement.

(3) The legislature further finds that research also demonstrates that access to adequate and appropriate supports during the period of transition from foster care to independence can have significant positive impacts on adult functioning and can improve outcomes relating to educational attainment and postsecondary enrollment, employment and earnings, and reduced rates of teen pregnancies." [2013 c 332 s 1.]

Recommendations—2013 c 332: "No later than September 1, 2013, the department of social and health services shall develop recommendations regarding the needs of dependent youth in juvenile rehabilitation administration institutions and report those recommendations to the governor and appropriate legislative committees. The report must include specific recommendations regarding how these youth may access services under the extended foster care program. The recommendations must be developed by the children's administration and the juvenile rehabilitation administration in consultation with youth who have been involved with the juvenile rehabilitation administration and representatives from community stakeholders and the courts." [2013 c 332 s 14.]

Application—2013 c 332: "This act applies prospectively only and not retroactively. It applies to:

(1) Dependency matters that have an open court case on July 28, 2013; and

(2) Dependency matters for which a petition is filed on or after July 28, 2013." [2013 c 332 s 15.]

Intent—2012 c 52: See note following RCW 74.13.031.

Intent—2011 c 330: See note following RCW 13.04.011.

RCW 13.34.268 Extended foster care services—Voluntary placement agreement—Decline—Petition for dependency. (1)(a) If a youth prior to reaching age twenty-one years requests extended foster care services from the department pursuant to RCW 74.13.336, and the department declines to enter into a voluntary placement agreement with the youth, the department must provide written documentation to the youth which contains:

(i) The date that the youth requested extended foster care services;

(ii) The department's reasons for declining to enter into a voluntary placement agreement with the youth and the date of the department's decision; and

(iii) Information regarding the youth's right to ask the court to establish a dependency for the purpose of providing extended foster care services and his or her right to counsel to assist in making that request.

(b) The written documentation pursuant to (a) of this subsection must be provided to the youth within ten days of the department's decision not to enter into a voluntary placement agreement with the youth.

(2)(a) A youth seeking to participate in extended foster care after being declined by the department under subsection (1) of this section may file a notice of intent to file a petition for dependency, asking the court to determine his or her eligibility for extended foster care services, and to enter an order of dependency. If the youth chooses to file such notice, it must be filed within thirty days of the date of the department's decision.

(b) Upon filing the notice, the youth must be provided counsel at no cost to him or her. Upon receipt of the youth's petition, the court must set a hearing date to determine whether the petition should be granted. [2018 c 34 s 2; 2013 c 332 s 6.]

Effective date—2018 c 34: See note following RCW 13.34.267.

Findings—Recommendations—Application—2013 c 332: See notes following RCW 13.34.267.

RCW 13.34.270 Child with developmental disability—Out-of-home placement—Permanency planning hearing. (1) Whenever the department of social and health services places a child with a developmental disability in out-of-home care pursuant to *RCW 74.13.350, the department shall obtain a judicial determination within one hundred eighty days of the placement that continued placement is in the best interests of the child. If the child's out-of-home placement ends before one hundred eighty days have elapsed, no judicial determination is required.

(2) To obtain the judicial determination, the department shall file a petition alleging that there is located or residing within the county a child who has a developmental disability and that the child has been placed in out-of-home care pursuant to *RCW 74.13.350. The

petition shall request that the court review the child's placement, make a determination whether continued placement is in the best interests of the child, and take other necessary action as provided in this section. The petition shall contain the name, date of birth, and residence of the child and the names and residences of the child's parent or legal guardian who has agreed to the child's placement in out-of-home care. Reasonable attempts shall be made by the department to ascertain and set forth in the petition the identity, location, and custodial status of any parent who is not a party to the placement agreement and why that parent cannot assume custody of the child.

(3) Upon filing of the petition, the clerk of the court shall schedule the petition for a hearing to be held no later than fourteen calendar days after the petition has been filed. The department shall provide notification of the time, date, and purpose of the hearing to the parent or legal guardian who has agreed to the child's placement in out-of-home care. The department shall also make reasonable attempts to notify any parent who is not a party to the placement agreement, if the parent's identity and location is known. Notification under this section may be given by the most expedient means, including but not limited to, mail, personal service, and telephone.

(4) The court shall appoint a guardian ad litem for the child as provided in RCW 13.34.100, unless the court for good cause finds the appointment unnecessary.

(5) Permanency planning hearings shall be held as provided in this section. At the hearing, the court shall review whether the child's best interests are served by continued out-of-home placement and determine the future legal status of the child.

(a) For children age ten and under, a permanency planning hearing shall be held in all cases where the child has remained in out-of-home care for at least nine months and an adoption decree or guardianship order under chapter 11.130 RCW has not previously been entered. The hearing shall take place no later than twelve months following commencement of the child's current placement episode.

(b) For children over age ten, a permanency planning hearing shall be held in all cases where the child has remained in out-of-home care for at least fifteen months and an adoption decree or guardianship order under chapter 11.130 RCW has not previously been entered. The hearing shall take place no later than eighteen months following commencement of the current placement episode.

(c) No later than ten working days before the permanency planning hearing, the department shall submit a written permanency plan to the court and shall mail a copy of the plan to all parties. The plan shall be directed toward securing a safe, stable, and permanent home for the child as soon as possible. The plan shall identify one of the following outcomes as the primary goal and may also identify additional outcomes as alternative goals: Return of the child to the home of the child's parent or legal guardian; adoption; guardianship; or long-term out-of-home care, until the child is age eighteen, with a written agreement between the parties and the child's care provider.

(d) If a goal of long-term out-of-home care has been achieved before the permanency planning hearing, the court shall review the child's status to determine whether the placement and the plan for the child's care remains appropriate. In cases where the primary permanency planning goal has not been achieved, the court shall inquire regarding the reasons why the primary goal has not been

achieved and determine what needs to be done to make it possible to achieve the primary goal.

(e) Following the first permanency planning hearing, the court shall hold a further permanency planning hearing in accordance with this section at least once every twelve months until a permanency planning goal is achieved or the voluntary placement agreement is terminated.

(6) Any party to the voluntary placement agreement may terminate the agreement at any time. Upon termination of the agreement, the child shall be returned to the care of the child's parent or legal guardian, unless the child has been taken into custody pursuant to RCW 13.34.050 or 26.44.050, placed in shelter care pursuant to RCW 13.34.060, or placed in foster care pursuant to RCW 13.34.130. The department shall notify the court upon termination of the voluntary placement agreement and return of the child to the care of the child's parent or legal guardian. Whenever a voluntary placement agreement is terminated, an action under this section shall be dismissed.

(7) When state or federal funds are expended for the care and maintenance of a child with a developmental disability, placed in care as a result of an action under this chapter, the department shall refer the case to the division of child support, unless the department finds that there is good cause not to pursue collection of child support against the parent or parents of the child.

(8) This section does not prevent the department of children, youth, and families from filing a dependency petition if there is reason to believe that the child is a dependent child as defined in RCW 13.34.030. An action filed under this section shall be dismissed upon the filing of a dependency petition regarding a child who is the subject of the action under this section.

(9) For purposes of this section, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, "department" means the department of social and health services. [2020 c 312 s 725; 2019 c 470 s 1; 2004 c 183 s 2; 2000 c 122 s 33; 1998 c 229 s 2; 1997 c 386 s 19.]

Reviser's note: *(1) RCW 74.13.350 was recodified as RCW 71A.28.010 pursuant to 2020 c 41 s 6.

(2) RCW 13.34.270 was amended by 2020 c 312 s 725 without cognizance of its repeal by 2020 c 41 s 5. For rule of construction concerning sections amended and repealed in the same legislative session, see RCW 1.12.025.

Effective dates—2020 c 312: See note following RCW 11.130.915.

Effective date—2004 c 183: See note following RCW 13.34.160.

Application—1997 c 386: See note following RCW 13.50.010.

RCW 13.34.270 Child with developmental disability—Out-of-home placement—Permanency planning hearing.
[2019 c 470 s 1; 2004 c 183 s 2; 2000 c 122 s 33; 1998 c 229 s 2; 1997 c 386 s 19.]

Reviser's note: RCW 13.34.270 was amended by 2020 c 312 s 725 without cognizance of its repeal by 2020 c 41 s 5. For rule of construction concerning sections amended and repealed in the same legislative session, see RCW 1.12.025.

RCW 13.34.300 Relevance of failure to cause juvenile to attend school to neglect petition. The legislature finds that it is the responsibility of the custodial parent, parents or guardian to ensure that children within the custody of such individuals attend school as provided for by law. To this end, while a parent's failure to cause a juvenile to attend school should not alone provide a basis for a neglect petition against the parent or guardian, when a neglect petition is filed on the basis of other evidence, a parent or guardian's failure to take reasonable steps to ensure that the juvenile attends school may be relevant to the question of the appropriate disposition of a neglect petition. [2000 c 122 s 34; 1979 ex.s. c 201 s 3.]

RCW 13.34.315 Health care—Evaluation and treatment. Whenever a child is ordered removed from his or her home pursuant to this chapter, the agency charged with his or her care may authorize an evaluation and treatment for the child's routine and necessary medical, dental, or mental health care, and all necessary emergency care. [2006 c 221 s 2.]

Finding—2006 c 221: "The legislature recognizes that foster children have enhanced health care needs and that it is necessary to improve the system of providing health care for foster children. The legislature further recognizes the importance of meeting the mental health needs of children in foster care, as well as their medical and dental health care needs. The legislature finds that there must be greater coordination and integration of systems, in particular coordination between children's administration and the health and recovery services administration as well as other agencies that provide or pay for health services for foster youth, to ensure that the health care needs of children in foster care are met in a timely manner." [2006 c 221 s 1.]

RCW 13.34.320 Inpatient mental health treatment—When parental consent required—Hearing. The department shall obtain the prior consent of a child's parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian before a dependent child is admitted into an inpatient mental health treatment facility. If the child's parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian is unavailable or does not agree with the proposed admission, the department shall request a hearing and provide notice to all interested parties to seek prior approval of the juvenile court before such admission. In the event that an emergent situation creating a risk of substantial harm to the health and welfare of a child in the custody of the department does not allow time for the department to obtain prior approval or to request a court hearing before consenting to the admission of the child into an inpatient mental health hospital, the department shall seek court approval by requesting that a hearing be set on the first available court date. [2018 c 284 s 25; 2009 c 520 s 40; 1999 c 188 s 2.]

Intent—1999 c 188: "It is the intent of the legislature that minor children in the care and custody of the department of social and health services under chapter 13.34 RCW be provided the most appropriate possible mental health care consistent with the child's

best interests, family reconciliation, the child's medical need for mental health treatment, available state and community resources, and professional standards of medical care. The legislature intends that admission of such minors for mental health hospitalization be made pursuant to the criteria and standards for mental health services for minors established in chapter 71.34 RCW, and that minor children in the care and custody of the department in need of mental health hospitalization shall retain all rights set forth therein. The legislature specifically intends that this act may not be construed to affect the standards or procedures established for the involuntary commitment of minors under chapter 71.34 RCW." [1999 c 188 s 1.]

RCW 13.34.330 Inpatient mental health treatment—Placement. A dependent child who is admitted to an inpatient mental health facility shall be placed in a facility, with available treatment space, that is closest to the family home, unless the department, in consultation with the admitting authority finds that admission in the facility closest to the child's home would jeopardize the health or safety of the child. [2018 c 284 s 26; 2009 c 520 s 41; 1999 c 188 s 3.]

Intent—1999 c 188: See note following RCW 13.34.320.

RCW 13.34.340 Release of records—Disclosure to treating physician. For minors who cannot consent to the release of their records with the department because they are not old enough to consent to treatment, or, if old enough, lack the capacity to consent, or if the minor is receiving treatment involuntarily with a provider the department has authorized to provide mental health treatment under RCW 13.34.320, the department shall disclose, upon the treating physician's request, all relevant records, including the minor's passport as established under RCW 74.13.285, in the department's possession that the treating physician determines contain information required for treatment of the minor. The treating physician shall maintain all records received from the department in a manner that distinguishes the records from any other records in the minor's file with the treating physician and the department records may not be disclosed by the treating physician to any other person or entity absent a court order except that, for medical purposes only, a treating physician may disclose the department records to another treating physician. [2018 c 284 s 27; 2009 c 520 s 42; 2000 c 122 s 35; 1999 c 188 s 4.]

Intent—1999 c 188: See note following RCW 13.34.320.

RCW 13.34.350 Dependent children—Information sharing—Guidelines. In order to facilitate communication of information needed to serve the best interest of any child who is the subject of a dependency case filed under this chapter, the department shall, consistent with state and federal law governing the release of confidential information, establish guidelines, and shall use those guidelines for the facilitation of communication of relevant information among divisions, providers, the courts, the family,

caregivers, caseworkers, and others. [2009 c 520 s 43; 2001 c 52 s 2.]

Finding—2001 c 52: "Recent analysis of the child dependency system following the death of Zy'Nyia Nobles indicated poor communication of relevant information from the courts, to the department, within programs between caseworkers, between divisions, among specialists, caregivers, and family. Appropriate service delivery necessitates communication of relevant information. Barriers to appropriate communication must be eliminated." [2001 c 52 s 1.]

Construction—2001 c 52: "Nothing in this act shall be construed to create a private right of action or claim against the department of social and health services on the part of any individual or organization." [2001 c 52 s 4.]

RCW 13.34.360 Transfer of newborn to qualified person—Criminal liability—Notification to child protective services—Definitions. (1) For purposes of this section:

(a) "Appropriate location" means (i) the emergency department of a hospital licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW during the hours the hospital is in operation; (ii) a fire station during its hours of operation and while fire personnel are present; or (iii) a federally designated rural health clinic during its hours of operation.

(b) "Newborn" means a live human being who is less than seventy-two hours old.

(c) "Qualified person" means (i) any person that the parent transferring the newborn reasonably believes is a bona fide employee, volunteer, or medical staff member of the hospital or federally designated rural health clinic and who represents to the parent transferring the newborn that he or she can and will summon appropriate resources to meet the newborn's immediate needs; or (ii) a firefighter, volunteer, or emergency medical technician at a fire station who represents to the parent transferring the newborn that he or she can and will summon appropriate resources to meet the newborn's immediate needs.

(2) A parent of a newborn who transfers the newborn to a qualified person at an appropriate location is not subject to criminal liability under RCW 9A.42.060, 9A.42.070, 9A.42.080, 26.20.030, or 26.20.035.

(3)(a) The qualified person at an appropriate location shall not require the parent transferring the newborn to provide any identifying information in order to transfer the newborn.

(b) The qualified person at an appropriate location shall attempt to protect the anonymity of the parent who transfers the newborn, while providing an opportunity for the parent to anonymously give the qualified person such information as the parent knows about the family medical history of the parents and the newborn. The qualified person at an appropriate location shall provide referral information about adoption options, counseling, appropriate medical and emotional aftercare services, domestic violence, and legal rights to the parent seeking to transfer the newborn.

(c) If a parent of a newborn transfers the newborn to a qualified person at an appropriate location pursuant to this section, the qualified person shall cause child protective services to be notified

within twenty-four hours after receipt of such a newborn. Child protective services shall assume custody of the newborn within twenty-four hours after receipt of notification.

(d) A federally designated rural health clinic is not required to provide ongoing medical care of a transferred newborn beyond that already required by law and may transfer the newborn to a hospital licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW. The federally designated rural health clinic shall notify child protective services of the transfer of the newborn to the hospital.

(e) A hospital, federally designated rural health clinic, or fire station, its employees, volunteers, and medical staff are immune from any criminal or civil liability for accepting or receiving a newborn under this section.

(4)(a) Beginning July 1, 2011, an appropriate location shall post a sign indicating that the location is an appropriate place for the safe and legal transfer of a newborn.

(b) To cover the costs of acquiring and placing signs, appropriate locations may accept nonpublic funds and donations.

(5) The department shall collect and compile information concerning the number of newborns transferred under this section after June 7, 2018. The department shall report its findings to the public annually, which may be on its website, beginning July 31, 2018. [2018 c 182 s 2; 2009 c 290 s 1; 2002 c 331 s 2.]

Findings—Intent—2018 c 182: "The legislature finds that on February 12, 2014, the body of a newborn girl was found near the side of a road in North Bend, Washington, wrapped in a blanket. The newborn was less than half a mile away from Snoqualmie valley hospital, a location where infants can be safely and anonymously surrendered under Washington state's safety of newborn children law. The legislature further finds that while national estimates are that safe surrender laws across the country have saved well over one thousand infants in the past decade, surprisingly little is known about how many abandonment incidents occur and how many could have been or have been prevented through safe surrender laws.

The legislature further finds that no newborn should be abandoned to die alone and hungry as its first and only exposure to the world, any life that can be saved under the safety of the newborn children law is worth saving, and understanding the characteristics of newborn abandonment and knowing when and where they occur is crucial for developing effective public awareness strategies to make caregivers aware of the state's safe surrender option. The legislature further finds that while existing state law requires persons receiving infants under the safety of newborn children law to notify child protective services, which is situated within the Washington state department of social and health services children's administration, within twenty-four hours, there is no statutory requirement for the department of social and health services to report data on surrendered newborns. The legislature therefore intends to require the department of social and health services to provide consistent tracking and regular public reporting of safe surrender information statewide and to regularly publish information on safe surrenders." [2018 c 182 s 1.]

Intent—2002 c 331: "The legislature intends to increase the likelihood that pregnant women will obtain adequate prenatal care and will provide their newborns with adequate health care during the first

few days of their lives. The legislature recognizes that prenatal and postdelivery health care for newborns and their mothers is especially critical to their survival and well-being. The legislature does not intend to encourage the abandonment of newborn children nor to change existing law relating to notification to parents under chapter 13.34 RCW, but rather to assure that abandonment does not occur and that all newborns have an opportunity for adequate health care and a stable home life." [2002 c 331 s 1.]

Effective date—2002 c 331: "Sections 1 through 7 of this act are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and take effect immediately [April 3, 2002]." [2002 c 331 s 9.]

RCW 13.34.370 Evaluation of parties—Selection of evaluators. The court may order expert evaluations of parties to obtain information regarding visitation issues or other issues in a case. These evaluations shall be performed by appointed evaluators who are mutually agreed upon by the court, the department, and the parents' counsel, and, if the child is to be evaluated, by the representative for the child. If no agreement can be reached, the court shall select the expert evaluator. [2018 c 284 s 28; 2009 c 520 s 44; 2004 c 146 s 2.]

RCW 13.34.380 Visitation policies and protocols—Development—Elements. The department shall develop consistent policies and protocols, based on current relevant research, concerning visitation for dependent children to be implemented consistently throughout the state. The department shall develop the policies and protocols in consultation with researchers in the field, community-based agencies, court-appointed special advocates, parents' representatives, and court representatives. The policies and protocols shall include, but not be limited to: The structure and quality of visitations; consultation with the assigned law enforcement officer in the event the parent or sibling of the child is identified as a suspect in an active criminal investigation for a violent crime that, if the allegations are true, would impact the safety of the child; and training for department caseworkers, visitation supervisors, and foster parents related to visitation.

The policies and protocols shall be consistent with the provisions of this chapter and implementation of the policies and protocols shall be consistent with relevant orders of the court. [2018 c 284 s 29; 2013 c 254 s 3; 2009 c 520 s 45; 2004 c 146 s 3.]

RCW 13.34.385 Petition for visitation—Relatives of dependent children—Notice—Modification of order—Effect of granting the petition—Retroactive application. (1) A relative of a dependent child may petition the juvenile court for reasonable visitation with the child if:

(a) The child has been found to be a dependent child under this chapter;

(b) The parental rights of both of the child's parents have been terminated;

(c) The child is in the custody of the department or another public agency; and

(d) The child has not been adopted and is not in a preadoptive home or other permanent placement at the time the petition for visitation is filed.

(2) The court shall give prior notice for any proceeding under this section, or cause prior notice to be given, to the department, other public agency, or agency having custody of the child, the child's attorney or guardian ad litem if applicable, and the child. The court shall also order the custodial agency to give prior notice of any hearing to the child's current foster parent, relative caregiver, guardian or custodian, and the child's tribe, if applicable.

(3) The juvenile court may grant the petition for visitation if it finds that the requirements of subsection (1) of this section have been met, and that unsupervised visitation between the child and the relative does not present a risk to the child's safety or well-being and that the visitation is in the best interests of the child. In determining the best interests of the child the court shall consider, but is not limited to, the following:

(a) The love, affection, and strength of the relationship between the child and the relative;

(b) The length and quality of the prior relationship between the child and the relative;

(c) Any criminal convictions for or founded history of abuse or neglect of a child by the relative;

(d) Whether the visitation will present a risk to the child's health, welfare, or safety;

(e) The child's reasonable preference, if the court considers the child to be of sufficient age to express a preference;

(f) Any other factor relevant to the child's best interest.

(4) The visitation order may be modified at any time upon a showing that the visitation poses a risk to the child's safety or well-being. The visitation order shall state that visitation will automatically terminate upon the child's placement in a preadoptive home, if the child is adopted, or if there is a subsequent founded abuse or neglect allegation against the relative.

(5) The granting of the petition under this section does not grant the relative the right to participate in the dependency action and does not grant any rights to the relative not otherwise specified in the visitation order.

(6) This section is retroactive and applies to any eligible dependent child at the time of the filing of the petition for visitation, regardless of the date parental rights were terminated.

(7) For the purpose of this section, "relative" means a relative as defined in RCW 74.15.020(2)(a), except parents.

(8) This section is intended to provide an additional procedure by which a relative may request visitation with a dependent child. It is not intended to impair or alter the ability a court currently has to order visitation with a relative under the dependency statutes. [2018 c 284 s 30; 2009 c 520 s 46; 2008 c 259 s 1.]

RCW 13.34.390 Comprehensive services for drug-affected and alcohol-affected mothers and infants. The department and the

department of health shall develop and expand comprehensive services for drug-affected and alcohol-affected mothers and infants. Subject to funds appropriated for this purpose, the expansion shall be in evidence-based, research-based, or consensus-based practices, and shall expand capacity in underserved regions of the state. [2009 c 520 s 47; 2005 c 504 s 303.]

Findings—Intent—Severability—Application—Construction—Captions, part headings, subheadings not law—Adoption of rules—Effective dates—2005 c 504: See notes following RCW 71.05.027.

Alphabetization—Correction of references—2005 c 504: See note following RCW 71.05.020.

RCW 13.34.400 Child welfare proceedings—Placement—Documentation. In any proceeding under this chapter, if the department submits a report to the court in which the department is recommending a new placement or a change in placement, the department shall include the documents relevant to persons in the home in which a child will be placed and listed in subsections (1) through (5) of this section to the report. The department shall include only these relevant documents and shall not attach the entire history of the subject of the report.

(1) If the report contains a recommendation, opinion, or assertion by the department relating to substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, anger management classes, or domestic violence classes, the department shall attach the document upon which the recommendation, opinion, or assertion was based. The documentation may include the progress report or evaluation submitted by the provider, but may not include the entire history with the provider.

(2) If the report contains a recommendation, opinion, or assertion by the department or agency relating to visitation with a child, the department shall attach the document upon which the recommendation, opinion, or assertion was based. The documentation may include the most recent visitation report, a visitation report referencing a specific incident alleged in the report, or summary of the visitation prepared by the person who supervised the visitation. The documentation attached to the report shall not include the entire visitation history.

(3) If the report contains a recommendation, opinion, or assertion by the department relating to the psychological status of a person, the department shall attach the document upon which the recommendation, opinion, or assertion was based. The documentation may include the progress report, evaluation, or summary submitted by the provider, but shall not include the entire history of the person.

(4) If the report contains a recommendation, opinion, or assertion by the department relating to injuries to a child, the department shall attach a summary of the physician's report, prepared by the physician or the physician's designee, relating to the recommendation, opinion, or assertion by the department.

(5) If the report contains a recommendation, opinion, or assertion by the department relating to a home study, licensing action, or background check information, the department shall attach the document or documents upon which that recommendation, opinion, or

assertion is based. [2018 c 284 s 31; 2009 c 520 s 48; 2007 c 411 s 2.]

Finding—2007 c 411: "The legislature finds that in order to allow courts to make well-informed placement decisions for children in the care of the state, the courts must have accurate information, including documentation supporting assertions or recommendations made by social workers, when appropriate." [2007 c 411 s 1.]

Short title—2007 c 411: "This act shall be known and cited as the Rafael Gomez act." [2007 c 411 s 3.]

RCW 13.34.410 Psychosexual evaluation. In the event a judge orders a parent to undergo a psychosexual evaluation, and pending the outcome of the evaluation, the department, subject to the approval of the court, may reassess visitation duration, supervision, and location, if appropriate. If the assessment indicates the current visitation plan is contrary to the child's health, safety, or welfare, the department, subject to approval by the court, may alter the visitation plan pending the outcome of the investigation. [2013 c 254 s 4.]

RCW 13.34.420 Qualified residential treatment program—Requirements. A qualified residential treatment program as defined in this chapter must meet the following requirements:

(1) Use a trauma-informed treatment model that is designed to address the needs, including clinical needs as appropriate, of children with serious emotional or behavioral disorders or disturbances; and

(2) Be able to implement treatment for the child that is identified in an assessment that:

(a) Is completed by a trained professional or licensed clinician who is a "qualified individual" as that term is defined under the federal family first prevention services act;

(b) Assesses the strengths and needs of the child; and

(c) Determines whether the child's needs can be met with family members or through placement in a foster family home or, if not, which available placement setting would provide the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive environment and be consistent with the child's permanency plan. [2019 c 172 s 3.]

Effective date—2019 c 172 ss 3, 4, and 10-15: "Sections 3, 4, and 10 through 15 of this act take effect October 1, 2019." [2019 c 172 s 19.]

RCW 13.34.425 Qualified residential treatment program—Placement—Hearing. If a child is placed in a qualified residential treatment program as defined in this chapter, the court shall, within sixty days of placement, hold a hearing to:

(1) Consider the assessment required under RCW 13.34.420 and submitted as part of the department's social study, and any related documentation;

(2) Determine whether placement in foster care can meet the child's needs or if placement in another available placement setting best meets the child's needs in the least restrictive environment; and

(3) Approve or disapprove the child's placement in the qualified residential treatment program. [2019 c 172 s 14.]

Effective date—2019 c 172 ss 3, 4, and 10-15: See note following RCW 13.34.420.

RCW 13.34.430 Social study—Required information. A social study as defined in this chapter must contain the following information:

(1) A statement of the specific harm or harms to the child that intervention is designed to alleviate;

(2) A description of the specific services and activities, for both the parents and child, that are needed in order to prevent serious harm to the child; the reasons why such services and activities are likely to be useful; the availability of any proposed services; and the agency's overall plan for ensuring that the services will be delivered. The description shall identify the services chosen and approved by the parent;

(3) If removal is recommended, a full description of the reasons why the child cannot be protected adequately in the home, including a description of any previous efforts to work with the parents and the child in the home; the in-home treatment programs that have been considered and rejected; the prevention services, including housing assistance, that have been offered or provided and have failed to prevent the need for out-of-home placement, unless the health, safety, and welfare of the child cannot be protected adequately in the home; and the parents' attitude toward placement of the child;

(4)(a) If the child is placed, for at least thirty days, in a qualified residential treatment program as defined in this chapter, a copy of the assessment described in RCW 13.34.420.

(b) As long as the child remains placed in a qualified residential treatment program and the department anticipates that the child will remain in this placement for at least sixty days, or if the child has already been in this placement for at least sixty days, the social study must also include the following information sufficient for the juvenile court to determine at each status hearing concerning the child:

(i) Whether ongoing assessment of the child's strengths and needs continues to support the determination that the child's needs cannot be met through placement in a foster family home;

(ii) Whether the child's placement provides the most effective and appropriate level of care in the least restrictive environment;

(iii) Whether the placement is consistent with the child's permanency plan;

(iv) What specific treatment or service needs will be met in the placement, and how long the child is expected to need the treatment or services; and

(v) What efforts the department has made to prepare the child to return home or be placed with a fit and willing relative as defined in RCW 13.34.030, a Title 13 RCW legal guardian, an adoptive parent, or in a foster family home;

(5) A statement of the likely harms the child will suffer as a result of removal;

(6) A description of the steps that will be taken to minimize the harm to the child that may result if separation occurs including an assessment of the child's relationship and emotional bond with any siblings, and the agency's plan to provide ongoing contact between the child and the child's siblings if appropriate; and

(7) Behavior that will be expected before determination that supervision of the family or placement is no longer necessary. [2019 c 172 s 4.]

Effective date—2019 c 172 ss 3, 4, and 10-15: See note following RCW 13.34.420.

RCW 13.34.435 Washington state center for court research—Attorney-client privilege. (1) The Washington state center for court research of the administrative office of the courts shall convene stakeholders, including youth and young adults, to identify the relevant outcome measures and data collection methods that appropriately protect attorney-client privilege to effectively assess:

(a) The number of youth for whom attorneys are appointed pursuant to RCW 13.34.212(3); and

(b) The short and longitudinal impact of standards-based legal representation on case outcomes including family reunification, number of placement changes, and placement with kin of appointment of standards-based representation disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, disability status, sexual and gender identity, and geography.

(2) By November 30, 2022, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the Washington state center for court research of the administrative office of the courts shall submit an annual report to the appropriate committees of the legislature and the governor outlining the outcome measures identified under this section. [2021 c 210 s 8.]

Findings—Intent—2021 c 210: See note following RCW 13.34.090.

RCW 13.34.440 Federal waivers. Where feasible, the department of children, youth, and families shall apply for federal waivers that would reimburse the department for the cost of providing maintenance payments for relatives or other suitable persons caring for a child who have indicated a desire to become a licensed foster parent, provided that the person has received an initial license from the department. [2021 c 211 s 11.]

Short title—Finding—Intent—2021 c 211: See notes following RCW 13.34.040.

RCW 13.34.800 Drug-affected and alcohol-affected infants—Model project. To the extent funds are appropriated, the department shall operate a model project to provide services to women who give birth to infants exposed to the nonprescription use of controlled substances or abuse of alcohol by the mother during pregnancy. Within available funds, the project may be offered in one site in each of the three department's administrative regions that have the highest incidence of

drug-affected or alcohol-affected infants annually. The project shall accept women referred to it by the department following the birth of a drug-affected or alcohol-affected infant. The model project shall be concluded by July 1, 2002. [1998 c 314 s 30.]

Effective date—1998 c 314: "Sections 18 through 24, 26 through 28, 30 through 39, and 41 through 44 of this act take effect January 1, 1999." [1998 c 314 s 46.]

RCW 13.34.801 Rules—Definition of "drug-affected infant." By July 1, 1999, the department of social and health services, in consultation with the department of health, shall adopt rules to implement chapter 314, Laws of 1998, including a definition of "drug-affected infant," which shall be limited to infants who are affected by a mother's nonprescription use of controlled substances. [1998 c 314 s 25.]

RCW 13.34.802 Rules—Definition of "alcohol-affected infant." By July 1, 1999, the department of social and health services, in consultation with the department of health, shall adopt rules to implement chapter 314, Laws of 1998, including a definition of "alcohol-affected infant," which shall be limited to infants who are affected by a mother's abuse of alcohol. [1998 c 314 s 29.]

RCW 13.34.820 Permanency for dependent children—Annual report. (1) The administrative office of the courts, in consultation with the attorney general's office and the department, shall compile an annual report, providing information about cases that fail to meet statutory guidelines to achieve permanency for dependent children.

(2) The administrative office of the courts shall submit the annual report required by this section to appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1st of each year, beginning on December 1, 2007. The administrative office of the courts shall also submit the annual report to a representative of the foster parent association of Washington state.

(3) The annual report shall include information regarding whether foster parents received timely notification of dependency hearings as required by RCW 13.34.096 and 13.34.145 and whether caregivers submitted reports to the court.

(4) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the administrative office of the courts shall, in consultation with others, identify measures of relational permanency and child well-being and shall report to the legislature by July 1, 2025, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the following information:

(a) A plan for reporting on child well-being and relational permanency;

(b) A plan for tracking and reporting on whether an order or portion of an order was agreed or contested, and if contested, by which party or parties;

(c) How to make such information publicly available;

(d) What can be reported using existing data;

(e) What additional information should be collected;

(f) What data-sharing agreements are necessary to ensure an accurate picture of the needs of families in the dependency system; and

(g) How many children in dependency have incarcerated parents.

(5) In making these determinations the administrative office of the courts must consult with representatives who have knowledge of data collection systems from the office of the superintendent of public instruction; the health care authority; the department of children, youth, and families; the department of social and health services; the department of corrections; tribal data experts; and any other entity holding relevant data or expertise.

(6) Consistent with RCW 13.50.280, to collect data necessary to evaluate the relational permanency and well-being of dependent children, the administrative office of the courts may execute data-sharing agreements with the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the health care authority, the department of children, youth, and families, the department of corrections, and the department of social and health services. [2024 c 326 s 2; 2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 309; 2016 c 180 s 2; 2007 c 410 s 6.]

Implementation—2024 c 326: "Dependency courts should work to ensure the well-being of dependent children and to ensure that every young person who leaves foster care has relational permanency - meaning they have various long-term relationships that help them feel loved and connected. This includes relationships with siblings, parents, family members, extended family, family friends, mentors, tribes, and where appropriate, former foster family members.

Legal permanency, achieved through reunification, guardianship, or adoption is important, but it is not the only way to provide a sense of belonging and meaningful connections for young people. The federal children's bureau has cautioned that, legal permanence alone does not guarantee secure attachments and lifelong relationships. The relational aspects of permanency are critically important and fundamental to overall well-being, administration on children, youth and families, information memorandum ACYF-CB-IM-20-09, January 5, 2021. Relational permanency is one component of a child's overall well-being. Washington state's data collection should reflect the importance of both relational and legal permanency as well as child well-being." [2024 c 326 s 1.]

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.

Short title—2007 c 410: See note following RCW 13.34.138.

RCW 13.34.830 Child protection and child welfare—Racial disproportionality—Evaluation—Report. (1) Within amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, or within funding made available by private grant or contribution, the Washington state institute for public policy shall evaluate the department of social and health services' use of structured decision-making practices and

implementation of the family team decision-making model to determine whether and how those child protection and child welfare efforts result in reducing disproportionate representation of African American, Native American, and Latino children in the state's child welfare system. The institute shall analyze the points in the system at which current data reflect the greatest levels of disproportionality. The institute shall report its findings to the legislature and the department of social and health services by September 1, 2010.

(2) If adequate funding is not made available through state appropriation or through private grant or contribution to simultaneously study the impact on racial disproportionality of both the structured decision-making process and family team decision-making model, the institute shall first study and report on the family team decision-making model. The department of social and health services and the Washington state institute for public policy jointly, shall:

(a) Promptly complete and execute a data-sharing agreement to comply with the department's confidential or records requirements and to provide the institute with data and other information necessary to conduct its evaluation; and

(b) Identify potential sources of private funding to supplement any state-appropriated amounts. [2009 c 213 s 2.]

Findings—2009 c 213: "(1) The legislature finds that research conducted by the Washington state institute for public policy released in June 2008, demonstrates that racial disproportionality exists in Washington's child welfare system and that the greatest disproportionality occurs when the initial referral to child protective services is made and when the decision is made to place a child in out-of-home care. The institute's research also demonstrates that children of African American, Native American, and Latino families have disproportionately longer lengths of stay in foster care.

(2) The legislature finds further that the department of social and health services, in a December 2008 report issued pursuant to chapter 465, Laws of 2007, identified initial recommendations for remediation of racial disproportionality, including examining specific current child welfare practices, structured decision making and family team decision making, to determine whether and how these practices might result in reducing or eliminating racial disproportionality." [2009 c 213 s 1.]

RCW 13.34.900 Construction—Chapter applicable to state registered domestic partnerships—2009 c 521. For the purposes of this chapter, the terms spouse, marriage, marital, husband, wife, widow, widower, next of kin, and family shall be interpreted as applying equally to state registered domestic partnerships or individuals in state registered domestic partnerships as well as to marital relationships and married persons, and references to dissolution of marriage shall apply equally to state registered domestic partnerships that have been terminated, dissolved, or invalidated, to the extent that such interpretation does not conflict with federal law. Where necessary to implement chapter 521, Laws of 2009, gender-specific terms such as husband and wife used in any statute, rule, or other law shall be construed to be gender neutral,

and applicable to individuals in state registered domestic partnerships. [2009 c 521 s 42.]

RCW 13.34.901 Construction—Prevention services. Nothing in this chapter may be construed to limit the department's authority to offer or provide prevention services or primary prevention services as defined in this chapter and chapter 74.13 RCW, respectively. [2019 c 172 s 17.]