

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

**Sectional Analysis to SS HB 27 Version P**

Section 1 This Act may be known as the Child Protection and Opportunity Act.

Section 2 formally adds recruiting foster parents when there is a shortage of foster parents to the duties of the Department of Health and Social Services ("the department").

Section 3 amends AS 47.10.080(l) to require the department to demonstrate in existing hearings that the department is making all reasonable efforts to find a permanent placement for a child.

Section 4 requires that during status hearings the department demonstrate that it is taking all reasonable efforts to find a permanent home for a child.

Section 5 requires that when the department transfers a child from one out-of-home placement to another, the department shall search for an appropriate placement, if in the child's best interests, with an adult family member or a family friends who meets the foster care licensing requirements established by the department.

Section 6 requires that when a child is transferred from one placement setting to another, and it is reasonable and in the child's best educational interests, the department shall coordinate with the school the child is attending to ensure the child is permitted to remain in that school through the end of the school term if the child's new placement is in the same municipality and connected by road to the school.

Section 7 requires the department to adopt regulations requiring the disclosure of appropriate information to Alaska Native villages or Native organizations so they may be apprised of needs a child who has not been placed in state custody so a tribal organization has needed information about the child's important needs discovered by the Office of Children's Services investigation, and so the tribal organization can, if it decides, help the child with those issues that need to be addressed.

Section 8 amends AS 47.10.142 by adding a new subsection requiring that when the department takes emergency custody of a child, the department shall, to the extent feasible and consistent with the best interests of the child, place the child according to the criteria specified under AS 47.14.100(e).

Section 9 changes the age when the department is no longer required to continue searching for a suitable adoptive or permanent legal guardianship for a child from 18 to 21 years of age.

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Section 10 requires that before a child is released from the Office of Children's Services custody before age 21 the department demonstrate at the court proceeding that releasing the child out of care is in the youth's best interests.

Section 11 amends AS 47.18.320(a) to state that the Office of Children's Services should work towards not just a "basic education", but towards "educational and vocational training." Word "basic" removed.

Section 12 identifies sections of the bill that could result in indirect amendments to the court's Alaska Child in Need of Aid Rules of Procedure relating to permanency hearings and hearings relating to the termination of parental rights. If no part of the bill is deemed a court change then this part of the bill will be deemed unnecessary. It is not clear that any portion of the bill constitutes a court rule change, though this section is added just in case the courts determine any provisions constitute court rule changes.