

NEWS RELEASE

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New Committee to Help Improve Outcomes for Foster Care Children

(Olympia) -- Better futures for foster children is the goal of the new Child Welfare Transformational Design Committee, which began work today in Olympia.

The committee was created by the Washington State Legislature to:

- Aid the Department of Social and Health Services as it converts the 1,800 child welfare services contracts it has with private organizations into performance based contracts by January, 2011.
- Develop two demonstration projects by July, 2012 that will test whether changing the way that child welfare services are delivered will improve accountability and outcomes for kids.

Members of the 24-member committee include representatives of Indian tribes, the Washington Federation of State Employees, private child welfare service providers, judges, DSHS, Partners for Our Children, and foster care and birth parents.

The new law - HB2106 -- is the result of a collaborative effort between Senator Jim Hargrove (D-Hoquiam) and Representative Ruth Kagi (D-Lake Forest Park) to use evidence-based practices to improve accountability and outcomes for children in the state's foster care system. The bill passed the House of Representatives 97-0; the Senate vote was 37-10.

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HB 2106 Fact Sheet

June 30, 2009

Improving Outcomes and Accountability for Children:

Nearly 10,000 children are in foster care in Washington State on any given day because they aren't safe in their own homes. HB2106 is all about improving outcomes and accountability for these children.

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Performance-Based Approach:

The legislation:

Requires the Department of Social and Health Services to convert the 1,800 child welfare services contracts it has with private organizations into performance based contracts by 2011. Today, about one third -- \$230 million - in actual services children receive while in care are delivered by private agencies and providers, but the contracts are based on services provided, not outcomes.

Creates the Child Welfare Transformation Committee to develop two demonstration sites to evaluate whether contracting out case management services now done by state government social workers improves outcomes for children. State workers would continue to provide child protective and investigative services and administer the performance-based contracts. The demonstration sites - one in Western Washington and the other in Eastern Washington - are to be up and running by 2012. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy will evaluate the results, then the Governor will decide in 2015 whether to expand or terminate the program.

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