Chapter 26.09 RCW

DISSOLUTION PROCEEDINGS—LEGAL SEPARATION

Sections

26.09.002 Policy.
26.09.003 Policy—Intent—Findings.
26.09.004 Definitions.
26.09.006 Mandatory use of approved forms.
26.09.010 Civil practice to govern—Designation of proceedings—Decrees.
26.09.013 Interpretive services—Literacy assistance—Guardian ad litem charges—Telephone or interactive videoconference participation—Residential time in cases involving domestic violence or child abuse—Disclosure of information—Supervised visitation and safe exchange centers.
26.09.015 Mediation proceedings.
26.09.016 Mediation in cases involving domestic violence or child abuse.
26.09.020 Petition—Dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, or for a declaration concerning validity of marriage or domestic partnership—Contents—Parties—Certificate.
26.09.030 Petition for dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership—Court proceedings, findings—Transfer to family court—Legal separation in lieu of dissolution.
26.09.040 Petition to have marriage or domestic partnership declared invalid or judicial determination of validity—Procedure—Findings—Grounds—Legitimacy of children.
26.09.050 Decrees—Contents—Restraining orders—Enforcement—Notice of termination or modification of restraining order.
26.09.060 Temporary maintenance or child support—Temporary restraining order—Preliminary injunction—Domestic violence or antiharassment protection order—Notice of termination or modification of restraining order—Support debts, notice.
26.09.070 Separation contracts.
26.09.080 Disposition of property and liabilities—Factors.
26.09.090 Maintenance orders for either spouse or either domestic partner—Factors.
26.09.100 Child support—Apportionment of expense—Periodic adjustments or modifications.
26.09.105 Child support—Medical support—Conditions.
26.09.110 Minor or dependent child—Court appointed attorney to represent—Payment of costs, fees, and disbursements.
26.09.120 Support or maintenance payments—To whom paid.
26.09.135 Order or decree for child support—Compliance with RCW 26.23.050.
26.09.138 Mandatory assignment of public retirement benefits—Remedies exclusive.
26.09.140 Payment of costs, attorneys' fees, etc.
26.09.150 Decree of dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, or declaration of invalidity—Finality—Appeal—Conversion of decree of legal separation to decree of dissolution—Name of party.
26.09.160 Failure to comply with decree or temporary injunction—Obligation to make support or maintenance payments or permit contact with children not suspended—Penalties.
26.09.165 Court orders—Required language.
26.09.170 Modification of decree for maintenance or support, property disposition—Termination of maintenance obligation and child support—Grounds.
26.09.175 Modification of order of child support.
26.09.181 Procedure for determining permanent parenting plan.
26.09.182 Permanent parenting plan—Determination of relevant information.
26.09.184 Permanent parenting plan.
26.09.187 Criteria for establishing permanent parenting plan.
26.09.191 Restrictions in temporary or permanent parenting plans.
26.09.194 Proposed temporary parenting plan—Temporary order—Amendment—Vacation of order.
26.09.197 Issuance of temporary parenting plan—Criteria.
26.09.210 Parenting plans—Interview with child by court—Advice of professional personnel.
26.09.220 Parenting arrangements—Investigation and report—Appointment of guardian ad litem.
26.09.225 Access to child's education and health care records.
26.09.231 Residential time summary report.
26.09.255 Remedies when a child is taken, enticed, or concealed.
26.09.260 Modification of parenting plan or custody decree.
26.09.270 Child custody—Temporary custody order, temporary parenting plan, or modification of custody decree—Affidavits required.
26.09.280 Parenting plan or child support modification or enforcement—Venue.
26.09.285 Designation of custody for the purpose of other state and federal statutes.
26.09.290 Final decree of dissolution nunc pro tunc.
26.09.300 Restraining orders—Notice—Refusal to comply—Arrest—Penalty—Defense—Peace officers, immunity.
26.09.310 Provision of health care to minor—Immunity of health care provider.
26.09.315 Child custody issues—Abduction by parent—Information.
26.09.320 Child support—Procedures for abatement based on incarceration—Rebuttable presumption of inability to pay—Reinstatement of support obligation.
26.09.325 Child support—Who may make request for abatement based on incarceration—Procedures when multiple orders requiring incarcerated person to pay support exist.
26.09.330 Child support—Department duties when order contains abatement language and obligated person is incarcerated—Procedures.
26.09.335 Child support—Department duties when order does not contain abatement language and obligated person is incarcerated—Procedures.
26.09.340 Child support—Requests for reversal or termination of abatement based on incarceration—Procedures.

NOTICE REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR RELOCATION OF CHILD

26.09.405 Applicability.
26.09.410 Definitions.
26.09.420 Grant of authority.
26.09.430 Notice requirement.
26.09.440 Notice—Contents and delivery.
26.09.450 Notice—Relocation within the same school district.
26.09.460 Limitation of notices.
26.09.470 Failure to give notice.
26.09.480 Objection to relocation or proposed revised residential schedule.
26.09.490 Required provision in residential orders.
26.09.500 Failure to object.
26.09.510 Temporary orders.
26.09.520 Basis for determination.
26.09.525 Substantially equal residential time.
26.09.530 Factor not to be considered.
26.09.540 Objections by nonparents.
26.09.550 Sanctions.
26.09.560 Priority for hearing.
26.09.900 Construction—Pending divorce actions.
26.09.901 Conversion of pending action to dissolution proceeding.
26.09.902 RCW 26.09.900 and 26.09.901 deemed in effect on July 16, 1973.
26.09.907 Construction—Pending actions as of January 1, 1988.
26.09.909 Decrees entered into prior to January 1, 1988.
26.09.910 Short title—1987 c 460.
26.09.911 Section captions—1987 c 460.
26.09.912 Effective date—1987 c 460.
26.09.915 Construction—Chapter applicable to state registered domestic partnerships—2009 c 521.
26.09.916 Rule-making authority—2020 c 227.

Child support enforcement: Chapter 26.18 RCW.

Child support registry: Chapter 26.23 RCW.

Domestic violence prevention: Chapter 26.50 RCW.

Living in marital relationship within state submits person to state jurisdiction as to proceedings under this chapter: RCW 4.28.185.

Missing children clearinghouse and hotline: Chapter 13.60 RCW.

Nonparental actions for child custody: Chapter 26.10 RCW.

Process—Domestic relations actions: ***Rules of court:*** *CR 4.1.*

Uniform child custody jurisdiction and enforcement act: Chapter 26.27 RCW.

26.09.002 Policy. Parents have the responsibility to make decisions and perform other parental functions necessary for the care and growth of their minor children. In any proceeding between parents under this chapter, the best interests of the child shall be the standard by which the court determines and allocates the parties' parental responsibilities. The state recognizes the fundamental importance of the parent-child relationship to the welfare of the child, and that the relationship between the child and each parent should be fostered unless inconsistent with the child's best interests. Residential time and financial support are equally important components of parenting arrangements. The best interests of the child are served by a parenting arrangement that best maintains a child's emotional growth, health and stability, and physical care. Further, the best interest of the child is ordinarily served when the existing pattern of interaction between a parent and child is altered only to the extent necessitated by the changed relationship of the parents or as required to protect the child from physical, mental, or emotional harm. [2007 c 496 § 101; 1987 c 460 § 2.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.003 Policy—Intent—Findings. The legislature reaffirms the intent of the current law as expressed in RCW 26.09.002. However, after review, the legislature finds that there are certain components of the existing law which do not support the original legislative intent. In order to better implement the existing legislative intent the legislature finds that incentives for parties to reduce family conflict and additional alternative dispute resolution options can assist in reducing the number of contested trials. Furthermore, the legislature finds that the identification of domestic violence as defined in RCW 26.50.010 and the treatment needs of the parties to dissolutions are necessary to improve outcomes for children. When judicial officers have the discretion to tailor individualized resolutions, the legislative intent expressed in RCW 26.09.002 can more readily be achieved. Judicial officers should have the discretion and flexibility to assess each case based on the merits of the individual cases before them. [2007 c 496 § 102.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.004 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Military duties potentially impacting parenting functions" means those obligations imposed, voluntarily or involuntarily, on a parent serving in the armed forces that may interfere with that parent's abilities to perform his or her parenting functions under a temporary or permanent parenting plan. Military duties potentially impacting parenting functions include, but are not limited to:

(a) "Deployment," which means the temporary transfer of a service member serving in an active-duty status to another location in support of a military operation, to include any tour of duty classified by the member's branch of the armed forces as "remote" or "unaccompanied";

(b) "Activation" or "mobilization," which means the call-up of a national guard or reserve service member to extended active-duty status. For purposes of this definition, "mobilization" does not include national guard or reserve annual training, inactive duty days, or drill weekends; or

(c) "Temporary duty," which means the transfer of a service member from one military base or the service member's home to a different location, usually another base, for a limited period of time to accomplish training or to assist in the performance of a noncombat mission.

(2) "Parenting functions" means those aspects of the parent-child relationship in which the parent makes decisions and performs functions necessary for the care and growth of the child. Parenting functions include:

(a) Maintaining a loving, stable, consistent, and nurturing relationship with the child;

(b) Attending to the daily needs of the child, such as feeding, clothing, physical care and grooming, supervision, health care, and day care, and engaging in other activities which are appropriate to the developmental level of the child and that are within the social and economic circumstances of the particular family;

(c) Attending to adequate education for the child, including remedial or other education essential to the best interests of the child;

(d) Assisting the child in developing and maintaining appropriate interpersonal relationships;

(e) Exercising appropriate judgment regarding the child's welfare, consistent with the child's developmental level and the family's social and economic circumstances; and

(f) Providing for the financial support of the child.

(3) "Permanent parenting plan" means a plan for parenting the child, including allocation of parenting functions, which plan is incorporated in any final decree or decree of modification in an action for dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, declaration of invalidity, or legal separation.

(4) "Temporary parenting plan" means a plan for parenting of the child pending final resolution of any action for dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, declaration of invalidity, or legal separation which is incorporated in a temporary order. [2009 c 502 § 1; 2008 c 6 § 1003; 1987 c 460 § 3.]

Reviser's note: The definitions in this section have been alphabetized pursuant to RCW 1.08.015(2)(k).

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.006 Mandatory use of approved forms. (1) Effective January 1, 1992, a party shall not file any pleading with the clerk of the court in an action commenced under this chapter unless on forms approved by the administrator for the courts.

(2) The parties shall comply with requirements for submission to the court of forms as provided in RCW 26.18.220. [1992 c 229 § 1; 1990 1st ex.s. c 2 § 26.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.010 Civil practice to govern—Designation of proceedings—Decrees. (1) Except as otherwise specifically provided herein, the practice in civil action shall govern all

proceedings under this chapter, except that trial by jury is dispensed with.

(2) A proceeding for dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation or a declaration concerning the validity of a marriage or domestic partnership shall be entitled "In re the marriage of . . . . . . and . . . . . ." or "In re the domestic partnership of . . . . . . and . . . . . ." Such proceedings may be filed in the superior court of the county where the petitioner resides.

(3) In cases where there has been no prior proceeding in this state involving the marital or domestic partnership status of the parties or support obligations for a minor child, a separate parenting and support proceeding between the parents shall be entitled "In re the parenting and support of . . . . . ."

(4) The initial pleading in all proceedings under this chapter shall be denominated a petition. A responsive pleading shall be denominated a response. Other pleadings, and all pleadings in other matters under this chapter shall be denominated as provided in the civil rules for superior court.

(5) In this chapter, "decree" includes "judgment".

(6) A decree of dissolution, of legal separation, or a declaration concerning the validity of a marriage or domestic partnership shall not be awarded to one of the parties, but shall provide that it affects the status previously existing between the parties in the manner decreed.

(7) In order to provide a means by which to facilitate a fair, efficient, and swift process to resolve matters regarding custody and visitation when a parent serving in the armed forces receives temporary duty, deployment, activation, or mobilization orders from the military, the court shall, upon motion of such a parent:

(a) For good cause shown, hold an expedited hearing in custody and visitation matters instituted under this chapter when the military duties of the parent have a material effect on the parent's ability, or anticipated ability, to appear in person at a regularly scheduled hearing; and

(b) Upon reasonable advance notice to the affected parties and for good cause shown, allow the parent to present testimony and evidence by electronic means in custody and visitation matters instituted under this chapter when the military duties of the parent have a material effect on the parent's ability to appear in person at a regularly scheduled hearing. The phrase "electronic means" includes communication by telephone, video teleconference, or the internet. [2009 c 502 § 2; 2008 c 6 § 1004; 1989 c 375 § 1; 1987 c 460 § 1; 1975 c 32 § 1; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 1.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.013 Interpretive services—Literacy assistance—Guardian ad litem charges—Telephone or interactive videoconference participation—Residential time in cases involving domestic violence or child abuse—Disclosure of information—Supervised visitation and safe exchange centers. In order to provide judicial officers with better information and to facilitate decision making which allows for the protection of children from physical, mental, or emotional harm and in order to facilitate consistent healthy contact between both parents and their children:

(1) Parties and witnesses who require the assistance of interpreters shall be provided access to qualified interpreters pursuant to chapter 2.42 or 2.43 RCW. To the extent practicable and within available resources, interpreters shall also be made available at dissolution-related proceedings.

(2) Parties and witnesses who require literacy assistance shall be referred to the multipurpose service centers established in *chapter 28B.04 RCW.

(3) In matters involving guardians ad litem, 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 review. Counties may, and to the extent state funding is provided therefor counties shall, provide indigent parties with guardian ad litem services at a reduced or waived fee.

(4) Parties may request to participate by telephone or interactive videoconference. The court may allow telephonic or interactive videoconference participation of one or more parties at any proceeding in its discretion. The court may also allow telephonic or interactive videoconference participation of witnesses.

(5) In cases involving domestic violence or child abuse, if residential time is ordered, the court may:

(a) Order exchange of a child to occur in a protected setting;

(b) Order residential time supervised by a neutral and independent adult and pursuant to an adequate plan for supervision of such residential time. The court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between the child and the parent unless the supervisor is willing to and capable of protecting the child from harm. The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor if the court determines, after a hearing, that the supervisor has failed to protect the child or is no longer willing or capable of protecting the child. If the court allows a family or household member to supervise residential time, the court shall establish conditions to be followed during residential time.

(6)(a) In cases in which the court has made a finding of domestic violence or child abuse, the court may not require a victim of domestic violence or the custodial parent of a victim of child abuse to disclose to the other party information that would reasonably be expected to enable the perpetrator of domestic violence or child abuse to obtain previously undisclosed information regarding the name, location, or address of a victim's residence, employer, or school at an initial hearing, and shall carefully weigh the safety interests of the victim before issuing orders which would require disclosure in a future hearing.

(b) In cases in which domestic violence or child abuse has been alleged but the court has not yet made a finding regarding such allegations, the court shall provide the party alleging domestic violence or child abuse with the opportunity to prove the allegations before ordering the disclosure of information that would reasonably be expected to enable the alleged perpetrator of domestic violence or child abuse to obtain previously undisclosed information regarding the name, location, or address of a victim's residence, employer, or school.

(7) In cases in which the court finds that the parties do not have a satisfactory history of cooperation or there is a high level of parental conflict, the court may order the parties to use supervised visitation and safe exchange centers or alternative safe locations to facilitate the exercise of residential time. [2012 c 223 § 5; 2007 c 496 § 401.]

***Reviser's note:** Chapter 28B.04 RCW expired August 1, 2015, pursuant to 2015 c 55 § 101.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.015 Mediation proceedings. (1) In any proceeding under this chapter, the matter may be set for mediation of the contested issues before, or concurrent with, the setting of the matter for hearing. The purpose of the mediation proceeding shall be to reduce acrimony which may exist between the parties and to develop an agreement assuring the child's close and continuing contact with both parents after the marriage or the domestic partnership is dissolved. The mediator shall use his or her best efforts to effect a settlement of the dispute.

(2)(a) Each superior court may make available a mediator. The court shall use the most cost-effective mediation services that are readily available unless there is good cause to access alternative providers. The mediator may be a member of the professional staff of a family court or mental health services agency, or may be any other person or agency designated by the court. In order to provide mediation services, the court is not required to institute a family court.

(b) In any proceeding involving issues relating to residential time or other matters governed by a parenting plan, the matter may be set for mediation of the contested issues before, or concurrent with, the setting of the matter for hearing. Counties may, and to the extent state funding is provided therefor counties shall, provide both predecree and postdecree mediation at reduced or waived fee to the parties within one year of the filing of the dissolution petition.

(3)(a) Mediation proceedings under this chapter shall be governed in all respects by chapter 7.07 RCW, except as follows:

(i) Mediation communications in postdecree mediations mandated by a parenting plan are admissible in subsequent proceedings for the limited purpose of proving:

(A) Abuse, neglect, abandonment, exploitation, or unlawful harassment, as defined in RCW 9A.46.020(1), of a child;

(B) Abuse or unlawful harassment as defined in RCW 9A.46.020(1), of a family or household member or intimate partner, each as defined in RCW 26.50.010; or

(C) That a parent used or frustrated the dispute resolution process without good reason for purposes of RCW 26.09.184 (4)(d).

(ii) If a postdecree mediation-arbitration proceeding is required pursuant to a parenting plan and the same person acts as both mediator and arbitrator, mediation communications in the mediation phase of such a proceeding may be admitted during the arbitration phase, and shall be admissible in the judicial review of such a proceeding under RCW 26.09.184(4)(e) to the extent necessary for such review to be effective.

(b) None of the exceptions under (a)(i) and (ii) of this subsection shall subject a mediator to compulsory process to testify except by court order for good cause shown, taking into consideration the need for the mediator's testimony and the interest in the mediator maintaining an appearance of impartiality. If a mediation communication is not privileged under (a)(i) of this subsection or that portion of (a)(ii) of this subsection pertaining to judicial review, only the portion of the communication necessary for the application of the exception may be admitted, and such admission of evidence shall not render any other mediation communication discoverable or admissible except as may be provided in chapter 7.07 RCW.

(4) The mediator shall assess the needs and interests of the child or children involved in the controversy and may interview the child or children if the mediator deems such interview appropriate or necessary.

(5) Any agreement reached by the parties as a result of mediation shall be reported to the court and to counsel for the parties by the mediator on the day set for mediation or any time thereafter designated by the court. [2020 c 29 § 13; 2008 c 6 § 1044; (2008 c 6 § 1043 expired January 1, 2009). Prior: 2007 c 496 § 602; 2007 c 496 § 501; 2005 c 172 § 17; 1991 c 367 § 2; 1989 c 375 § 2; 1986 c 95 § 4.]

Effective date—2020 c 29: See note following RCW 7.77.060.

Mediation testimony competency: RCW 5.60.070 and 5.60.072.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.016 Mediation in cases involving domestic violence or child abuse. Mediation is generally inappropriate in cases involving domestic violence and child abuse. In order to effectively identify cases where issues of domestic violence and child abuse are present and reduce conflict in dissolution matters: (1) Where appropriate parties shall be provided access to trained domestic violence advocates; and (2) in cases where a victim requests mediation the court may make exceptions and permit mediation, so long as the court makes a finding that mediation is appropriate under the circumstances and the victim is permitted to have a supporting person present during the mediation proceedings. [2007 c 496 § 301.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.020 Petition—Dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, or for a declaration concerning validity of marriage or domestic partnership—Contents—Parties—Certificate. (1) A petition in a proceeding for dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, or for a declaration concerning the validity of a marriage or domestic partnership shall allege:

(a) The last known state of residence of each party, and if a party's last known state of residence is Washington, the last known county of residence;

(b) The date and place of the marriage or, for domestic partnerships, the date of registration, and place of residence when the domestic partnership was registered;

(c) If the parties are separated the date on which the separation occurred;

(d) The names and ages of any child dependent upon either or both spouses or either or both domestic partners and whether the wife or domestic partner is pregnant;

(e) Any arrangements as to the residential schedule of, decision making for, dispute resolution for, and support of the children and the maintenance of a spouse or domestic partner;

(f) A statement specifying whether there is community or separate property owned by the parties to be disposed of;

(g) If the county has established a program under RCW 26.12.260, a statement affirming that the moving party met and conferred with the program prior to filing the petition;

(h) The relief sought.

(2) Either or both parties to the marriage or to the domestic partnership may initiate the proceeding.

(3) The petitioner shall complete and file with the petition a certificate under RCW 43.70.150 on the form provided by the department of health and the confidential information form under RCW 26.23.050.

(4) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or prohibit the ability of parties to obtain appropriate emergency orders. [2008 c 6 § 1005; 2007 c 496 § 203; 2001 c 42 § 1; 1997 c 58 § 945. Prior: 1989 1st ex.s. c 9 § 204; 1989 c 375 § 3; 1983 1st ex.s. c 45 § 2; 1973 2nd ex.s. c 23 § 1; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 2.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.030 Petition for dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership—Court proceedings, findings—Transfer to family court—Legal separation in lieu of dissolution. When a party who (1) is a resident of this state, or (2) is a member of the armed forces and is stationed in this state, or (3) is married or in a domestic partnership to a party who is a resident of this state or who is a member of the armed forces and is stationed in this state, petitions for a dissolution of marriage or dissolution of domestic partnership, and alleges that the marriage or domestic partnership is irretrievably broken and when ninety days have elapsed since the petition was filed and from the date when service of summons was made upon the respondent or the first publication of summons was made, the court shall proceed as follows:

(a) If the other party joins in the petition or does not deny that the marriage or domestic partnership is irretrievably broken, the court shall enter a decree of dissolution.

(b) If the other party alleges that the petitioner was induced to file the petition by fraud, or coercion, the court shall make a finding as to that allegation and, if it so finds shall dismiss the petition.

(c) If the other party denies that the marriage or domestic partnership is irretrievably broken the court shall consider all relevant factors, including the circumstances that gave rise to the filing of the petition and the prospects for reconciliation and shall:

(i) Make a finding that the marriage or domestic partnership is irretrievably broken and enter a decree of dissolution of the marriage or domestic partnership; or

(ii) At the request of either party or on its own motion, transfer the cause to the family court, refer them to another counseling service of their choice, and request a report back from the counseling service within sixty days, or continue the matter for not more than sixty days for hearing. If the cause is returned from the family court or at the adjourned hearing, the court shall:

(A) Find that the parties have agreed to reconciliation and dismiss the petition; or

(B) Find that the parties have not been reconciled, and that either party continues to allege that the marriage or domestic partnership is irretrievably broken. When such facts are found, the court shall enter a decree of dissolution of the marriage or domestic partnership.

(d) If the petitioner requests the court to decree legal separation in lieu of dissolution, the court shall enter the decree in that form unless the other party objects and petitions for a decree of dissolution or declaration of invalidity.

(e) In considering a petition for dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, a court shall not use a party's pregnancy as the sole basis for denying or delaying the entry of a decree of dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership. Granting a decree of dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership when a party is pregnant does not affect further proceedings under chapter 26.26A or 26.26B RCW. [2019 c 46 § 5019; 2008 c 6 § 1006; 2005 c 55 § 1; 1996 c 23 § 1; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 3.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.040 Petition to have marriage or domestic partnership declared invalid or judicial determination of validity—Procedure—Findings—Grounds—Legitimacy of children. (1) While both parties to an alleged marriage or domestic partnership are living, and at least one party is resident in this state or a member of the armed service and stationed in the state, a petition to have the marriage or domestic partnership declared invalid may be sought by:

(a) Either or both parties, or the guardian of an incompetent spouse or incompetent domestic partner, for any cause specified in subsection (4) of this section; or

(b) Either or both parties, the legal spouse or domestic partner, or a child of either party when it is alleged that either or both parties is married to or in a domestic partnership with another person.

(2) If the validity of a marriage or domestic partnership is denied or questioned at any time, either or both parties to the marriage or either or both parties to the domestic partnership may petition the court for a judicial determination of the validity of such marriage or domestic partnership.

(3) In a proceeding to declare the invalidity of a marriage or domestic partnership, the court shall proceed in the manner and shall have the jurisdiction, including the authority to provide for maintenance, a parenting plan for minor children, and division of the property of the parties, provided by this chapter.

(4) After hearing the evidence concerning the validity of a marriage or domestic partnership, if both parties to the alleged marriage or domestic partnership are still living, the court:

(a) If it finds the marriage or domestic partnership to be valid, shall enter a decree of validity;

(b) If it finds that:

(i) The marriage or domestic partnership should not have been contracted because of age of one or both of the parties, lack of required parental or court approval, a prior undissolved marriage of one or both of the parties, a prior domestic partnership of one or both parties that has not been terminated or dissolved, reasons of consanguinity, or because a party lacked capacity to consent to the marriage or domestic partnership, either because of mental incapacity or because of the influence of alcohol or other incapacitating substances, or because a party was induced to enter into the marriage or domestic partnership by force or duress, or by fraud involving the essentials of marriage or domestic partnership, and that the parties have not ratified their marriage or domestic partnership by voluntarily cohabiting after attaining the age of consent, or after attaining capacity to consent, or after ces-

sation of the force or duress or discovery of the fraud, shall declare the marriage or domestic partnership invalid as of the date it was purportedly contracted;

(ii) The marriage or domestic partnership should not have been contracted because of any reason other than those above, shall upon motion of a party, order any action which may be appropriate to complete or to correct the record and enter a decree declaring such marriage or domestic partnership to be valid for all purposes from the date upon which it was purportedly contracted;

(c) If it finds that a marriage or domestic partnership contracted in a jurisdiction other than this state, was void or voidable under the law of the place where the marriage or domestic partnership was contracted, and in the absence of proof that such marriage or domestic partnership was subsequently validated by the laws of the place of contract or of a subsequent domicile of the parties, shall declare the marriage or domestic partnership invalid as of the date of the marriage or domestic partnership.

(5) Any child of the parties born or conceived during the existence of a marriage or domestic partnership of record is legitimate and remains legitimate notwithstanding the entry of a declaration of invalidity of the marriage or domestic partnership. [2008 c 6 § 1007; 1987 c 460 § 4; 1975 c 32 § 2; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 4.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.050 Decrees—Contents—Restraining orders—Enforcement—Notice of termination or modification of restraining order. (1) In entering a decree of dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, or declaration of invalidity, the court shall determine the marital or domestic partnership status of the parties, make provision for a parenting plan for any minor child of the marriage or domestic partnership, make provision for the support of any child of the marriage or domestic partnership entitled to support, consider or approve provision for the maintenance of either spouse or either domestic partner, make provision for the disposition of property and liabilities of the parties, make provision for the allocation of the children as federal tax exemptions, make provision for any necessary continuing restraining orders including the provisions contained in RCW 9.41.800, make provision for the issuance within this action of the restraint provisions of a domestic violence protection order under chapter 26.50 RCW or an antiharassment protection order under chapter 10.14 RCW, and make provision for the change of name of any party.

(2) Restraining orders issued under this section restraining or enjoining the person from molesting or disturbing another party, or from going onto the grounds of or entering the home, workplace, or school of the other party or the day care or school of any child, or prohibiting the person from knowingly coming within, or knowingly remaining within, a specified distance of a location, shall prominently bear on the front page of the order the legend: VIOLATION OF THIS ORDER WITH ACTUAL NOTICE OF ITS TERMS IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE UNDER CHAPTER 26.50 RCW AND WILL SUBJECT A VIOLATOR TO ARREST.

(3) The court shall order that any restraining order bearing a criminal offense legend, any domestic violence protection order, or any antiharassment protection order granted under this section, in addition to the law enforcement information sheet or proof of service of the order, be forwarded by the clerk of the court on or before the next judicial day to the appropriate law enforcement agency specified in the order. Upon receipt of the order, the law enforcement agency shall enter the order into any computer-based criminal intelligence information system available in this state used by law enforcement agencies to list outstanding warrants. The order is fully enforceable in any county in the state.

(4) If a restraining order issued pursuant to this section is modified or terminated, the clerk of the court shall notify the law enforcement agency specified in the order on or before the next judicial day. Upon receipt of notice that an order has been terminated, the law enforcement agency shall remove the order from any computer-based criminal intelligence system. [2008 c 6 § 1008; 2000 c 119 § 6; 1995 c 93 § 2; 1994 sp.s. c 7 § 451; 1989 c 375 § 29; 1987 c 460 § 5; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 5.]

Finding—Intent—Severability—1994 sp.s. c 7: See notes following RCW 43.70.540.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.060 Temporary maintenance or child support—Temporary restraining order—Preliminary injunction—Domestic violence or antiharassment protection order—Notice of termination or modification of restraining order—Support debts, notice. (1) In a proceeding for:

(a) Dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, or a declaration of invalidity; or

(b) Disposition of property or liabilities, maintenance, or support following dissolution of the marriage or the domestic partnership by a court which lacked personal jurisdiction over the absent spouse or absent domestic partner; either party may move for temporary maintenance or for temporary support of children entitled to support. The motion shall be accompanied by an affidavit setting forth the factual basis for the motion and the amounts requested.

(2) As a part of a motion for temporary maintenance or support or by independent motion accompanied by affidavit, either party may request the court to issue a temporary restraining order or preliminary injunction, providing relief proper in the circumstances, and restraining or enjoining any person from:

(a) Transferring, removing, encumbering, concealing, or in any way disposing of any property except in the usual course of business or for the necessities of life, and, if so restrained or enjoined, requiring him or her to notify the moving party of any proposed extraordinary expenditures made after the order is issued;

(b) Molesting or disturbing the peace of the other party or of any child;

(c) Going onto the grounds of or entering the home, workplace, or school of the other party or the day care or school of any child upon a showing of the necessity therefor;

(d) Knowingly coming within, or knowingly remaining within, a specified distance from a specified location; and

(e) Removing a child from the jurisdiction of the court.

(3) Either party may request a domestic violence protection order under chapter 26.50 RCW or an antiharassment protection order under chapter 10.14 RCW on a temporary basis. The court may grant any of the relief provided in RCW

26.50.060 except relief pertaining to residential provisions for the children which provisions shall be provided for under this chapter, and any of the relief provided in RCW 10.14.080. Ex parte orders issued under this subsection shall be effective for a fixed period not to exceed fourteen days, or upon court order, not to exceed twenty-four days if necessary to ensure that all temporary motions in the case can be heard at the same time.

(4) In issuing the order, the court shall consider the provisions of RCW 9.41.800, and shall order the respondent to surrender, and prohibit the respondent from possessing, all firearms, dangerous weapons, and any concealed pistol license as required in RCW 9.41.800.

(5) The court may issue a temporary restraining order without requiring notice to the other party only if it finds on the basis of the moving affidavit or other evidence that irreparable injury could result if an order is not issued until the time for responding has elapsed.

(6) The court may issue a temporary restraining order or preliminary injunction and an order for temporary maintenance or support in such amounts and on such terms as are just and proper in the circumstances. The court may in its discretion waive the filing of the bond or the posting of security.

(7) Restraining orders issued under this section restraining the person from molesting or disturbing another party, or from going onto the grounds of or entering the home, workplace, or school of the other party or the day care or school of any child, or prohibiting the person from knowingly coming within, or knowingly remaining within, a specified distance of a location, shall prominently bear on the front page of the order the legend: VIOLATION OF THIS ORDER WITH ACTUAL NOTICE OF ITS TERMS IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE UNDER CHAPTER 26.50 RCW AND WILL SUBJECT A VIOLATOR TO ARREST.

(8) The court shall order that any temporary restraining order bearing a criminal offense legend, any domestic violence protection order, or any antiharassment protection order granted under this section be forwarded by the clerk of the court on or before the next judicial day to the appropriate law enforcement agency specified in the order. Upon receipt of the order, the law enforcement agency shall enter the order into any computer-based criminal intelligence information system available in this state used by law enforcement agencies to list outstanding warrants. Entry into the computer-based criminal intelligence information system constitutes notice to all law enforcement agencies of the existence of the order. The order is fully enforceable in any county in the state.

(9) If a restraining order issued pursuant to this section is modified or terminated, the clerk of the court shall notify the law enforcement agency specified in the order on or before the next judicial day. Upon receipt of notice that an order has been terminated, the law enforcement agency shall remove the order from any computer-based criminal intelligence system.

(10) A temporary order, temporary restraining order, or preliminary injunction:

(a) Does not prejudice the rights of a party or any child which are to be adjudicated at subsequent hearings in the proceeding;

(b) May be revoked or modified;

(c) Terminates when the final decree is entered, except as provided under subsection (11) of this section, or when the petition for dissolution, legal separation, or declaration of invalidity is dismissed;

(d) May be entered in a proceeding for the modification of an existing decree.

(11) Delinquent support payments accrued under an order for temporary support remain collectible and are not extinguished when a final decree is entered unless the decree contains specific language to the contrary. A support debt under a temporary order owed to the state for public assistance expenditures shall not be extinguished by the final decree if:

(a) The obligor was given notice of the state's interest under chapter 74.20A RCW; or

(b) The temporary order directs the obligor to make support payments to the office of support enforcement or the Washington state support registry. [2019 c 245 § 17; 2008 c 6 § 1009; 2000 c 119 § 7; 1995 c 246 § 26; 1994 sp.s. c 7 § 452; 1992 c 229 § 9; 1989 c 360 § 37; 1984 c 263 § 26; 1983 1st ex.s. c 41 § 1; 1983 c 232 § 10; 1975 c 32 § 3; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 6.]

Finding—Intent—Severability—1994 sp.s. c 7: See notes following RCW 43.70.540.

Arrest without warrant in domestic violence cases: RCW 10.31.100(2).

Child abuse, temporary restraining order: RCW 26.44.063.

Ex parte temporary order for protection: RCW 26.50.070.

Orders for protection in cases of domestic violence: RCW 26.50.030.

Orders prohibiting contact: RCW 10.99.040.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.070 Separation contracts. (1) The parties to a marriage or a domestic partnership, in order to promote the amicable settlement of disputes attendant upon their separation or upon the filing of a petition for dissolution of their marriage or domestic partnership, a decree of legal separation, or declaration of invalidity of their marriage or domestic partnership, may enter into a written separation contract providing for the maintenance of either of them, the disposition of any property owned by both or either of them, the parenting plan and support for their children and for the release of each other from all obligation except that expressed in the contract.

(2) If the parties to such contract elect to live separate and apart without any court decree, they may record such contract and cause notice thereof to be published in a legal newspaper of the county wherein the parties resided prior to their separation. Recording such contract and publishing notice of the making thereof shall constitute notice to all persons of such separation and of the facts contained in the recorded document.

(3) If either or both of the parties to a separation contract shall at the time of the execution thereof, or at a subsequent time, petition the court for dissolution of their marriage or domestic partnership, for a decree of legal separation, or for a declaration of invalidity of their marriage or domestic partnership, the contract, except for those terms providing for a parenting plan for their children, shall be binding upon the court unless it finds, after considering the economic circumstances of the parties and any other relevant evidence pro-

duced by the parties on their own motion or on request of the court, that the separation contract was unfair at the time of its execution. Child support may be included in the separation contract and shall be reviewed in the subsequent proceeding for compliance with RCW 26.19.020.

(4) If the court in an action for dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, or declaration of invalidity finds that the separation contract was unfair at the time of its execution, it may make orders for the maintenance of either party, the disposition of their property and the discharge of their obligations.

(5) Unless the separation contract provides to the contrary, the agreement shall be set forth in the decree of dissolution, legal separation, or declaration of invalidity, or filed in the action or made an exhibit and incorporated by reference, except that in all cases the terms of the parenting plan shall be set out in the decree, and the parties shall be ordered to comply with its terms.

(6) Terms of the contract set forth or incorporated by reference in the decree may be enforced by all remedies available for the enforcement of a judgment, including contempt, and are enforceable as contract terms.

(7) When the separation contract so provides, the decree may expressly preclude or limit modification of any provision for maintenance set forth in the decree. Terms of a separation contract pertaining to a parenting plan for the children and, in the absence of express provision to the contrary, terms providing for maintenance set forth or incorporated by reference in the decree are automatically modified by modification of the decree.

(8) If at any time the parties to the separation contract by mutual agreement elect to terminate the separation contract they may do so without formality unless the contract was recorded as in subsection (2) of this section, in which case a statement should be filed terminating the contract. [2008 c 6 § 1010; 1989 c 375 § 4; 1987 c 460 § 6; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 7.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.080 Disposition of property and liabilities—Factors. In a proceeding for dissolution of the marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, declaration of invalidity, or in a proceeding for disposition of property following dissolution of the marriage or the domestic partnership by a court which lacked personal jurisdiction over the absent spouse or absent domestic partner or lacked jurisdiction to dispose of the property, the court shall, without regard to misconduct, make such disposition of the property and the liabilities of the parties, either community or separate, as shall appear just and equitable after considering all relevant factors including, but not limited to:

(1) The nature and extent of the community property;

(2) The nature and extent of the separate property;

(3) The duration of the marriage or domestic partnership; and

(4) The economic circumstances of each spouse or domestic partner at the time the division of property is to become effective, including the desirability of awarding the family home or the right to live therein for reasonable periods to a spouse or domestic partner with whom the children reside the majority of the time. [2008 c 6 § 1011; 1989 c 375 § 5; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 8.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.090 Maintenance orders for either spouse or either domestic partner—Factors. (1) In a proceeding for dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, declaration of invalidity, or in a proceeding for maintenance following dissolution of the marriage or domestic partnership by a court which lacked personal jurisdiction over the absent spouse or absent domestic partner, the court may grant a maintenance order for either spouse or either domestic partner. The maintenance order shall be in such amounts and for such periods of time as the court deems just, without regard to misconduct, after considering all relevant factors including but not limited to:

(a) The financial resources of the party seeking maintenance, including separate or community property apportioned to him or her, and his or her ability to meet his or her needs independently, including the extent to which a provision for support of a child living with the party includes a sum for that party;

(b) The time necessary to acquire sufficient education or training to enable the party seeking maintenance to find employment appropriate to his or her skill, interests, style of life, and other attendant circumstances;

(c) The standard of living established during the marriage or domestic partnership;

(d) The duration of the marriage or domestic partnership;

(e) The age, physical and emotional condition, and financial obligations of the spouse or domestic partner seeking maintenance; and

(f) The ability of the spouse or domestic partner from whom maintenance is sought to meet his or her needs and financial obligations while meeting those of the spouse or domestic partner seeking maintenance. [2008 c 6 § 1012; 1989 c 375 § 6; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 9.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.100 Child support—Apportionment of expense—Periodic adjustments or modifications. (1) In a proceeding for dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, declaration of invalidity, maintenance, or child support, after considering all relevant factors but without regard to misconduct, the court shall order either or both parents owing a duty of support to any child of the marriage or the domestic partnership dependent upon either or both spouses or domestic partners to pay an amount determined under chapter 26.19 RCW.

(2) The court may require automatic periodic adjustments or modifications of child support. That portion of any decree that requires periodic adjustments or modifications of child support shall use the provisions in chapter 26.19 RCW as the basis for the adjustment or modification. Provisions in the decree for periodic adjustment or modification shall not conflict with RCW 26.09.170 except that the decree may require periodic adjustments or modifications of support more frequently than the time periods established pursuant to RCW 26.09.170.

(3) Upon motion of a party and without a substantial change of circumstances, the court shall modify the decree to

comply with subsection (2) of this section as to installments accruing subsequent to entry of the court's order on the motion for modification.

(4) The adjustment or modification provision may be modified by the court due to economic hardship consistent with the provisions of *RCW 26.09.170(6)(a). [2010 c 279 § 3; 2008 c 6 § 1013; 1991 sp.s. c 28 § 1; 1990 1st ex.s. c 2 § 1; 1989 c 375 § 7; 1988 c 275 § 9; 1987 c 430 § 3; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 10.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 26.09.170 was amended by 2020 c 227 § 13, changing subsection (6)(a) to subsection (8)(a), effective February 1, 2021.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.105 Child support—Medical support—Conditions. (1) Whenever a child support order is entered or modified under this chapter, the court shall require both parents to provide medical support for any child named in the order as provided in this section.

(a) The child support order must include an obligation to provide health care coverage that is both accessible to all children named in the order and available at reasonable cost to the obligated parent.

(b) The court must allocate the cost of health care coverage between the parents.

(2) Medical support consists of:

(a) Health care coverage, which may consist of health insurance coverage or public health care coverage; and

(b) Cash medical support, which consists of:

(i) A parent's monthly payment toward the premium paid for coverage provided by a public entity or by another parent, which represents the obligated parent's proportionate share of the premium paid, but no more than twenty-five percent of the obligated parent's basic support obligation; and

(ii) A parent's proportionate share of uninsured medical expenses.

(3) The parents share the obligation to provide medical support for the child or children specified in the order, by providing health care coverage or contributing a cash medical support obligation when appropriate, and paying a proportionate share of any uninsured medical expenses.

(4) Under appropriate circumstances, the court may excuse one parent from the responsibility to provide health care coverage or the monthly payment toward the premium. The child's receipt of public health care coverage may not be the sole basis for excusing a parent from providing health insurance coverage through an employer or union.

(5)(a) The court may specify how medical support must be provided by each parent under subsection (6) of this section.

(b) If the court does not specify how medical support will be provided or if neither parent provides proof that he or she is providing health care coverage for the child at the time the support order is entered, the division of child support or either parent may enforce a parent's obligation to provide medical support under RCW 26.18.170.

(6)(a) If there is sufficient evidence provided at the time the order is entered, the court may make a determination of which parent must provide health care coverage and which parent must contribute a sum certain amount as his or her monthly payment toward the premium.

(b) If both parents have available health insurance coverage or health care coverage that is accessible to the child at the time the support order is entered, the court has discretion to order the parent with better coverage to provide the coverage for the child and the other parent to pay a monthly payment toward the premium. In making the determination of which coverage is better, the court shall consider the needs of the child, the cost and extent of each parent's coverage, and the accessibility of the coverage.

(c) Each parent shall be responsible for his or her proportionate share of uninsured medical expenses.

(7) The order must provide that if the parties' circumstances change, the parties' medical support obligations will be enforced as provided in RCW 26.18.170.

(8) A parent who is ordered to maintain or provide health care coverage may comply with that requirement by:

(a) Providing proof of accessible health care coverage for any child named in the order; or

(b) Providing coverage that can be extended to cover the child that is available to that parent through employment or that is union-related, if the cost of such coverage does not exceed twenty-five percent of that parent's basic child support obligation.

(9) The order must provide that, while an obligated parent may satisfy his or her health care coverage obligation by enrolling the child in public health care coverage, that parent is also required to provide accessible health insurance coverage for the child if it is available at no cost through the parent's employer or union.

(10) The order must provide that the fact that one parent enrolled the child in public health care coverage does not satisfy the other parent's health care coverage obligation unless the support order provides otherwise. A parent may satisfy the obligation to provide health care coverage by:

(a) First enrolling the child in available and accessible health insurance coverage through the parent's employer or union if such coverage is available for no more than twenty-five percent of the parent's basic support obligation; or

(b) If there is no accessible health insurance coverage for the child available through the parent's employer or union, contributing a proportionate share of any premium paid by the other parent or the state for public health care coverage for the child.

(11) The court may order a parent to provide health care coverage that exceeds twenty-five percent of that parent's basic support obligation if it is in the best interests of the child to provide coverage.

(12) Each parent is responsible for his or her proportionate share of uninsured medical expenses for the child or children covered by the support order.

(13) The parents must maintain health care coverage as required under this section until:

(a) Further order of the court;

(b) The child is emancipated, if there is no express language to the contrary in the order; or

(c) Health insurance is no longer available through the parents' employer or union and no conversion privileges exist to continue coverage following termination of employment.

(14) A parent who is required to extend health insurance coverage to a child under this section is liable for any covered

health care costs for which the parent receives direct payment from an insurer.

(15) A parent ordered to provide health care coverage must provide proof of such coverage or proof that such coverage is unavailable within twenty days of the entry of the order to:

(a) The other parent; or

(b) The department of social and health services if the parent has been notified or ordered to make support payments to the Washington state support registry.

(16) Every order requiring a parent to provide health care or insurance coverage must be entered in compliance with *RCW 26.23.050 and be subject to direct enforcement as provided under chapter 26.18 RCW.

(17) When a parent is providing health insurance or health care coverage at the time the order is entered, the premium shall be included in the worksheets for the calculation of child support under chapter 26.19 RCW.

(18) As used in this section:

(a) "Accessible" means health care coverage which provides primary care services to the child or children with reasonable effort by the custodian.

(b) "Cash medical support" means a combination of: (i) A parent's monthly payment toward the premium paid for coverage provided by a public entity or by another parent, which represents the obligated parent's proportionate share of the premium paid, but no more than twenty-five percent of the obligated parent's basic support obligation; and (ii) a parent's proportionate share of uninsured medical expenses.

(c) "Uninsured medical expenses" includes premiums, copays, deductibles, along with other health care costs not covered by health care coverage.

(d) "Obligated parent" means a parent ordered to provide health insurance coverage for the children.

(e) "Proportionate share" means an amount equal to a parent's percentage share of the combined monthly net income of both parents as computed when determining a parent's child support obligation under chapter 26.19 RCW.

(f) "Monthly payment toward the premium" means a parent's contribution toward premiums paid for coverage provided by a public entity or by another parent, which is based on the obligated parent's proportionate share of the premium paid, but no more than twenty-five percent of the obligated parent's basic support obligation.

(g) "Premium" means the amount paid for coverage provided by a public entity or by another parent for a child covered by the order. This term may also mean "cost of coverage."

(19) This section does not limit the authority of the court to enter or modify support orders containing provisions for payment of uninsured health expenses, health care costs, or insurance premiums which are in addition to and not inconsistent with this section.

(20) The department of social and health services has rule-making authority to enact rules in compliance with 45 C.F.R. Parts 302, 303, 304, 305, and 308. [2018 c 150 § 101; 2009 c 476 § 1; 1994 c 230 § 1; 1989 c 416 § 1; 1985 c 108 § 1; 1984 c 201 § 1.]

***Reviser's note:** The reference to RCW 26.23.050 appears to refer to the amendments made by 1989 c 416 § 8, which was vetoed by the governor.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.110 Minor or dependent child—Court appointed attorney to represent—Payment of costs, fees, and disbursements. The court may appoint an attorney to represent the interests of a minor or dependent child with respect to provision for the parenting plan in an action for dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, or declaration concerning the validity of a marriage or domestic partnership. The court shall enter an order for costs, fees, and disbursements in favor of the child's attorney. The order shall be made against either or both parents, except that, if both parties are indigent, the costs, fees, and disbursements shall be borne by the county. [2008 c 6 § 1014; 1987 c 460 § 11; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 11.]

*Process—Domestic relations actions: **Rules of court:** CR 4.1.*

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.120 Support or maintenance payments—To whom paid. (1) The court shall order support payments, including maintenance if child support is ordered, to be made to the Washington state support registry, or the person entitled to receive the payments under an order approved by the court as provided in RCW 26.23.050.

(2) Maintenance payments, when ordered in an action where there is no dependent child, may be ordered to be paid to the person entitled to receive the payments, or the clerk of the court as trustee for remittance to the persons entitled to receive the payments.

(3) If support or maintenance payments are made to the clerk of court, the clerk:

(a) Shall maintain records listing the amount of payments, the date when payments are required to be made, and the names and addresses of the parties affected by the order;

(b) May by local court rule accept only certified funds or cash as payment; and

(c) Shall accept only certified funds or cash for five years in all cases after one check has been returned for nonsufficient funds or account closure.

(4) The parties affected by the order shall inform the registry through which the payments are ordered to be paid of any change of address or of other conditions that may affect the administration of the order. [2008 c 6 § 1015; 1994 c 230 § 2; 1989 c 360 § 11. Prior: 1987 c 435 § 15; 1987 c 363 § 5; 1983 1st ex.s. c 45 § 3; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 12.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.135 Order or decree for child support—Compliance with RCW 26.23.050. Every court order or decree establishing a child support obligation shall be entered in compliance with the provisions of RCW 26.23.050. [1987 c 435 § 16; 1986 c 138 § 1; 1984 c 260 § 21.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.138 Mandatory assignment of public retirement benefits—Remedies exclusive. (1) Any obligee of a court order or decree establishing a spousal maintenance obligation may seek a mandatory benefits assignment order under chapter 41.50 RCW if any spousal maintenance payment is more than fifteen days past due and the total of such past due payments is equal to or greater than one hundred dollars, or if the obligor requests a withdrawal of accumu-

lated contributions from the department of retirement systems.

(2) Any court order or decree establishing a spousal maintenance obligation may state that, if any spousal maintenance payment is more than fifteen days past due and the total of such past due payments is equal to or greater than one hundred dollars, or if the obligor requests a withdrawal of accumulated contributions from the department of retirement systems, the obligee may seek a mandatory benefits assignment order under chapter 41.50 RCW without prior notice to the obligor. Any such court order or decree may also, or in the alternative, contain a provision that would allow the department to make a direct payment of all or part of a withdrawal of accumulated contributions pursuant to RCW 41.50.550(3). Failure to include this provision does not affect the validity of the court order or decree establishing the spousal maintenance, nor does such failure affect the general applicability of RCW 41.50.500 through 41.50.650 to such obligations.

(3) The remedies in RCW 41.50.530 through 41.50.630 are the exclusive provisions of law enforceable against the department of retirement systems in connection with any action for enforcement of a spousal maintenance obligation ordered pursuant to a divorce, dissolution, or legal separation, and no other remedy ordered by a court under this chapter shall be enforceable against the department of retirement systems for collection of spousal maintenance.

(4)(a) Nothing in this section regarding mandatory assignment of benefits to enforce a spousal maintenance obligation shall abridge the right of an ex spouse to receive direct payment of retirement benefits payable pursuant to: (i) A court decree of dissolution or legal separation; or (ii) any court order or court-approved property settlement agreement; or (iii) incident to any court decree of dissolution or legal separation, if such dissolution orders fully comply with RCW 41.50.670 and 41.50.700, or as applicable, RCW 2.10.180, 2.12.090, *41.04.310, 41.04.320, 41.04.330, **41.26.180, 41.32.052, 41.40.052, or 43.43.310 as those statutes existed before July 1, 1987, and as those statutes exist on and after July 28, 1991.

(b) Persons whose dissolution orders as defined in RCW 41.50.500(3) were entered between July 1, 1987, and July 28, 1991, shall be entitled to receive direct payments of retirement benefits to satisfy court-ordered property divisions if the dissolution orders filed with the department comply or are amended to comply with RCW 41.50.670 through 41.50.720 and, as applicable, RCW 2.10.180, 2.12.090, **41.26.180, 41.32.052, 41.40.052, or 43.43.310. [1991 c 365 § 24; 1987 c 326 § 26.]

Reviser's note: *(1) RCW 41.04.310, 41.04.320, and 41.04.330 were repealed by 1987 c 326 § 21, effective July 1, 1987.

**(2) RCW 41.26.180 was recodified as RCW 41.26.053 pursuant to 1994 c 298 § 5.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.140 Payment of costs, attorneys' fees, etc. The court from time to time after considering the financial resources of both parties may order a party to pay a reasonable amount for the cost to the other party of maintaining or defending any proceeding under this chapter and for reasonable attorneys' fees or other professional fees in connection therewith, including sums for legal services rendered and costs incurred prior to the commencement of the proceeding or enforcement or modification proceedings after entry of judgment.

Upon any appeal, the appellate court may, in its discretion, order a party to pay for the cost to the other party of maintaining the appeal and attorneys' fees in addition to statutory costs.

The court may order that the attorneys' fees be paid directly to the attorney who may enforce the order in his or her name. [2011 c 336 § 690; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 14.]

26.09.150 Decree of dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, or declaration of invalidity—Finality—Appeal—Conversion of decree of legal separation to decree of dissolution—Name of party. ***(Effective until January 1, 2021.)*** (1) A decree of dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, or declaration of invalidity is final when entered, subject to the right of appeal. An appeal which does not challenge the finding that the marriage or domestic partnership is irretrievably broken or was invalid, does not delay the finality of the dissolution or declaration of invalidity and either party may remarry or enter into a domestic partnership pending such an appeal.

(2)(a) No earlier than six months after entry of a decree of legal separation, on motion of either party, the court shall convert the decree of legal separation to a decree of dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership. The clerk of court shall complete the certificate as provided for in *RCW 70.58.200 on the form provided by the department of health. On or before the tenth day of each month, the clerk of the court shall forward to the state registrar of vital statistics the certificate of each decree of divorce, dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, annulment, or separate maintenance granted during the preceding month.

(b) Once a month, the state registrar of vital statistics shall prepare a list of persons for whom a certificate of dissolution of domestic partnership was transmitted to the registrar and was not included in a previous list, and shall supply the list to the secretary of state.

(3) Upon request of a party whose marriage or domestic partnership is dissolved or declared invalid, the court shall order a former name restored or the court may, in its discretion, order a change to another name. [2008 c 6 § 1016. Prior: 1989 1st ex.s. c 9 § 205; 1989 c 375 § 30; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 15.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 70.58.200 was repealed by 1991 c 96 § 6.

Effect of entry of a decree of dissolution of marriage or a declaration of invalidity or certification of termination of a state registered domestic partnership on nonprobate assets: RCW 11.07.010.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.150 Decree of dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, or declaration of invalidity—Finality—Appeal—Conversion of decree of legal separation to decree of dissolution—Name of party. ***(Effective January 1, 2021.)*** (1) A decree of dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, or declaration of invalidity is final when entered, subject to the right of appeal. An appeal which does not challenge the finding that the marriage or domestic partnership is irretrievably bro-

ken or was invalid, does not delay the finality of the dissolution or declaration of invalidity and either party may remarry or enter into a domestic partnership pending such an appeal.

(2)(a) No earlier than six months after entry of a decree of legal separation, on motion of either party, the court shall convert the decree of legal separation to a decree of dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership. The clerk of court shall complete the certificate on the form provided by the department of health. On or before the tenth day of each month, the clerk of the court shall forward to the state registrar of vital statistics the certificate of each decree of divorce, dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, annulment, or separate maintenance granted during the preceding month.

(b) Once a month, the state registrar of vital statistics shall prepare a list of persons for whom a certificate of dissolution of domestic partnership was transmitted to the registrar and was not included in a previous list, and shall supply the list to the secretary of state.

(3) Upon request of a party whose marriage or domestic partnership is dissolved or declared invalid, the court shall order a former name restored or the court may, in its discretion, order a change to another name. [2019 c 148 § 33; 2008 c 6 § 1016. Prior: 1989 1st ex.s. c 9 § 205; 1989 c 375 § 30; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 15.]

Effective date—Rule-making authority—2019 c 148: See RCW 70.58A.901 and 70.58A.902.

Effect of entry of a decree of dissolution of marriage or a declaration of invalidity or certification of termination of a state registered domestic partnership on nonprobate assets: RCW 11.07.010.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.160 Failure to comply with decree or temporary injunction—Obligation to make support or maintenance payments or permit contact with children not suspended—Penalties. (1) The performance of parental functions and the duty to provide child support are distinct responsibilities in the care of a child. If a party fails to comply with a provision of a decree or temporary order of injunction, the obligation of the other party to make payments for support or maintenance or to permit contact with children is not suspended. An attempt by a parent, in either the negotiation or the performance of a parenting plan, to condition one aspect of the parenting plan upon another, to condition payment of child support upon an aspect of the parenting plan, to refuse to pay ordered child support, to refuse to perform the duties provided in the parenting plan, or to hinder the performance by the other parent of duties provided in the parenting plan, shall be deemed bad faith and shall be punished by the court by holding the party in contempt of court and by awarding to the aggrieved party reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incidental in bringing a motion for contempt of court.

(2)(a) A motion may be filed to initiate a contempt action to coerce a parent to comply with an order establishing residential provisions for a child. If the court finds there is reasonable cause to believe the parent has not complied with the order, the court may issue an order to show cause why the relief requested should not be granted.

(b) If, based on all the facts and circumstances, the court finds after hearing that the parent, in bad faith, has not complied with the order establishing residential provisions for the child, the court shall find the parent in contempt of court. Upon a finding of contempt, the court shall order:

(i) The noncomplying parent to provide the moving party additional time with the child. The additional time shall be equal to the time missed with the child, due to the parent's noncompliance;

(ii) The parent to pay, to the moving party, all court costs and reasonable attorneys' fees incurred as a result of the noncompliance, and any reasonable expenses incurred in locating or returning a child; and

(iii) The parent to pay, to the moving party, a civil penalty, not less than the sum of one hundred dollars.

The court may also order the parent to be imprisoned in the county jail, if the parent is presently able to comply with the provisions of the court-ordered parenting plan and is presently unwilling to comply. The parent may be imprisoned until he or she agrees to comply with the order, but in no event for more than one hundred eighty days.

(3) On a second failure within three years to comply with a residential provision of a court-ordered parenting plan, a motion may be filed to initiate contempt of court proceedings according to the procedure set forth in subsection (2)(a) and (b) of this section. On a finding of contempt under this subsection, the court shall order:

(a) The noncomplying parent to provide the other parent or party additional time with the child. The additional time shall be twice the amount of the time missed with the child, due to the parent's noncompliance;

(b) The noncomplying parent to pay, to the other parent or party, all court costs and reasonable attorneys' fees incurred as a result of the noncompliance, and any reasonable expenses incurred in locating or returning a child; and

(c) The noncomplying parent to pay, to the moving party, a civil penalty of not less than two hundred fifty dollars.

The court may also order the parent to be imprisoned in the county jail, if the parent is presently able to comply with the provisions of the court-ordered parenting plan and is presently unwilling to comply. The parent may be imprisoned until he or she agrees to comply with the order but in no event for more than one hundred eighty days.

(4) For purposes of subsections (1), (2), and (3) of this section, the parent shall be deemed to have the present ability to comply with the order establishing residential provisions unless he or she establishes otherwise by a preponderance of the evidence. The parent shall establish a reasonable excuse for failure to comply with the residential provision of a court-ordered parenting plan by a preponderance of the evidence.

(5) Any monetary award ordered under subsections (1), (2), and (3) of this section may be enforced, by the party to whom it is awarded, in the same manner as a civil judgment.

(6) Subsections (1), (2), and (3) of this section authorize the exercise of the court's power to impose remedial sanctions for contempt of court and is in addition to any other contempt power the court may possess.

(7) Upon motion for contempt of court under subsections (1) through (3) of this section, if the court finds the motion was brought without reasonable basis, the court shall order the moving party to pay to the nonmoving party, all costs, reasonable attorneys' fees, and a civil penalty of not less than

one hundred dollars. [1991 c 367 § 4; 1989 c 318 § 1; 1987 c 460 § 12; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 16.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.165 Court orders—Required language. All court orders containing parenting plan provisions or orders of contempt, entered pursuant to RCW 26.09.160, shall include the following language:

WARNING: VIOLATION OF THE RESIDENTIAL PROVISIONS OF THIS ORDER WITH ACTUAL KNOWLEDGE OF ITS TERMS IS PUNISHABLE BY CONTEMPT OF COURT, AND MAY BE A CRIMINAL OFFENSE UNDER RCW 9A.40.060(2) or 9A.40.070(2). VIOLATION OF THIS ORDER MAY SUBJECT A VIOLATOR TO ARREST.

[1994 c 162 § 2; 1989 c 318 § 4.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.170 Modification of decree for maintenance or support, property disposition—Termination of maintenance obligation and child support—Grounds. ***(Effective until February 1, 2021.)*** (1) Except as otherwise provided in RCW 26.09.070(7), the provisions of any decree respecting maintenance or support may be modified: (a) Only as to installments accruing subsequent to the petition for modification or motion for adjustment except motions to compel court-ordered adjustments, which shall be effective as of the first date specified in the decree for implementing the adjustment; and, (b) except as otherwise provided in this section, only upon a showing of a substantial change of circumstances. The provisions as to property disposition may not be revoked or modified, unless the court finds the existence of conditions that justify the reopening of a judgment under the laws of this state.

(2) Unless otherwise agreed in writing or expressly provided in the decree the obligation to pay future maintenance is terminated upon the death of either party or the remarriage of the party receiving maintenance or registration of a new domestic partnership of the party receiving maintenance.

(3) Unless otherwise agreed in writing or expressly provided in the decree, provisions for the support of a child are terminated by emancipation of the child or by the death of the parent obligated to support the child.

(4) Unless expressly provided by an order of the superior court or a court of comparable jurisdiction, provisions for the support of a child are terminated upon the marriage or registration of a domestic partnership to each other of parties to a paternity order, or upon the remarriage or registration of a domestic partnership to each other of parties to a decree of dissolution. The remaining provisions of the order, including provisions establishing paternity, remain in effect.

(5)(a) A party to an order of child support may petition for a modification based upon a showing of substantially changed circumstances at any time.

(b) An obligor's voluntary unemployment or voluntary underemployment, by itself, is not a substantial change of circumstances.

(6) An order of child support may be modified one year or more after it has been entered without a showing of substantially changed circumstances:

(a) If the order in practice works a severe economic hardship on either party or the child;

(b) If a child is still in high school, upon a finding that there is a need to extend support beyond the eighteenth birthday to complete high school; or

(c) To add an automatic adjustment of support provision consistent with RCW 26.09.100.

(7)(a) If twenty-four months have passed from the date of the entry of the order or the last adjustment or modification, whichever is later, the order may be adjusted without a showing of substantially changed circumstances based upon:

(i) Changes in the income of the parents; or

(ii) Changes in the economic table or standards in chapter 26.19 RCW.

(b) Either party may initiate the adjustment by filing a motion and child support worksheets.

(c) If the court adjusts or modifies a child support obligation pursuant to this subsection by more than thirty percent and the change would cause significant hardship, the court may implement the change in two equal increments, one at the time of the entry of the order and the second six months from the entry of the order. Twenty-four months must pass following the second change before a motion for another adjustment under this subsection may be filed.

(8)(a) The department of social and health services may file an action to modify or adjust an order of child support if public assistance money is being paid to or for the benefit of the child and the department has determined that the child support order is at least fifteen percent above or below the appropriate child support amount set forth in the standard calculation as defined in RCW 26.19.011.

(b) The department of social and health services may file an action to modify or adjust an order of child support in a nonassistance case if:

(i) The department has determined that the child support order is at least fifteen percent above or below the appropriate child support amount set forth in the standard calculation as defined in RCW 26.19.011;

(ii) The department has determined the case meets the department's review criteria; and

(iii) A party to the order or another state or jurisdiction has requested a review.

(c) If incarceration of the parent who is obligated to pay support is the basis for the difference between the existing child support order amount and the proposed amount of support determined as a result of a review, the department may file an action to modify or adjust an order of child support even if:

(i) There is no other change of circumstances; and

(ii) The change in support does not meet the fifteen percent threshold.

(d) The determination of whether the child support order is at least fifteen percent above or below the appropriate child support amount must be based on the current income of the parties.

(9) The department of social and health services may file an action to modify or adjust an order of child support under subsections (5) through (7) of this section if:

(a) Public assistance money is being paid to or for the benefit of the child;

(b) A party to the order in a nonassistance case has requested a review; or

(c) Another state or jurisdiction has requested a modification of the order.

(10) If testimony other than affidavit is required in any proceeding under this section, a court of this state shall permit a party or witness to be deposed or to testify under penalty of perjury by telephone, audiovisual means, or other electronic means, unless good cause is shown. [2019 c 275 § 2; 2010 c 279 § 1; 2008 c 6 § 1017; 2002 c 199 § 1; 1997 c 58 § 910; 1992 c 229 § 2; 1991 sp.s. c 28 § 2; 1990 1st ex.s. c 2 § 2; 1989 c 416 § 3; 1988 c 275 § 17; 1987 c 430 § 1; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 17.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.170 Modification of decree for maintenance or support, property disposition—Termination of maintenance obligation and child support—Grounds. ***(Effective February 1, 2021.)*** (1) Except as otherwise provided in RCW 26.09.070(7), the provisions of any decree respecting maintenance or support may be modified: (a) Only as to installments accruing subsequent to the petition for modification or motion for adjustment except motions to compel court-ordered adjustments, which shall be effective as of the first date specified in the decree for implementing the adjustment; and, (b) except as otherwise provided in this section, only upon a showing of a substantial change of circumstances. The provisions as to property disposition may not be revoked or modified, unless the court finds the existence of conditions that justify the reopening of a judgment under the laws of this state.

(2) Unless otherwise agreed in writing or expressly provided in the decree the obligation to pay future maintenance is terminated upon the death of either party or the remarriage of the party receiving maintenance or registration of a new domestic partnership of the party receiving maintenance.

(3) Unless otherwise agreed in writing or expressly provided in the decree, provisions for the support of a child are terminated by emancipation of the child or by the death of the person required to pay support for the child.

(4) Unless expressly provided by an order of the superior court or a court of comparable jurisdiction, provisions for the support of a child are terminated upon the marriage or registration of a domestic partnership to each other of parties to a paternity or parentage order, or upon the remarriage or registration of a domestic partnership to each other of parties to a decree of dissolution. The remaining provisions of the order, including provisions establishing parentage, remain in effect.

(5)(a) A party to an order of child support may petition for a modification based upon a showing of substantially changed circumstances at any time.

(b) The voluntary unemployment or voluntary underemployment of the person required to pay support, by itself, is not a substantial change of circumstances.

(6) An order of child support may be modified at any time to add language regarding abatement to ten dollars per month per order due to the incarceration of the person required to pay support, as provided in RCW 26.09.320.

(a) The department of social and health services, the person entitled to receive support or the payee under the order, or the person required to pay support may petition for a prospective modification of a child support order if the person required to pay support is currently confined in a jail, prison, or correctional facility for at least six months or is serving a sentence greater than six months in a jail, prison, or correctional facility, and the support order does not contain language regarding abatement due to incarceration.

(b) The petition may only be filed if the person required to pay support is currently incarcerated.

(c) As part of the petition for modification, the petitioner may also request that the support obligation be abated to ten dollars per month per order due to incarceration, as provided in RCW 26.09.320.

(7) An order of child support may be modified without showing a substantial change of circumstances if the requested modification is to modify an existing order when the person required to pay support has been released from incarceration, as provided in RCW 26.09.320(3)(d).

(8) An order of child support may be modified one year or more after it has been entered without a showing of substantially changed circumstances:

(a) If the order in practice works a severe economic hardship on either party or the child;

(b) If a child is still in high school, upon a finding that there is a need to extend support beyond the eighteenth birthday to complete high school; or

(c) To add an automatic adjustment of support provision consistent with RCW 26.09.100.

(9)(a) If twenty-four months have passed from the date of the entry of the order or the last adjustment or modification, whichever is later, the order may be adjusted without a showing of substantially changed circumstances based upon:

(i) Changes in the income of the person required to pay support, or of the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support who is a parent of the child or children covered by the order; or

(ii) Changes in the economic table or standards in chapter 26.19 RCW.

(b) Either party may initiate the adjustment by filing a motion and child support worksheets.

(c) If the court adjusts or modifies a child support obligation pursuant to this subsection by more than thirty percent and the change would cause significant hardship, the court may implement the change in two equal increments, one at the time of the entry of the order and the second six months from the entry of the order. Twenty-four months must pass following the second change before a motion for another adjustment under this subsection may be filed.

(10)(a) The department of social and health services may file an action to modify or adjust an order of child support if public assistance money is being paid to or for the benefit of the child and the department has determined that the child support order is at least fifteen percent above or below the appropriate child support amount set forth in the standard calculation as defined in RCW 26.19.011.

(b) The department of social and health services may file an action to modify or adjust an order of child support in a nonassistance case if:

(i) The department has determined that the child support order is at least fifteen percent above or below the appropriate child support amount set forth in the standard calculation as defined in RCW 26.19.011;

(ii) The department has determined the case meets the department's review criteria; and

(iii) A party to the order or another state or jurisdiction has requested a review.

(c) If incarceration of the person required to pay support is the basis for the difference between the existing child support order amount and the proposed amount of support determined as a result of a review, the department may file an action to modify or adjust an order of child support even if:

(i) There is no other change of circumstances; and

(ii) The change in support does not meet the fifteen percent threshold.

(d) The determination of whether the child support order is at least fifteen percent above or below the appropriate child support amount must be based on the current income of the parties.

(11) The department of social and health services may file an action to modify or adjust an order of child support under subsections (5) through (9) of this section if:

(a) Public assistance money is being paid to or for the benefit of the child;

(b) A party to the order in a nonassistance case has requested a review; or

(c) Another state or jurisdiction has requested a modification of the order.

(12) If testimony other than affidavit is required in any proceeding under this section, a court of this state shall permit a party or witness to be deposed or to testify under penalty of perjury by telephone, audiovisual means, or other electronic means, unless good cause is shown. [2020 c 227 § 13; 2019 c 275 § 2; 2010 c 279 § 1; 2008 c 6 § 1017; 2002 c 199 § 1; 1997 c 58 § 910; 1992 c 229 § 2; 1991 sp.s. c 28 § 2; 1990 1st ex.s. c 2 § 2; 1989 c 416 § 3; 1988 c 275 § 17; 1987 c 430 § 1; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 17.]

Effective date—2020 c 227 §§ 3-13: See note following RCW 26.09.320.

Findings—Intent—2020 c 227: See note following RCW 26.09.320.

Rule-making authority—2020 c 227: See RCW 26.09.916.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.175 Modification of order of child support. (1) A proceeding for the modification of an order of child support shall commence with the filing of a petition and worksheets. The petition shall be in the form prescribed by the administrator for the courts. There shall be a fee of twenty dollars for the filing of a petition for modification of dissolution.

(2)(a) The petitioner shall serve upon the other party the summons, a copy of the petition, and the worksheets in the form prescribed by the administrator for the courts. If the modification proceeding is the first action filed in this state, service shall be made by personal service. If the decree to be modified was entered in this state, service shall be by personal service or by any form of mail requiring a return receipt. Proof of service shall be filed with the court.

(b) If the support obligation has been assigned to the state pursuant to RCW 74.20.330 or the state has a subrogated interest under RCW 74.20A.030, the summons, petition, and worksheets shall also be served on the attorney general; except that notice shall be given to the office of the prosecuting attorney for the county in which the action is filed in lieu of the office of the attorney general in those counties and in the types of cases as designated by the office of the attorney general by letter sent to the presiding superior court judge of that county.

(3) As provided for under RCW 26.09.170, the department of social and health services may file an action to modify or adjust an order of child support if:

(a) Public assistance money is being paid to or for the benefit of the child;

(b) A party to the order in a nonassistance case has requested a review; or

(c) Another state or jurisdiction has requested a modification of the order.

(4) A responding party's answer and worksheets shall be served and the answer filed within twenty days after service of the petition or sixty days if served out of state. A responding party's failure to file an answer within the time required shall result in entry of a default judgment for the petitioner.

(5) At any time after responsive pleadings are filed, any party may schedule the matter for hearing.

(6) Unless all parties stipulate to arbitration or the presiding judge authorizes oral testimony pursuant to subsection (7) of this section, a petition for modification of an order of child support shall be heard by the court on affidavits, the petition, answer, and worksheets only.

(7) A party seeking authority to present oral testimony on the petition to modify a support order shall file an appropriate motion not later than ten days after the time of notice of hearing. Affidavits and exhibits setting forth the reasons oral testimony is necessary to a just adjudication of the issues shall accompany the petition. The affidavits and exhibits must demonstrate the extraordinary features of the case. Factors which may be considered include, but are not limited to: (a) Substantial questions of credibility on a major issue; (b) insufficient or inconsistent discovery materials not correctable by further discovery; or (c) particularly complex circumstances requiring expert testimony.

(8) If testimony other than affidavit is required in any proceeding under this section, a court of this state shall permit a party or witness to be deposed or to testify under penalty of perjury by telephone, audiovisual means, or other electronic means, unless good cause is shown. [2010 c 279 § 2; 2002 c 199 § 2; 1992 c 229 § 3; 1991 c 367 § 6; 1990 1st ex.s. c 2 § 3; 1987 c 430 § 2.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.181 Procedure for determining permanent parenting plan. (1) SUBMISSION OF PROPOSED PLANS. (a) In any proceeding under this chapter, except a modification, each party shall file and serve a proposed permanent parenting plan on or before the earliest date of:

(i) Thirty days after filing and service by either party of a notice for trial; or

(ii) One hundred eighty days after commencement of the action which one hundred eighty day period may be extended by stipulation of the parties.

(b) In proceedings for a modification of custody or a parenting plan, a proposed parenting plan shall be filed and served with the motion for modification and with the response to the motion for modification.

(c) No proposed permanent parenting plan shall be required after filing of an agreed permanent parenting plan, after entry of a final decree, or after dismissal of the cause of action.

(d) A party who files a proposed parenting plan in compliance with this section may move the court for an order of default adopting that party's parenting plan if the other party has failed to file a proposed parenting plan as required in this section.

(2) AMENDING PROPOSED PARENTING PLANS. Either party may file and serve an amended proposed permanent parenting plan according to the rules for amending pleadings.

(3) GOOD FAITH PROPOSAL. The parent submitting a proposed parenting plan shall attach a verified statement that the plan is proposed by that parent in good faith.

(4) AGREED PERMANENT PARENTING PLANS. The parents may make an agreed permanent parenting plan.

(5) MANDATORY SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE. Where mandatory settlement conferences are provided under court rule, the parents shall attend a mandatory settlement conference. The mandatory settlement conference shall be presided over by a judge or a court commissioner, who shall apply the criteria in RCW 26.09.187 and 26.09.191. The parents shall in good faith review the proposed terms of the parenting plans and any other issues relevant to the cause of action with the presiding judge or court commissioner. Facts and legal issues that are not then in dispute shall be entered as stipulations for purposes of final hearing or trial in the matter.

(6) TRIAL SETTING. Trial dates for actions involving minor children brought under this chapter shall receive priority.

(7) ENTRY OF FINAL ORDER. The final order or decree shall be entered not sooner than ninety days after filing and service.

This subsection does not apply to decrees of legal separation. [1989 2nd ex.s. c 2 § 1; 1989 c 375 § 8; 1987 c 460 § 7.]

26.09.182 Permanent parenting plan—Determination of relevant information. Before entering a permanent parenting plan, the court shall determine the existence of any information and proceedings relevant to the placement of the child that are available in the judicial information system and databases. [2007 c 496 § 304.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.184 Permanent parenting plan. (1) OBJECTIVES. The objectives of the permanent parenting plan are to:

(a) Provide for the child's physical care;

(b) Maintain the child's emotional stability;

(c) Provide for the child's changing needs as the child grows and matures, in a way that minimizes the need for future modifications to the permanent parenting plan;

(d) Set forth the authority and responsibilities of each parent with respect to the child, consistent with the criteria in RCW 26.09.187 and 26.09.191;

(e) Minimize the child's exposure to harmful parental conflict;

(f) Encourage the parents, where appropriate under RCW 26.09.187 and 26.09.191, to meet their responsibilities to their minor children through agreements in the permanent parenting plan, rather than by relying on judicial intervention; and

(g) To otherwise protect the best interests of the child consistent with RCW 26.09.002.

(2) CONTENTS OF THE PERMANENT PARENTING PLAN. The permanent parenting plan shall contain provisions for resolution of future disputes between the parents, allocation of decision-making authority, and residential provisions for the child.

(3) CONSIDERATION IN ESTABLISHING THE PERMANENT PARENTING PLAN. In establishing a permanent parenting plan, the court may consider the cultural heritage and religious beliefs of a child.

(4) DISPUTE RESOLUTION. A process for resolving disputes, other than court action, shall be provided unless precluded or limited by RCW 26.09.187 or 26.09.191. A dispute resolution process may include counseling, mediation, or arbitration by a specified individual or agency, or court action. In the dispute resolution process:

(a) Preference shall be given to carrying out the parenting plan;

(b) The parents shall use the designated process to resolve disputes relating to implementation of the plan, except those related to financial support, unless an emergency exists;

(c) A written record shall be prepared of any agreement reached in counseling or mediation and of each arbitration award and shall be provided to each party;

(d) If the court finds that a parent has used or frustrated the dispute resolution process without good reason, the court shall award attorneys' fees and financial sanctions to the prevailing parent;

(e) The parties have the right of review from the dispute resolution process to the superior court; and

(f) The provisions of (a) through (e) of this subsection shall be set forth in the decree.

(5) ALLOCATION OF DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY.

(a) The plan shall allocate decision-making authority to one or both parties regarding the children's education, health care, and religious upbringing. The parties may incorporate an agreement related to the care and growth of the child in these specified areas, or in other areas, into their plan, consistent with the criteria in RCW 26.09.187 and 26.09.191. Regardless of the allocation of decision-making in the parenting plan, either parent may make emergency decisions affecting the health or safety of the child.

(b) Each parent may make decisions regarding the day-to-day care and control of the child while the child is residing with that parent.

(c) When mutual decision making is designated but cannot be achieved, the parties shall make a good faith effort to resolve the issue through the dispute resolution process.

(6) RESIDENTIAL PROVISIONS FOR THE CHILD. The plan shall include a residential schedule which designates in which parent's home each minor child shall reside on given days of the year, including provision for holidays, birthdays of family members, vacations, and other special occasions, consistent with the criteria in RCW 26.09.187 and 26.09.191.

(7) PARENTS' OBLIGATION UNAFFECTED. If a parent fails to comply with a provision of a parenting plan or a child support order, the other parent's obligations under the parenting plan or the child support order are not affected. Failure to comply with a provision in a parenting plan or a child support order may result in a finding of contempt of court, under RCW 26.09.160.

(8) PROVISIONS TO BE SET FORTH IN PERMANENT PARENTING PLAN. The permanent parenting plan shall set forth the provisions of subsections (4)(a) through (c), (5)(b) and (c), and (7) of this section. [2007 c 496 § 601; 1991 c 367 § 7; 1989 c 375 § 9; 1987 c 460 § 8.]

Custody, designation of for purposes of other statutes: RCW 26.09.285.

Failure to comply with decree or temporary injunction—Obligations not suspended: RCW 26.09.160.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.187 Criteria for establishing permanent parenting plan. (1) DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS. The court shall not order a dispute resolution process, except court action, when it finds that any limiting factor under RCW 26.09.191 applies, or when it finds that either parent is unable to afford the cost of the proposed dispute resolution process. If a dispute resolution process is not precluded or limited, then in designating such a process the court shall consider all relevant factors, including:

(a) Differences between the parents that would substantially inhibit their effective participation in any designated process;

(b) The parents' wishes or agreements and, if the parents have entered into agreements, whether the agreements were made knowingly and voluntarily; and

(c) Differences in the parents' financial circumstances that may affect their ability to participate fully in a given dispute resolution process.

(2) ALLOCATION OF DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY.

(a) AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE PARTIES. The court shall approve agreements of the parties allocating decision-making authority, or specifying rules in the areas listed in RCW 26.09.184(5)(a), when it finds that:

(i) The agreement is consistent with any limitations on a parent's decision-making authority mandated by RCW 26.09.191; and

(ii) The agreement is knowing and voluntary.

(b) SOLE DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY. The court shall order sole decision-making to one parent when it finds that:

(i) A limitation on the other parent's decision-making authority is mandated by RCW 26.09.191;

(ii) Both parents are opposed to mutual decision making;

(iii) One parent is opposed to mutual decision making, and such opposition is reasonable based on the criteria in (c) of this subsection.

(c) MUTUAL DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY. Except as provided in (a) and (b) of this subsection, the court shall consider the following criteria in allocating decision-making authority:

(i) The existence of a limitation under RCW 26.09.191;

(ii) The history of participation of each parent in decision making in each of the areas in RCW 26.09.184(5)(a);

(iii) Whether the parents have a demonstrated ability and desire to cooperate with one another in decision making in each of the areas in RCW 26.09.184(5)(a); and

(iv) The parents' geographic proximity to one another, to the extent that it affects their ability to make timely mutual decisions.

(3) RESIDENTIAL PROVISIONS.

(a) The court shall make residential provisions for each child which encourage each parent to maintain a loving, stable, and nurturing relationship with the child, consistent with the child's developmental level and the family's social and economic circumstances. The child's residential schedule shall be consistent with RCW 26.09.191. Where the limitations of RCW 26.09.191 are not dispositive of the child's residential schedule, the court shall consider the following factors:

(i) The relative strength, nature, and stability of the child's relationship with each parent;

(ii) The agreements of the parties, provided they were entered into knowingly and voluntarily;

(iii) Each parent's past and potential for future performance of parenting functions as defined in *RCW 26.09.004(3), including whether a parent has taken greater responsibility for performing parenting functions relating to the daily needs of the child;

(iv) The emotional needs and developmental level of the child;

(v) The child's relationship with siblings and with other significant adults, as well as the child's involvement with his or her physical surroundings, school, or other significant activities;

(vi) The wishes of the parents and the wishes of a child who is sufficiently mature to express reasoned and independent preferences as to his or her residential schedule; and

(vii) Each parent's employment schedule, and shall make accommodations consistent with those schedules.

Factor (i) shall be given the greatest weight.

(b) Where the limitations of RCW 26.09.191 are not dispositive, the court may order that a child frequently alternate his or her residence between the households of the parents for brief and substantially equal intervals of time if such provision is in the best interests of the child. In determining whether such an arrangement is in the best interests of the child, the court may consider the parties geographic proximity to the extent necessary to ensure the ability to share performance of the parenting functions.

(c) For any child, residential provisions may contain any reasonable terms or conditions that facilitate the orderly and meaningful exercise of residential time by a parent, including but not limited to requirements of reasonable notice when residential time will not occur. [2007 c 496 § 603; 1989 c 375 § 10; 1987 c 460 § 9.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 26.09.004 was alphabetized pursuant to RCW 1.08.015(2)(k), changing subsection (3) to subsection (2).

Custody, designation of for purposes of other statutes: RCW 26.09.285.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.191 Restrictions in temporary or permanent parenting plans. ***(Effective until January 1, 2021.)*** (1) The permanent parenting plan shall not require mutual decision-making or designation of a dispute resolution process other than court action if it is found that a parent has engaged in any of the following conduct: (a) Willful abandonment that continues for an extended period of time or substantial refusal to perform parenting functions; (b) physical, sexual, or a pattern of emotional abuse of a child; or (c) a history of acts of domestic violence as defined in RCW 26.50.010(3) or an assault or sexual assault that causes grievous bodily harm or the fear of such harm or that results in a pregnancy.

(2)(a) The parent's residential time with the child shall be limited if it is found that the parent has engaged in any of the following conduct: (i) Willful abandonment that continues for an extended period of time or substantial refusal to perform parenting functions; (ii) physical, sexual, or a pattern of emotional abuse of a child; (iii) a history of acts of domestic violence as defined in RCW 26.50.010(3) or an assault or sexual assault that causes grievous bodily harm or the fear of such harm or that results in a pregnancy; or (iv) the parent has been convicted as an adult of a sex offense under:

(A) RCW 9A.44.076 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (d) of this subsection;

(B) RCW 9A.44.079 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (d) of this subsection;

(C) RCW 9A.44.086 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (d) of this subsection;

(D) RCW 9A.44.089;

(E) RCW 9A.44.093;

(F) RCW 9A.44.096;

(G) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2) if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (d) of this subsection;

(H) Chapter 9.68A RCW;

(I) Any predecessor or antecedent statute for the offenses listed in (a)(iv)(A) through (H) of this subsection;

(J) Any statute from any other jurisdiction that describes an offense analogous to the offenses listed in (a)(iv)(A) through (H) of this subsection.

This subsection (2)(a) shall not apply when (c) or (d) of this subsection applies.

(b) The parent's residential time with the child shall be limited if it is found that the parent resides with a person who has engaged in any of the following conduct: (i) Physical, sexual, or a pattern of emotional abuse of a child; (ii) a history of acts of domestic violence as defined in RCW 26.50.010(3) or an assault or sexual assault that causes grievous bodily harm or the fear of such harm or that results in a pregnancy; or (iii) the person has been convicted as an adult or as a juvenile has been adjudicated of a sex offense under:

(A) RCW 9A.44.076 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (e) of this subsection;

(B) RCW 9A.44.079 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (e) of this subsection;

(C) RCW 9A.44.086 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (e) of this subsection;

(D) RCW 9A.44.089;

(E) RCW 9A.44.093;

(F) RCW 9A.44.096;

(G) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2) if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (e) of this subsection;

(H) Chapter 9.68A RCW;

(I) Any predecessor or antecedent statute for the offenses listed in (b)(iii)(A) through (H) of this subsection;

(J) Any statute from any other jurisdiction that describes an offense analogous to the offenses listed in (b)(iii)(A) through (H) of this subsection.

This subsection (2)(b) shall not apply when (c) or (e) of this subsection applies.

(c) If a parent has been found to be a sexual predator under chapter 71.09 RCW or under an analogous statute of any other jurisdiction, the court shall restrain the parent from contact with a child that would otherwise be allowed under this chapter. If a parent resides with an adult or a juvenile who has been found to be a sexual predator under chapter 71.09 RCW or under an analogous statute of any other jurisdiction, the court shall restrain the parent from contact with the parent's child except contact that occurs outside that person's presence.

(d) There is a rebuttable presumption that a parent who has been convicted as an adult of a sex offense listed in (d)(i) through (ix) of this subsection poses a present danger to a child. Unless the parent rebuts this presumption, the court shall restrain the parent from contact with a child that would otherwise be allowed under this chapter:

(i) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2), provided that the person convicted was at least five years older than the other person;

(ii) RCW 9A.44.073;

(iii) RCW 9A.44.076, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;

(iv) RCW 9A.44.079, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;

(v) RCW 9A.44.083;

(vi) RCW 9A.44.086, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;

(vii) RCW 9A.44.100;

(viii) Any predecessor or antecedent statute for the offenses listed in (d)(i) through (vii) of this subsection;

(ix) Any statute from any other jurisdiction that describes an offense analogous to the offenses listed in (d)(i) through (vii) of this subsection.

(e) There is a rebuttable presumption that a parent who resides with a person who, as an adult, has been convicted, or as a juvenile has been adjudicated, of the sex offenses listed in (e)(i) through (ix) of this subsection places a child at risk of abuse or harm when that parent exercises residential time in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person. Unless the parent rebuts the presumption, the court shall restrain the parent from contact with the parent's child except for contact

that occurs outside of the convicted or adjudicated person's presence:

(i) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2), provided that the person convicted was at least five years older than the other person;

(ii) RCW 9A.44.073;

(iii) RCW 9A.44.076, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;

(iv) RCW 9A.44.079, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;

(v) RCW 9A.44.083;

(vi) RCW 9A.44.086, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;

(vii) RCW 9A.44.100;

(viii) Any predecessor or antecedent statute for the offenses listed in (e)(i) through (vii) of this subsection;

(ix) Any statute from any other jurisdiction that describes an offense analogous to the offenses listed in (e)(i) through (vii) of this subsection.

(f) The presumption established in (d) of this subsection may be rebutted only after a written finding that the child was not conceived and subsequently born as a result of a sexual assault committed by the parent requesting residential time and that:

(i) If the child was not the victim of the sex offense committed by the parent requesting residential time, (A) contact between the child and the offending parent is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, and (B) the offending parent has successfully engaged in treatment for sex offenders or is engaged in and making progress in such treatment, if any was ordered by a court, and the treatment provider believes such contact is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child; or

(ii) If the child was the victim of the sex offense committed by the parent requesting residential time, (A) contact between the child and the offending parent is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, (B) if the child is in or has been in therapy for victims of sexual abuse, the child's counselor believes such contact between the child and the offending parent is in the child's best interest, and (C) the offending parent has successfully engaged in treatment for sex offenders or is engaged in and making progress in such treatment, if any was ordered by a court, and the treatment provider believes such contact is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child.

(g) The presumption established in (e) of this subsection may be rebutted only after a written finding that the child was not conceived and subsequently born as a result of a sexual assault committed by the parent requesting residential time and that:

(i) If the child was not the victim of the sex offense committed by the person who is residing with the parent requesting residential time, (A) contact between the child and the parent residing with the convicted or adjudicated person is appropriate and that parent is able to protect the child in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person, and (B) the convicted or adjudicated person has successfully engaged in treatment for sex offenders or is engaged in and making progress in such treatment, if any was ordered by a court, and the treatment provider believes such contact is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child; or

(ii) If the child was the victim of the sex offense committed by the person who is residing with the parent requesting residential time, (A) contact between the child and the parent in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, (B) if the child is in or has been in therapy for victims of sexual abuse, the child's counselor believes such contact between the child and the parent residing with the convicted or adjudicated person in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person is in the child's best interest, and (C) the convicted or adjudicated person has successfully engaged in treatment for sex offenders or is engaged in and making progress in such treatment, if any was ordered by a court, and the treatment provider believes contact between the parent and child in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child.

(h) If the court finds that the parent has met the burden of rebutting the presumption under (f) of this subsection, the court may allow a parent who has been convicted as an adult of a sex offense listed in (d)(i) through (ix) of this subsection to have residential time with the child supervised by a neutral and independent adult and pursuant to an adequate plan for supervision of such residential time. The court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between the child and the parent unless the court finds, based on the evidence, that the supervisor is willing and capable of protecting the child from harm. The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, based on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the child or is no longer willing or capable of protecting the child.

(i) If the court finds that the parent has met the burden of rebutting the presumption under (g) of this subsection, the court may allow a parent residing with a person who has been adjudicated as a juvenile of a sex offense listed in (e)(i) through (ix) of this subsection to have residential time with the child in the presence of the person adjudicated as a juvenile, supervised by a neutral and independent adult and pursuant to an adequate plan for supervision of such residential time. The court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between the child and the parent unless the court finds, based on the evidence, that the supervisor is willing and capable of protecting the child from harm. The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, based on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the child or is no longer willing or capable of protecting the child.

(j) If the court finds that the parent has met the burden of rebutting the presumption under (g) of this subsection, the court may allow a parent residing with a person who, as an adult, has been convicted of a sex offense listed in (e)(i) through (ix) of this subsection to have residential time with the child in the presence of the convicted person supervised by a neutral and independent adult and pursuant to an adequate plan for supervision of such residential time. The court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between the child and the parent unless the court finds, based on the evidence, that the supervisor is willing and capable of protecting the child from harm. The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, based on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the child or is no longer willing or capable of protecting the child.

(k) A court shall not order unsupervised contact between the offending parent and a child of the offending parent who was sexually abused by that parent. A court may order unsu-

pervised contact between the offending parent and a child who was not sexually abused by the parent after the presumption under (d) of this subsection has been rebutted and supervised residential time has occurred for at least two years with no further arrests or convictions of sex offenses involving children under chapter 9A.44 RCW, RCW 9A.64.020, or chapter 9.68A RCW and (i) the sex offense of the offending parent was not committed against a child of the offending parent, and (ii) the court finds that unsupervised contact between the child and the offending parent is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, after consideration of the testimony of a state-certified therapist, mental health counselor, or social worker with expertise in treating child sexual abuse victims who has supervised at least one period of residential time between the parent and the child, and after consideration of evidence of the offending parent's compliance with community supervision requirements, if any. If the offending parent was not ordered by a court to participate in treatment for sex offenders, then the parent shall obtain a psychosexual evaluation conducted by a certified sex offender treatment provider or a certified affiliate sex offender treatment provider indicating that the offender has the lowest likelihood of risk to reoffend before the court grants unsupervised contact between the parent and a child.

(l) A court may order unsupervised contact between the parent and a child which may occur in the presence of a juvenile adjudicated of a sex offense listed in (e)(i) through (ix) of this subsection who resides with the parent after the presumption under (e) of this subsection has been rebutted and supervised residential time has occurred for at least two years during which time the adjudicated juvenile has had no further arrests, adjudications, or convictions of sex offenses involving children under chapter 9A.44 RCW, RCW 9A.64.020, or chapter 9.68A RCW, and (i) the court finds that unsupervised contact between the child and the parent that may occur in the presence of the adjudicated juvenile is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, after consideration of the testimony of a state-certified therapist, mental health counselor, or social worker with expertise in treatment of child sexual abuse victims who has supervised at least one period of residential time between the parent and the child in the presence of the adjudicated juvenile, and after consideration of evidence of the adjudicated juvenile's compliance with community supervision or parole requirements, if any. If the adjudicated juvenile was not ordered by a court to participate in treatment for sex offenders, then the adjudicated juvenile shall obtain a psychosexual evaluation conducted by a certified sex offender treatment provider or a certified affiliate sex offender treatment provider indicating that the adjudicated juvenile has the lowest likelihood of risk to reoffend before the court grants unsupervised contact between the parent and a child which may occur in the presence of the adjudicated juvenile who is residing with the parent.

(m)(i) The limitations imposed by the court under (a) or (b) of this subsection shall be reasonably calculated to protect the child from the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harm that could result if the child has contact with the parent requesting residential time. The limitations shall also be reasonably calculated to provide for the safety of the parent who may be at risk of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harm that could result if the parent has contact with the parent requesting residential time. The limitations the court may impose include, but are not limited to: Supervised contact between the child and the parent or completion of relevant counseling or treatment. If the court expressly finds based on the evidence that limitations on the residential time with the child will not adequately protect the child from the harm or abuse that could result if the child has contact with the parent requesting residential time, the court shall restrain the parent requesting residential time from all contact with the child.

(ii) The court shall not enter an order under (a) of this subsection allowing a parent to have contact with a child if the parent has been found by clear and convincing evidence in a civil action or by a preponderance of the evidence in a dependency action to have sexually abused the child, except upon recommendation by an evaluator or therapist for the child that the child is ready for contact with the parent and will not be harmed by the contact. The court shall not enter an order allowing a parent to have contact with the child in the offender's presence if the parent resides with a person who has been found by clear and convincing evidence in a civil action or by a preponderance of the evidence in a dependency action to have sexually abused a child, unless the court finds that the parent accepts that the person engaged in the harmful conduct and the parent is willing to and capable of protecting the child from harm from the person.

(iii) The court shall not enter an order under (a) of this subsection allowing a parent to have contact with a child if the parent has been found by clear and convincing evidence pursuant to RCW 26.26A.465 to have committed sexual assault, as defined in RCW 26.26A.465, against the child's parent, and that the child was born within three hundred twenty days of the sexual assault.

(iv) If the court limits residential time under (a) or (b) of this subsection to require supervised contact between the child and the parent, the court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between a child and a parent who has engaged in physical, sexual, or a pattern of emotional abuse of the child unless the court finds based upon the evidence that the supervisor accepts that the harmful conduct occurred and is willing to and capable of protecting the child from harm. The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, based on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the child or is no longer willing to or capable of protecting the child.

(n) If the court expressly finds based on the evidence that contact between the parent and the child will not cause physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harm to the child and that the probability that the parent's or other person's harmful or abusive conduct will recur is so remote that it would not be in the child's best interests to apply the limitations of (a), (b), and (m)(i) and (iv) of this subsection, or if the court expressly finds that the parent's conduct did not have an impact on the child, then the court need not apply the limitations of (a), (b), and (m)(i) and (iv) of this subsection. The weight given to the existence of a protection order issued under chapter 26.50 RCW as to domestic violence is within the discretion of the court. This subsection shall not apply when (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k), (l), and (m)(ii) of this subsection apply.

(3) A parent's involvement or conduct may have an adverse effect on the child's best interests, and the court may

preclude or limit any provisions of the parenting plan, if any of the following factors exist:

(a) A parent's neglect or substantial nonperformance of parenting functions;

(b) A long-term emotional or physical impairment which interferes with the parent's performance of parenting functions as defined in RCW 26.09.004;

(c) A long-term impairment resulting from drug, alcohol, or other substance abuse that interferes with the performance of parenting functions;

(d) The absence or substantial impairment of emotional ties between the parent and the child;

(e) The abusive use of conflict by the parent which creates the danger of serious damage to the child's psychological development;

(f) A parent has withheld from the other parent access to the child for a protracted period without good cause; or

(g) Such other factors or conduct as the court expressly finds adverse to the best interests of the child.

(4) In cases involving allegations of limiting factors under subsection (2)(a)(ii) and (iii) of this section, both parties shall be screened to determine the appropriateness of a comprehensive assessment regarding the impact of the limiting factor on the child and the parties.

(5) In entering a permanent parenting plan, the court shall not draw any presumptions from the provisions of the temporary parenting plan.

(6) In determining whether any of the conduct described in this section has occurred, the court shall apply the civil rules of evidence, proof, and procedure.

(7) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "A parent's child" means that parent's natural child, adopted child, or stepchild; and

(b) "Social worker" means a person with a master's or further advanced degree from a social work educational program accredited and approved as provided in RCW 18.320.010. [2019 c 46 § 5020; 2017 c 234 § 2; 2011 c 89 § 6; 2007 c 496 § 303; 2004 c 38 § 12; 1996 c 303 § 1; 1994 c 267 § 1. Prior: 1989 c 375 § 11; 1989 c 326 § 1; 1987 c 460 § 10.]

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

Findings—2011 c 89: See RCW 18.320.005.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.191 Restrictions in temporary or permanent parenting plans. ***(Effective January 1, 2021.)*** (1) The permanent parenting plan shall not require mutual decision-making or designation of a dispute resolution process other than court action if it is found that a parent has engaged in any of the following conduct: (a) Willful abandonment that continues for an extended period of time or substantial refusal to perform parenting functions; (b) physical, sexual, or a pattern of emotional abuse of a child; or (c) a history of acts of domestic violence as defined in RCW 26.50.010(3) or an assault or sexual assault that causes grievous bodily harm or the fear of such harm or that results in a pregnancy.

(2)(a) The parent's residential time with the child shall be limited if it is found that the parent has engaged in any of the following conduct: (i) Willful abandonment that continues for an extended period of time or substantial refusal to perform parenting functions; (ii) physical, sexual, or a pattern of emotional abuse of a child; (iii) a history of acts of domestic violence as defined in RCW 26.50.010(3) or an assault or sexual assault that causes grievous bodily harm or the fear of such harm or that results in a pregnancy; or (iv) the parent has been convicted as an adult of a sex offense under:

(A) RCW 9A.44.076 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (d) of this subsection;

(B) RCW 9A.44.079 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (d) of this subsection;

(C) RCW 9A.44.086 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (d) of this subsection;

(D) RCW 9A.44.089;

(E) RCW 9A.44.093;

(F) RCW 9A.44.096;

(G) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2) if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (d) of this subsection;

(H) Chapter 9.68A RCW;

(I) Any predecessor or antecedent statute for the offenses listed in (a)(iv)(A) through (H) of this subsection;

(J) Any statute from any other jurisdiction that describes an offense analogous to the offenses listed in (a)(iv)(A) through (H) of this subsection.

This subsection (2)(a) shall not apply when (c) or (d) of this subsection applies.

(b) The parent's residential time with the child shall be limited if it is found that the parent resides with a person who has engaged in any of the following conduct: (i) Physical, sexual, or a pattern of emotional abuse of a child; (ii) a history of acts of domestic violence as defined in RCW 26.50.010(3) or an assault or sexual assault that causes grievous bodily harm or the fear of such harm or that results in a pregnancy; or (iii) the person has been convicted as an adult or as a juvenile has been adjudicated of a sex offense under:

(A) RCW 9A.44.076 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (e) of this subsection;

(B) RCW 9A.44.079 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (e) of this subsection;

(C) RCW 9A.44.086 if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (e) of this subsection;

(D) RCW 9A.44.089;

(E) RCW 9A.44.093;

(F) RCW 9A.44.096;

(G) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2) if, because of the difference in age between the offender and the victim, no rebuttable presumption exists under (e) of this subsection;

(H) Chapter 9.68A RCW;

(I) Any predecessor or antecedent statute for the offenses listed in (b)(iii)(A) through (H) of this subsection;

(J) Any statute from any other jurisdiction that describes an offense analogous to the offenses listed in (b)(iii)(A) through (H) of this subsection.

This subsection (2)(b) shall not apply when (c) or (e) of this subsection applies.

(c) If a parent has been found to be a sexual predator under chapter 71.09 RCW or under an analogous statute of any other jurisdiction, the court shall restrain the parent from contact with a child that would otherwise be allowed under this chapter. If a parent resides with an adult or a juvenile who has been found to be a sexual predator under chapter 71.09 RCW or under an analogous statute of any other jurisdiction, the court shall restrain the parent from contact with the parent's child except contact that occurs outside that person's presence.

(d) There is a rebuttable presumption that a parent who has been convicted as an adult of a sex offense listed in (d)(i) through (ix) of this subsection poses a present danger to a child. Unless the parent rebuts this presumption, the court shall restrain the parent from contact with a child that would otherwise be allowed under this chapter:

(i) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2), provided that the person convicted was at least five years older than the other person;

(ii) RCW 9A.44.073;

(iii) RCW 9A.44.076, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;

(iv) RCW 9A.44.079, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;

(v) RCW 9A.44.083;

(vi) RCW 9A.44.086, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;

(vii) RCW 9A.44.100;

(viii) Any predecessor or antecedent statute for the offenses listed in (d)(i) through (vii) of this subsection;

(ix) Any statute from any other jurisdiction that describes an offense analogous to the offenses listed in (d)(i) through (vii) of this subsection.

(e) There is a rebuttable presumption that a parent who resides with a person who, as an adult, has been convicted, or as a juvenile has been adjudicated, of the sex offenses listed in (e)(i) through (ix) of this subsection places a child at risk of abuse or harm when that parent exercises residential time in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person. Unless the parent rebuts the presumption, the court shall restrain the parent from contact with the parent's child except for contact that occurs outside of the convicted or adjudicated person's presence:

(i) RCW 9A.64.020 (1) or (2), provided that the person convicted was at least five years older than the other person;

(ii) RCW 9A.44.073;

(iii) RCW 9A.44.076, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;

(iv) RCW 9A.44.079, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;

(v) RCW 9A.44.083;

(vi) RCW 9A.44.086, provided that the person convicted was at least eight years older than the victim;

(vii) RCW 9A.44.100;

(viii) Any predecessor or antecedent statute for the offenses listed in (e)(i) through (vii) of this subsection;

(ix) Any statute from any other jurisdiction that describes an offense analogous to the offenses listed in (e)(i) through (vii) of this subsection.

(f) The presumption established in (d) of this subsection may be rebutted only after a written finding that the child was not conceived and subsequently born as a result of a sexual assault committed by the parent requesting residential time and that:

(i) If the child was not the victim of the sex offense committed by the parent requesting residential time, (A) contact between the child and the offending parent is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, and (B) the offending parent has successfully engaged in treatment for sex offenders or is engaged in and making progress in such treatment, if any was ordered by a court, and the treatment provider believes such contact is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child; or

(ii) If the child was the victim of the sex offense committed by the parent requesting residential time, (A) contact between the child and the offending parent is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, (B) if the child is in or has been in therapy for victims of sexual abuse, the child's counselor believes such contact between the child and the offending parent is in the child's best interest, and (C) the offending parent has successfully engaged in treatment for sex offenders or is engaged in and making progress in such treatment, if any was ordered by a court, and the treatment provider believes such contact is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child.

(g) The presumption established in (e) of this subsection may be rebutted only after a written finding that the child was not conceived and subsequently born as a result of a sexual assault committed by the parent requesting residential time and that:

(i) If the child was not the victim of the sex offense committed by the person who is residing with the parent requesting residential time, (A) contact between the child and the parent residing with the convicted or adjudicated person is appropriate and that parent is able to protect the child in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person, and (B) the convicted or adjudicated person has successfully engaged in treatment for sex offenders or is engaged in and making progress in such treatment, if any was ordered by a court, and the treatment provider believes such contact is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child; or

(ii) If the child was the victim of the sex offense committed by the person who is residing with the parent requesting residential time, (A) contact between the child and the parent in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, (B) if the child is in or has been in therapy for victims of sexual abuse, the child's counselor believes such contact between the child and the parent residing with the convicted or adjudicated person in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person is in the child's best interest, and (C) the convicted or adjudicated person has successfully engaged in treatment for sex offenders or is engaged in and making progress in such treatment, if any was ordered by a court, and the treatment provider believes contact between the parent and child in the presence of the convicted or adjudicated person is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child.

(h) If the court finds that the parent has met the burden of rebutting the presumption under (f) of this subsection, the court may allow a parent who has been convicted as an adult of a sex offense listed in (d)(i) through (ix) of this subsection to have residential time with the child supervised by a neutral and independent adult and pursuant to an adequate plan for supervision of such residential time. The court shall not

approve of a supervisor for contact between the child and the parent unless the court finds, based on the evidence, that the supervisor is willing and capable of protecting the child from harm. The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, based on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the child or is no longer willing or capable of protecting the child.

(i) If the court finds that the parent has met the burden of rebutting the presumption under (g) of this subsection, the court may allow a parent residing with a person who has been adjudicated as a juvenile of a sex offense listed in (e)(i) through (ix) of this subsection to have residential time with the child in the presence of the person adjudicated as a juvenile, supervised by a neutral and independent adult and pursuant to an adequate plan for supervision of such residential time. The court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between the child and the parent unless the court finds, based on the evidence, that the supervisor is willing and capable of protecting the child from harm. The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, based on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the child or is no longer willing or capable of protecting the child.

(j) If the court finds that the parent has met the burden of rebutting the presumption under (g) of this subsection, the court may allow a parent residing with a person who, as an adult, has been convicted of a sex offense listed in (e)(i) through (ix) of this subsection to have residential time with the child in the presence of the convicted person supervised by a neutral and independent adult and pursuant to an adequate plan for supervision of such residential time. The court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between the child and the parent unless the court finds, based on the evidence, that the supervisor is willing and capable of protecting the child from harm. The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, based on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the child or is no longer willing or capable of protecting the child.

(k) A court shall not order unsupervised contact between the offending parent and a child of the offending parent who was sexually abused by that parent. A court may order unsupervised contact between the offending parent and a child who was not sexually abused by the parent after the presumption under (d) of this subsection has been rebutted and supervised residential time has occurred for at least two years with no further arrests or convictions of sex offenses involving children under chapter 9A.44 RCW, RCW 9A.64.020, or chapter 9.68A RCW and (i) the sex offense of the offending parent was not committed against a child of the offending parent, and (ii) the court finds that unsupervised contact between the child and the offending parent is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, after consideration of the testimony of a state-certified therapist, mental health counselor, or social worker with expertise in treating child sexual abuse victims who has supervised at least one period of residential time between the parent and the child, and after consideration of evidence of the offending parent's compliance with community supervision requirements, if any. If the offending parent was not ordered by a court to participate in treatment for sex offenders, then the parent shall obtain a psychosexual evaluation conducted by a certified sex offender treatment provider or a certified affiliate sex offender treatment provider indicating that the offender has the lowest likelihood of risk to reoffend before the court grants unsupervised contact between the parent and a child.

(l) A court may order unsupervised contact between the parent and a child which may occur in the presence of a juvenile adjudicated of a sex offense listed in (e)(i) through (ix) of this subsection who resides with the parent after the presumption under (e) of this subsection has been rebutted and supervised residential time has occurred for at least two years during which time the adjudicated juvenile has had no further arrests, adjudications, or convictions of sex offenses involving children under chapter 9A.44 RCW, RCW 9A.64.020, or chapter 9.68A RCW, and (i) the court finds that unsupervised contact between the child and the parent that may occur in the presence of the adjudicated juvenile is appropriate and poses minimal risk to the child, after consideration of the testimony of a state-certified therapist, mental health counselor, or social worker with expertise in treatment of child sexual abuse victims who has supervised at least one period of residential time between the parent and the child in the presence of the adjudicated juvenile, and after consideration of evidence of the adjudicated juvenile's compliance with community supervision or parole requirements, if any. If the adjudicated juvenile was not ordered by a court to participate in treatment for sex offenders, then the adjudicated juvenile shall obtain a psychosexual evaluation conducted by a certified sex offender treatment provider or a certified affiliate sex offender treatment provider indicating that the adjudicated juvenile has the lowest likelihood of risk to reoffend before the court grants unsupervised contact between the parent and a child which may occur in the presence of the adjudicated juvenile who is residing with the parent.

(m)(i) The limitations imposed by the court under (a) or (b) of this subsection shall be reasonably calculated to protect the child from the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harm that could result if the child has contact with the parent requesting residential time. The limitations shall also be reasonably calculated to provide for the safety of the parent who may be at risk of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harm that could result if the parent has contact with the parent requesting residential time. The limitations the court may impose include, but are not limited to: Supervised contact between the child and the parent or completion of relevant counseling or treatment. If the court expressly finds based on the evidence that limitations on the residential time with the child will not adequately protect the child from the harm or abuse that could result if the child has contact with the parent requesting residential time, the court shall restrain the parent requesting residential time from all contact with the child.

(ii) The court shall not enter an order under (a) of this subsection allowing a parent to have contact with a child if the parent has been found by clear and convincing evidence in a civil action or by a preponderance of the evidence in a dependency action to have sexually abused the child, except upon recommendation by an evaluator or therapist for the child that the child is ready for contact with the parent and will not be harmed by the contact. The court shall not enter an order allowing a parent to have contact with the child in the offender's presence if the parent resides with a person who has been found by clear and convincing evidence in a civil action or by a preponderance of the evidence in a dependency

action to have sexually abused a child, unless the court finds that the parent accepts that the person engaged in the harmful conduct and the parent is willing to and capable of protecting the child from harm from the person.

(iii) The court shall not enter an order under (a) of this subsection allowing a parent to have contact with a child if the parent has been found by clear and convincing evidence pursuant to RCW 26.26A.465 to have committed sexual assault, as defined in RCW 26.26A.465, against the child's parent, and that the child was born within three hundred twenty days of the sexual assault.

(iv) If the court limits residential time under (a) or (b) of this subsection to require supervised contact between the child and the parent, the court shall not approve of a supervisor for contact between a child and a parent who has engaged in physical, sexual, or a pattern of emotional abuse of the child unless the court finds based upon the evidence that the supervisor accepts that the harmful conduct occurred and is willing to and capable of protecting the child from harm. The court shall revoke court approval of the supervisor upon finding, based on the evidence, that the supervisor has failed to protect the child or is no longer willing to or capable of protecting the child.

(n) If the court expressly finds based on the evidence that contact between the parent and the child will not cause physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harm to the child and that the probability that the parent's or other person's harmful or abusive conduct will recur is so remote that it would not be in the child's best interests to apply the limitations of (a), (b), and (m)(i) and (iv) of this subsection, or if the court expressly finds that the parent's conduct did not have an impact on the child, then the court need not apply the limitations of (a), (b), and (m)(i) and (iv) of this subsection. The weight given to the existence of a protection order issued under chapter 26.50 RCW as to domestic violence is within the discretion of the court. This subsection shall not apply when (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k), (l), and (m)(ii) of this subsection apply.

(3) A parent's involvement or conduct may have an adverse effect on the child's best interests, and the court may preclude or limit any provisions of the parenting plan, if any of the following factors exist:

(a) A parent's neglect or substantial nonperformance of parenting functions;

(b) A long-term emotional or physical impairment which interferes with the parent's performance of parenting functions as defined in RCW 26.09.004;

(c) A long-term impairment resulting from drug, alcohol, or other substance abuse that interferes with the performance of parenting functions;

(d) The absence or substantial impairment of emotional ties between the parent and the child;

(e) The abusive use of conflict by the parent which creates the danger of serious damage to the child's psychological development. Abusive use of conflict includes, but is not limited to, abusive litigation as defined in RCW 26.51.020. If the court finds a parent has engaged in abusive litigation, the court may impose any restrictions or remedies set forth in chapter 26.51 RCW in addition to including a finding in the parenting plan. Litigation that is aggressive or improper but that does not meet the definition of abusive litigation shall not constitute a basis for a finding under this section. A report made in good faith to law enforcement, a medical professional, or child protective services of sexual, physical, or mental abuse of a child shall not constitute a basis for a finding of abusive use of conflict;

(f) A parent has withheld from the other parent access to the child for a protracted period without good cause; or

(g) Such other factors or conduct as the court expressly finds adverse to the best interests of the child.

(4) In cases involving allegations of limiting factors under subsection (2)(a)(ii) and (iii) of this section, both parties shall be screened to determine the appropriateness of a comprehensive assessment regarding the impact of the limiting factor on the child and the parties.

(5) In entering a permanent parenting plan, the court shall not draw any presumptions from the provisions of the temporary parenting plan.

(6) In determining whether any of the conduct described in this section has occurred, the court shall apply the civil rules of evidence, proof, and procedure.

(7) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "A parent's child" means that parent's natural child, adopted child, or stepchild; and

(b) "Social worker" means a person with a master's or further advanced degree from a social work educational program accredited and approved as provided in RCW 18.320.010. [2020 c 311 § 8; 2019 c 46 § 5020; 2017 c 234 § 2; 2011 c 89 § 6; 2007 c 496 § 303; 2004 c 38 § 12; 1996 c 303 § 1; 1994 c 267 § 1. Prior: 1989 c 375 § 11; 1989 c 326 § 1; 1987 c 460 § 10.]

Effective date—2020 c 311: See RCW 26.51.901.

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

Findings—2011 c 89: See RCW 18.320.005.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.194 Proposed temporary parenting plan—Temporary order—Amendment—Vacation of order. (1) A parent seeking a temporary order relating to parenting shall file and serve a proposed temporary parenting plan by motion. The other parent, if contesting the proposed temporary parenting plan, shall file and serve a responsive proposed parenting plan. Either parent may move to have a proposed temporary parenting plan entered as part of a temporary order. The parents may enter an agreed temporary parenting plan at any time as part of a temporary order. The proposed temporary parenting plan may be supported by relevant evidence and shall be accompanied by an affidavit or declaration which shall state at a minimum the following:

(a) The name, address, and length of residence with the person or persons with whom the child has lived for the preceding twelve months;

(b) The performance by each parent during the last twelve months of the parenting functions relating to the daily needs of the child;

(c) The parents' work and child-care schedules for the preceding twelve months;

(d) The parents' current work and child-care schedules; and

(e) Any of the circumstances set forth in RCW 26.09.191 that are likely to pose a serious risk to the child and that warrant limitation on the award to a parent of temporary resi-

dence or time with the child pending entry of a permanent parenting plan.

(2) At the hearing, the court shall enter a temporary parenting order incorporating a temporary parenting plan which includes:

(a) A schedule for the child's time with each parent when appropriate;

(b) Designation of a temporary residence for the child;

(c) Allocation of decision-making authority, if any. Absent allocation of decision-making authority consistent with RCW 26.09.187(2), neither party shall make any decision for the child other than those relating to day-to-day or emergency care of the child, which shall be made by the party who is present with the child;

(d) Provisions for temporary support for the child; and

(e) Restraining orders, if applicable, under RCW 26.09.060.

(3) A parent may make a motion for an order to show cause and the court may enter a temporary order, including a temporary parenting plan, upon a showing of necessity.

(4) A parent may move for amendment of a temporary parenting plan, and the court may order amendment to the temporary parenting plan, if the amendment conforms to the limitations of RCW 26.09.191 and is in the best interest of the child.

(5) If a proceeding for dissolution of marriage or dissolution of domestic partnership, legal separation, or declaration of invalidity is dismissed, any temporary order or temporary parenting plan is vacated. [2008 c 6 § 1045; 1987 c 460 § 13.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.197 Issuance of temporary parenting plan—Criteria. After considering the affidavit required by RCW 26.09.194(1) and other relevant evidence presented, the court shall make a temporary parenting plan that is in the best interest of the child. In making this determination, the court shall give particular consideration to:

(1) The relative strength, nature, and stability of the child's relationship with each parent; and

(2) Which parenting arrangements will cause the least disruption to the child's emotional stability while the action is pending.

The court shall also consider the factors used to determine residential provisions in the permanent parenting plan. [2007 c 496 § 604; 1987 c 460 § 14.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.210 Parenting plans—Interview with child by court—Advice of professional personnel. The court may interview the child in chambers to ascertain the child's wishes as to the child's residential schedule in a proceeding for dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership, legal separation, or declaration of invalidity. 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 be made part of the record in the case.

The court may seek the advice of professional personnel whether or not they are employed on a regular basis by the court. The advice given shall be in writing and shall be made available by the court to counsel upon request. Counsel may call for cross-examination any professional personnel consulted by the court. [2008 c 6 § 1018; 1987 c 460 § 15; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 21.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.220 Parenting arrangements—Investigation and report—Appointment of guardian ad litem. (1)(a) The court may order an investigation and report concerning parenting arrangements for the child, or may appoint a guardian ad litem pursuant to RCW 26.12.175, or both. The investigation and report may be made by the guardian ad litem, court-appointed special advocate, the staff of the juvenile court, or other professional social service organization experienced in counseling children and families.

(b) An investigator is a person appointed as an investigator under RCW 26.12.050(1)(b) or any other third-party professional ordered or appointed by the court to provide an opinion, assessment, or evaluation regarding the creation or modification of a parenting plan.

(2) In preparing the report concerning a child, the investigator or person appointed under subsection (1) of this section may consult any person who may have information about the child and the potential parenting or custodian arrangements. Upon order of the court, the investigator or person appointed under subsection (1) of this section may refer the child to professional personnel for diagnosis. The investigator or person appointed under subsection (1) of this section may consult with and obtain information from medical, psychiatric, or other expert persons who have served the child in the past without obtaining the consent of the parent or the child's custodian; but the child's consent must be obtained if the child has reached the age of twelve, unless the court finds that the child lacks mental capacity to consent. If the requirements of subsection (3) of this section are fulfilled, the report by the investigator or person appointed under subsection (1) of this section may be received in evidence at the hearing.

(3) The investigator or person appointed under subsection (1) of this section shall provide his or her report to counsel and to any party not represented by counsel at least ten days prior to the hearing unless a shorter time is ordered by the court for good cause shown. The investigator or person appointed under subsection (1) of this section shall make available to counsel and to any party not represented by counsel his or her file of underlying data and reports, complete texts of diagnostic reports made to the investigator or appointed person pursuant to the provisions of subsection (2) of this section, and the names and addresses of all persons whom he or she has consulted. Any party to the proceeding may call the investigator or person appointed under subsection (1) of this section and any person whom the investigator or appointed person has consulted for cross-examination. A party may not waive the right of cross-examination prior to the hearing. [2011 c 292 § 4; 1993 c 289 § 1; 1989 c 375 § 12; 1987 c 460 § 16; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 22.]

26.09.225 Access to child's education and health care records. (1) Each parent shall have full and equal access to the education and health care records of the child absent a court order to the contrary. Neither parent may veto the access requested by the other parent.

(2) Educational records are limited to academic, attendance, and disciplinary records of public and private schools in all grades kindergarten through twelve and any form of alternative school for all periods for which child support is paid or the child is the dependent in fact of the parent requesting access to the records.

(3) Educational records of postsecondary educational institutions are limited to enrollment and academic records necessary to determine, establish, or continue support ordered pursuant to RCW 26.19.090. [1991 sp.s. c 28 § 3; 1990 1st ex.s. c 2 § 18; 1987 c 460 § 17.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.231 Residential time summary report. The parties to dissolution matters shall file with the clerk of the court the residential time summary report. The summary report shall be on the form developed by the administrative office of the courts in consultation with the department of social and health services division of child support. The parties must complete the form and file the form with the court order. [2017 c 183 § 2; 2007 c 496 § 701.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.255 Remedies when a child is taken, enticed, or concealed. (1) A relative may bring civil action against any other relative if, with intent to deny access to a child by that relative of the child who has a right to physical custody of or visitation with the child or a parent with whom the child resides pursuant to a parenting plan order, the relative takes, entices, or conceals the child from that relative. The plaintiff may be awarded, in addition to any damages awarded by the court, the reasonable expenses incurred by the plaintiff in locating the child, including, but not limited to, investigative services and reasonable attorneys' fees.

(2) "Relative" means an ancestor, descendant, or sibling including a relative of the same degree through marriage, domestic partnership, or adoption, or a spouse or domestic partner. [2008 c 6 § 1019; 1987 c 460 § 22; 1984 c 95 § 6.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.260 Modification of parenting plan or custody decree. (1) Except as otherwise provided in subsections (4), (5), (6), (8), and (10) of this section, the court shall not modify a prior custody decree or a parenting plan unless it finds, upon the basis of facts that have arisen since the prior decree or plan or that were unknown to the court at the time of the prior decree or plan, that a substantial change has occurred in the circumstances of the child or the nonmoving party and that the modification is in the best interest of the child and is necessary to serve the best interests of the child. The effect of a parent's military duties potentially impacting parenting functions shall not, by itself, be a substantial change of circumstances justifying a permanent modification of a prior decree or plan.

(2) In applying these standards, the court shall retain the residential schedule established by the decree or parenting plan unless:

(a) The parents agree to the modification;

(b) The child has been integrated into the family of the petitioner with the consent of the other parent in substantial deviation from the parenting plan;

(c) The child's present environment is detrimental to the child's physical, mental, or emotional health and the harm likely to be caused by a change of environment is outweighed by the advantage of a change to the child; or

(d) The court has found the nonmoving parent in contempt of court at least twice within three years because the parent failed to comply with the residential time provisions in the court-ordered parenting plan, or the parent has been convicted of custodial interference in the first or second degree under RCW 9A.40.060 or 9A.40.070.

(3) A conviction of custodial interference in the first or second degree under RCW 9A.40.060 or 9A.40.070 shall constitute a substantial change of circumstances for the purposes of this section.

(4) The court may reduce or restrict contact between the child and the parent with whom the child does not reside a majority of the time if it finds that the reduction or restriction would serve and protect the best interests of the child using the criteria in RCW 26.09.191.

(5) The court may order adjustments to the residential aspects of a parenting plan upon a showing of a substantial change in circumstances of either parent or of the child, and without consideration of the factors set forth in subsection (2) of this section, if the proposed modification is only a minor modification in the residential schedule that does not change the residence the child is scheduled to reside in the majority of the time and:

(a) Does not exceed twenty-four full days in a calendar year; or

(b) Is based on a change of residence of the parent with whom the child does not reside the majority of the time or an involuntary change in work schedule by a parent which makes the residential schedule in the parenting plan impractical to follow; or

(c) Does not result in a schedule that exceeds ninety overnights per year in total, if the court finds that, at the time the petition for modification is filed, the decree of dissolution or parenting plan does not provide reasonable time with the parent with whom the child does not reside a majority of the time, and further, the court finds that it is in the best interests of the child to increase residential time with the parent in excess of the residential time period in (a) of this subsection. However, any motion under this subsection (5)(c) is subject to the factors established in subsection (2) of this section if the party bringing the petition has previously been granted a modification under this same subsection within twenty-four months of the current motion. Relief granted under this section shall not be the sole basis for adjusting or modifying child support.

(6) The court may order adjustments to the residential aspects of a parenting plan pursuant to a proceeding to permit or restrain a relocation of the child. The person objecting to the relocation of the child or the relocating person's proposed revised residential schedule may file a petition to modify the parenting plan, including a change of the residence in which the child resides the majority of the time, without a showing of adequate cause other than the proposed relocation itself. A hearing to determine adequate cause for modification shall not be required so long as the request for relocation of the child is being pursued. In making a determination of a modification pursuant to relocation of the child, the court shall

first determine whether to permit or restrain the relocation of the child using the procedures and standards provided in RCW 26.09.405 through 26.09.560. Following that determination, the court shall determine what modification pursuant to relocation should be made, if any, to the parenting plan or custody order or visitation order.

(7) A parent with whom the child does not reside a majority of the time and whose residential time with the child is subject to limitations pursuant to RCW 26.09.191 (2) or (3) may not seek expansion of residential time under subsection (5)(c) of this section unless that parent demonstrates a substantial change in circumstances specifically related to the basis for the limitation.

(8)(a) If a parent with whom the child does not reside a majority of the time voluntarily fails to exercise residential time for an extended period, that is, one year or longer, the court upon proper motion may make adjustments to the parenting plan in keeping with the best interests of the minor child.

(b) For the purposes of determining whether the parent has failed to exercise residential time for one year or longer, the court may not count any time periods during which the parent did not exercise residential time due to the effect of the parent's military duties potentially impacting parenting functions.

(9) A parent with whom the child does not reside a majority of the time who is required by the existing parenting plan to complete evaluations, treatment, parenting, or other classes may not seek expansion of residential time under subsection (5)(c) of this section unless that parent has fully complied with such requirements.

(10) The court may order adjustments to any of the nonresidential aspects of a parenting plan upon a showing of a substantial change of circumstances of either parent or of a child, and the adjustment is in the best interest of the child. Adjustments ordered under this section may be made without consideration of the factors set forth in subsection (2) of this section.

(11) If the parent with whom the child resides a majority of the time receives temporary duty, deployment, activation, or mobilization orders from the military that involve moving a substantial distance away from the parent's residence or otherwise would have a material effect on the parent's ability to exercise parenting functions and primary placement responsibilities, then:

(a) Any temporary custody order for the child during the parent's absence shall end no later than ten days after the returning parent provides notice to the temporary custodian, but shall not impair the discretion of the court to conduct an expedited or emergency hearing for resolution of the child's residential placement upon return of the parent and within ten days of the filing of a motion alleging an immediate danger of irreparable harm to the child. If a motion alleging immediate danger has not been filed, the motion for an order restoring the previous residential schedule shall be granted; and

(b) The temporary duty, activation, mobilization, or deployment and the temporary disruption to the child's schedule shall not be a factor in a determination of change of circumstances if a motion is filed to transfer residential placement from the parent who is a military service member.

(12) If a parent receives military temporary duty, deployment, activation, or mobilization orders that involve moving a substantial distance away from the military parent's residence or otherwise have a material effect on the military parent's ability to exercise residential time or visitation rights, at the request of the military parent, the court may delegate the military parent's residential time or visitation rights, or a portion thereof, to a child's family member, including a stepparent, or another person other than a parent, with a close and substantial relationship to the minor child for the duration of the military parent's absence, if delegating residential time or visitation rights is in the child's best interest. The court may not permit the delegation of residential time or visitation rights to a person who would be subject to limitations on residential time under RCW 26.09.191. The parties shall attempt to resolve disputes regarding delegation of residential time or visitation rights through the dispute resolution process specified in their parenting plan, unless excused by the court for good cause shown. Such a court-ordered temporary delegation of a military parent's residential time or visitation rights does not create separate rights to residential time or visitation for a person other than a parent.

(13) If the court finds that a motion to modify a prior decree or parenting plan has been brought in bad faith, the court shall assess the attorney's fees and court costs of the nonmoving parent against the moving party. [2009 c 502 § 3; 2000 c 21 § 19; 1999 c 174 § 1; 1991 c 367 § 9. Prior: 1989 c 375 § 14; 1989 c 318 § 3; 1987 c 460 § 19; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 26.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.270 Child custody—Temporary custody order, temporary parenting plan, or modification of custody decree—Affidavits required. A party seeking a temporary custody order or a temporary parenting plan or modification of a custody decree or parenting plan shall submit together with his or her motion, an affidavit setting forth facts supporting the requested order or modification and shall give notice, together with a copy of his or her affidavit, to other parties to the proceedings, who may file opposing affidavits. The court shall deny the motion unless it finds that adequate cause for hearing the motion is established by the affidavits, in which case it shall set a date for hearing on an order to show cause why the requested order or modification should not be granted. [2011 c 336 § 691; 1989 c 375 § 15; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 27.]

26.09.280 Parenting plan or child support modification or enforcement—Venue. Every action or proceeding to change, modify, or enforce any final order, judgment, or decree entered in any dissolution or legal separation or declaration concerning the validity of a marriage or domestic partnership, whether under this chapter or prior law, regarding the parenting plan or child support for the minor children of the marriage or the domestic partnership may be brought in the county where the minor children are then residing, or in the court in which the final order, judgment, or decree was entered, or in the county where the parent or other person who has the care, custody, or control of the children is then

residing. [2008 c 6 § 1020; 1991 c 367 § 10; 1987 c 460 § 20; 1975 c 32 § 4; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 28.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.285 Designation of custody for the purpose of other state and federal statutes. Solely for the purposes of all other state and federal statutes which require a designation or determination of custody, a parenting plan shall designate the parent with whom the child is scheduled to reside a majority of the time as the custodian of the child. However, this designation shall not affect either parent's rights and responsibilities under the parenting plan. In the absence of such a designation, the parent with whom the child is scheduled to reside the majority of the time shall be deemed to be the custodian of the child for the purposes of such federal and state statutes. [1989 c 375 § 16; 1987 c 460 § 21.]

26.09.290 Final decree of dissolution nunc pro tunc. Whenever either of the parties in an action for dissolution of marriage or domestic partnership is, under the law, entitled to a final judgment, but by mistake, negligence, or inadvertence the same has not been signed, filed, or entered, if no appeal has been taken from the interlocutory order or motion for a new trial made, the court, on the motion of either party thereto or upon its own motion, may cause a final judgment to be signed, dated, filed, and entered therein granting the dissolution as of the date when the same could have been given or made by the court if applied for. The court may cause such final judgment to be signed, dated, filed, and entered nunc pro tunc as aforesaid, even though a final judgment may have been previously entered where by mistake, negligence or inadvertence the same has not been signed, filed, or entered as soon as such final judgment, the parties to such action shall be deemed to have been restored to the status of single persons as of the date affixed to such judgment, and any marriage or any domestic partnership of either of such parties subsequent to six months after the granting of the interlocutory order as shown by the minutes of the court, and after the final judgment could have been entered under the law if applied for, shall be valid for all purposes as of the date affixed to such final judgment, upon the filing thereof. [2008 c 6 § 1021; 1973 1st ex.s. c 157 § 29.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.300 Restraining orders—Notice—Refusal to comply—Arrest—Penalty—Defense—Peace officers, immunity. (1) Whenever a restraining order is issued under this chapter, and the person to be restrained knows of the order, a violation of the provisions restricting the person from acts or threats of violence or of a provision restraining the person from going onto the grounds of or entering the residence, workplace, school, or day care of another, or prohibiting the person from knowingly coming within, or knowingly remaining within, a specified distance of a location, is punishable under RCW 26.50.110.

(2) A person is deemed to have notice of a restraining order if:

(a) The person to be restrained or the person's attorney signed the order;

(b) The order recites that the person to be restrained or the person's attorney appeared in person before the court;

(c) The order was served upon the person to be restrained; or

(d) The peace officer gives the person oral or written evidence of the order by reading from it or handing to the person a certified copy of the original order, certified to be an accurate copy of the original by a notary public or by the clerk of the court.

(3) A peace officer shall verify the existence of a restraining order by:

(a) Obtaining information confirming the existence and terms of the order from a law enforcement agency; or

(b) Obtaining a certified copy of the order, certified to be an accurate copy of the original by a notary public or by the clerk of the court.

(4) A peace officer shall arrest and take into custody, pending release on bail, personal recognizance, or court order, a person without a warrant when the officer has probable cause to believe that:

(a) A restraining order has been issued under this chapter;

(b) The respondent or person to be restrained knows of the order; and

(c) The person to be arrested has violated the terms of the order restraining the person from acts or threats of violence or restraining the person from going onto the grounds of or entering the residence, workplace, school, or day care of another, or prohibiting the person from knowingly coming within, or knowingly remaining within, a specified distance of a location.

(5) It is a defense to prosecution under subsection (1) of this section that the court order was issued contrary to law or court rule.

(6) No peace officer may be held criminally or civilly liable for making an arrest under subsection (4) of this section if the officer acts in good faith and without malice. [2000 c 119 § 21; 1996 c 248 § 9; 1995 c 246 § 27; 1984 c 263 § 28; 1974 ex.s. c 99 § 1.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.310 Provision of health care to minor—Immunity of health care provider. No health care provider or facility, or their agent, shall be liable for damages in any civil action brought by a parent or guardian based only on a lack of the parent or guardian's consent for medical care of a minor child, if consent to the care has been given by a parent or guardian of the minor. The immunity provided by this section shall apply regardless of whether:

(1) The parents are married, unmarried, in a domestic partnership or not, or separated at the time of consent or treatment;

(2) The consenting parent is, or is not, a custodial parent of the minor;

(3) The giving of consent by a parent is, or is not, full performance of any agreement between the parents, or of any order or decree in any action entered pursuant to chapter 26.09 RCW;

(4) The action or suit is brought by or on behalf of the nonconsenting parent, the minor child, or any other person. [2008 c 6 § 1022; 1989 c 377 § 1.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.315 Child custody issues—Abduction by parent—Information. In any proceeding under this chapter where the custody or care of a minor child is at issue or in dispute, information on the harmful effects of parental abduction shall be included in any packet of information or materials provided to the parties, or in any parenting class or seminar that is offered to or required of the parties. The information shall include the following:

PAMPHLET REGARDING THE HARMFUL EFFECTS
OF PARENTAL ABDUCTION IN
CHILD CUSTODY CASES

Child custody disputes can sometimes lead one parent or the other to abduct one or more of their children. Each year approximately two hundred fifty thousand children in the United States are abducted by a noncustodial or custodial parent in violation of the law.

Child abduction, including abduction by a parent, commonly leads to growing fear, confusion, and general mistrust on the part of the child. Parental abduction means a loss of the parent left behind, extended family, friends, pets, community, and familiar surroundings that provide children with a sense of security and well-being. Such losses may be very traumatic for a child leading to long-term, adverse effects as the child grows.

Given the need to maintain secrecy by the abducting parent, children who are parentally abducted often:

(1) Fail to receive an adequate education;

(2) Fail to receive adequate medical care;

(3) Live in substandard housing;

(4) Are told the parent left behind is a bad person, does not want the child, or is deceased;

(5) Are instructed to lie to remain anonymous and hidden;

(6) Are fearful of leaving their residence;

(7) Are fearful of encountering law enforcement and other security personnel.

If and when returned, abducted children often live in apprehension of being abducted again. Just as abused children may identify with and seek the approval of their abuser, abducted children may do the same with their abductor. Once returned the child may feel anger and resentment at the parent who was left behind because the child now does not have visitation or communication with the abducting parent.

The returned child may suffer loyalty conflicts, emotional detachment, and feelings of betrayal by providing information about the abducting parent who broke the law. An inability to trust adults in general can hinder the child's ability to form lasting relationships even long into adulthood.

If the child is very young when abducted and is returned as an older child, the child may suffer serious negative emotional effects because the child feels as if he or she is returned to a stranger and therefore the return to the parent who was originally left behind seems like an abduction itself.

Parents need to understand that even though their relationship with each other may be strained or even toxic, their children often have a strong, loving, trusting relationship with both parents.

A parent who is considering abducting his or her child should know and understand the potential short-term and long-term traumatic impacts that parental abduction has on a child and consider only those actions that will be lawful and will contribute to the child's best interests. [2013 c 91 § 1.]

26.09.320 Child support—Procedures for abatement based on incarceration—Rebuttable presumption of inability to pay—Reinstatement of support obligation. ***(Effective February 1, 2021.)*** (1) When a child support order contains language providing for abatement based on incarceration of the person required to pay child support, there is a rebuttable presumption that an incarcerated person is unable to pay the child support obligation. Unless the presumption is rebutted, the provisions of subsection (3) of this section apply.

(2)(a) If the child support order does not contain language providing for abatement based on incarceration of the person required to pay support, the department, the person required to pay support, the payee under the order, or the person entitled to receive support may commence an action in the appropriate forum to:

(i) Modify the support order to contain abatement language; and

(ii) Abate the person's child support obligation due to current incarceration for at least six months.

(b) In a proceeding brought under this subsection, there is a rebuttable presumption that an incarcerated person is unable to pay the child support obligation. The department, the payee under the order, or the person entitled to receive support, may rebut the presumption by demonstrating that the person required to pay support has possession of, or access to, income or assets available to provide support while incarcerated.

(c) Unless the presumption is rebutted, the provisions of subsection (3) of this section apply.

(3) If the court or administrative forum determines that abatement of support is appropriate:

(a) The child support obligation under that order will be abated to ten dollars per month, without regard to the number of children covered by that order, while the person required to pay support is confined in a jail, prison, or correctional facility for at least six months or is serving a sentence greater than six months in a jail, prison, or correctional facility. Either the department, the payee under the order, or the person entitled to receive support may rebut the presumption by demonstrating the person required to pay support has possession of, or access to, income or assets available to provide support while incarcerated.

(b) If the incarcerated person's support obligation under the order is abated as provided in (a) of this subsection, the obligation will remain abated to ten dollars per month through the last day of the third month after the person is released from confinement.

(c) After abatement, the support obligation of the person required to pay support under the order is automatically reinstated at fifty percent of the support amount provided in the underlying order, but may not be less than the presumptive minimum obligation of fifty dollars per month per child, effective the first day of the fourth month after the person's release from confinement. Effective one year after release from confinement, the reinstatement at fifty percent of the support amount is automatically terminated, and the support obligation of the person required to pay support under the

order is automatically reinstated at one hundred percent of the support amount provided in the underlying order.

(i) Upon a showing of good cause by a party that the circumstances of the case allow it, the court or administrative forum may add specific provisions to the order abating the child support obligation regarding when and how the abatement may terminate.

(ii) During the period of abatement, the department, the person required to pay support, the payee under the order, or the person entitled to receive support may commence an action to modify the child support order under RCW 26.09.170 or 74.20A.059, in which case the provision regarding reinstatement of the support amount at fifty percent does not apply.

(d) If the incarcerated person's support obligation under the order has been abated as provided in (a) of this subsection and then has been reinstated under (c) of this subsection:

(i) Either the department, the person required to pay support, the payee under the order, or the person entitled to receive support may file an action to modify or adjust the order in the appropriate forum, if:

(A) The provisions of (c)(i) and (ii) of this subsection do not apply; and

(B) The person required to pay support has been released from incarceration.

(ii) An action to modify or adjust the order based on the release from incarceration of the person required to pay support may be filed even if there is no other change of circumstances.

(4) The effective date of abatement of a child support obligation based on incarceration to ten dollars per month per order is the date on which the person required to pay support is confined in a jail, prison, or correctional facility for at least six months or begins serving a sentence greater than six months in a jail, prison, or correctional facility, regardless of when the department is notified of the incarceration. However:

(a) The person required to pay support is not entitled to a refund of any support collections or payments that were received by the department prior to the date on which the department is notified of the incarceration; and

(b) The department, the payee under the order, or the person entitled to receive support is not required to refund any support collections or payments that were received by the department prior to the date on which the department is notified of the incarceration.

(5) Abatement of a child support obligation based on incarceration of the person required to pay support does not constitute modification or adjustment of the order. [2020 c 227 § 4.]

Reviser's note: For the purposes of this section, "department" appears to refer to the department of social and health services, division of child support.

Effective date—2020 c 227 §§ 3-13: "Sections 3 through 13 of this act take effect February 1, 2021." [2020 c 227 § 16.]

Findings—Intent—2020 c 227: "(1) The legislature finds that a large number of justice-involved individuals owe significant child support debts when they are released from incarceration.

(2) The legislature finds that these child support debts are often uncollectible and unduly burdensome on a recently released justice-involved individual, and that such debts severely impact the ability of the person required to pay support to have a successful reentry and reintegration into society.

(3) The legislature finds that there is case law in Washington, *In re Marriage of Blickenstaff*, 71 Wn. App. 489, 859 P.2d 646 (1993), providing that incarceration does not equate to voluntary unemployment or voluntary underemployment.

(4) The legislature finds that there is a statewide movement to assist justice-involved individuals reenter and reintegrate into society, and to reduce state-caused pressures which tend to lead to recidivism and a return to jail or prison.

(5) The legislature finds that, although there is currently a statutory process for modification of child support orders, it is in the best interests of the children of the state of Washington to create a process of abatement instead of making it the sole responsibility of the justice-involved person to take action to deal with his or her child support obligation while incarcerated.

(6) The legislature intends, therefore, to create a remedy whereby court or administrative orders for child support entered in Washington state may be abated when the person required to pay support is incarcerated for at least six months and has no income or assets available to pay support.

(7) The goal of this act is to ensure that the person required to pay support makes the maximum child support monthly payment amount appropriate to comply with an order for child support, notwithstanding other provisions related to abatement herein." [2020 c 227 § 3.]

26.09.325 Child support—Who may make request for abatement based on incarceration—Procedures when multiple orders requiring incarcerated person to pay support exist. ***(Effective February 1, 2021.)*** Either the department, the person required to pay support, the payee under the order, or the person entitled to receive support may make a request for abatement of child support to ten dollars per month under an order for child support when the person required to pay support is currently confined in a jail, prison, or correctional facility for at least six months, or is serving a sentence greater than six months in a jail, prison, or correctional facility.

(1) A request for the abatement of child support owed under one child support order does not automatically qualify as a request for abatement of support owed under every order that may exist requiring that person to pay support. However, the request applies to any support order which is being enforced by the department at the time of the request.

(2) If there are multiple orders requiring the incarcerated person to pay child support, the issue of whether abatement of support due to incarceration is appropriate must be considered for each order.

(a) The payee or person entitled to receive support under each support order is entitled to notice and an opportunity to be heard regarding the potential abatement of support under that order.

(b) If the child or children covered by a support order are not residing with the payee under the order, any other person entitled to receive support for the child or children must be provided notice and an opportunity to be heard regarding the potential abatement of support under that order. [2020 c 227 § 5.]

Reviser's note: For the purposes of this section, "department" appears to refer to the department of social and health services, division of child support.

Effective date—2020 c 227 §§ 3-13: See note following RCW 26.09.320.

Findings—Intent—2020 c 227: See note following RCW 26.09.320.

26.09.330 Child support—Department duties when order contains abatement language and obligated person is incarcerated—Procedures. ***(Effective February 1, 2021.)*** (1) When a child support order contains language

regarding abatement to ten dollars per month per order based on incarceration of the person required to pay support, and that person is currently confined in a jail, prison, or correctional facility for at least six months, or is serving a sentence greater than six months in a jail, prison, or correctional facility, the department must:

(a) Review the support order for abatement once the department receives notice from the person required to pay support or someone acting on his or her behalf that the person may qualify for abatement of support;

(b) Review its records and other available information to determine if the person required to pay support has possession of, or access to, income or assets available to provide support while incarcerated; and

(c) Decide whether abatement of the person's support obligation is appropriate.

(2) If the department decides that abatement of the person's support obligation is appropriate, the department must notify the person required to pay support, and the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support, that the incarcerated person's support obligation has been abated and that the abatement will continue until the first day of the fourth month after the person is released from confinement. The notification must include the following information:

(a) The payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support may object to the abatement of support due to incarceration;

(i) An objection must be received within twenty days of the notification of abatement;

(ii) Any objection will be forwarded to the office of administrative hearings for an adjudicative proceeding under chapter 34.05 RCW;

(iii) The department, the person required to pay support, and the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support, all have the right to participate in the administrative hearing as parties; and

(iv) The burden of proof is on the party objecting to the abatement of support to show that the person required to pay support has possession of, or access to, income or assets available to provide support while incarcerated;

(b) The effective date of the abatement of support;

(c) The estimated date of release;

(d) The estimated date that the abatement will end;

(e) That the person required to pay support, the payee under the order, the person entitled to receive support, or the department may file an action to modify the underlying support order once the person required to pay support is released from incarceration, as provided under RCW 26.09.320(3)(d); and

(f) That, if the abated obligation was established by a court order, the department will file a copy of the notification in the court file.

(3) If the department decides that abatement of the incarcerated person's support obligation is not appropriate, the department must notify the person required to pay support and the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support, that the department does not believe that abatement of the support obligation should occur. The notification must include the following information:

(a) The reasons why the department decided that abatement of the support obligation is not appropriate;

(b) The person required to pay support and the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support may object to the department's decision not to abate the support obligation;

(i) An objection must be received within twenty days of the notification of abatement;

(ii) Any objection will be forwarded to the office of administrative hearings for an adjudicative proceeding under chapter 34.05 RCW; and

(iii) The department, the incarcerated person, and the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support all have the right to participate in the administrative hearing as parties;

(c) That, if the administrative law judge enters an order providing that abatement is appropriate, the department will take appropriate steps to document the abatement and will provide notification to the parties as required in subsection (2) of this section. [2020 c 227 § 6.]

Reviser's note: For the purposes of this section, "department" appears to refer to the department of social and health services, division of child support.

Effective date—2020 c 227 §§ 3-13: See note following RCW 26.09.320.

Findings—Intent—2020 c 227: See note following RCW 26.09.320.

26.09.335 Child support—Department duties when order does not contain abatement language and obligated person is incarcerated—Procedures. ***(Effective February 1, 2021.)*** (1) When a court or administrative order does not contain language regarding abatement based on incarceration of the person required to pay support and the department receives notice that the person is currently confined in a jail, prison, or correctional facility for at least six months or is serving a sentence greater than six months in a jail, prison, or correctional facility, the department must refer the case to the appropriate forum for a determination of whether the order should be modified to:

(a) Contain abatement language as provided in RCW 26.09.320; and

(b) Abate the person's child support obligation due to current incarceration.

(2) In a proceeding brought under this section, there is a rebuttable presumption that an incarcerated person is unable to pay the child support obligation. The department, the payee under the order, or the person entitled to receive support may rebut the presumption by demonstrating that the incarcerated person has possession of, or access to, income or assets available to provide support while incarcerated.

(3) Unless the presumption is rebutted, the court or administrative forum must enter an order providing that the child support obligation under the order is abated to ten dollars per month, without regard to the number of children covered by the order, if the person required to pay support is confined in a jail, prison, or correctional facility for at least six months, or is serving a sentence greater than six months in a jail, prison, or correctional facility.

(4) The order must:

(a) Include the appropriate language required by RCW 26.09.320 in order to provide for a rebuttable presumption of abatement to ten dollars per month per order;

(b) Provide that the order must be reinstated at fifty percent of the previously ordered support amount but not less than the presumptive minimum obligation of fifty dollars per month per child, effective on the first day of the fourth month after the person's release from confinement, and also provide that the order must be automatically reinstated at one hundred percent of the previously ordered support amount effective one year after release from confinement; and

(c) Include language regarding an action to modify or adjust the underlying order as provided under RCW 26.09.320(3). [2020 c 227 § 7.]

Reviser's note: For the purposes of this section, "department" appears to refer to the department of social and health services, division of child support.

Effective date—2020 c 227 §§ 3-13: See note following RCW 26.09.320.

Findings—Intent—2020 c 227: See note following RCW 26.09.320.

26.09.340 Child support—Requests for reversal or termination of abatement based on incarceration—Procedures. ***(Effective February 1, 2021.)*** (1) At any time during the period of incarceration, the department, the payee under the order, or the person entitled to receive support may file a request to reverse or terminate the abatement of support by demonstrating that the incarcerated person has possession of, or access to, income or assets available to provide support while incarcerated.

(a) A request for reversal or termination of the abatement may be filed with the department or with the office of administrative hearings.

(b) The request must include documents or other evidence showing that the incarcerated person has possession of, or access to, income or assets available to provide support while incarcerated.

(c) If the request for a hearing does not include documents or evidence showing that the incarcerated person has possession of, or access to, income or assets, the department may file a motion asking that the request for a hearing be dismissed before a hearing is scheduled or held.

(d) The party seeking to reverse or terminate the abatement may seek to vacate the dismissal order by filing a motion which includes the required proof.

(e) Depending on the type of evidence provided at the hearing, the administrative law judge may order that the abatement of the support obligation be:

(i) Reversed, meaning that the determination that support should be abated is vacated and all amounts owed under the support order are reinstated; or

(ii) Terminated, meaning that the abatement of support ends as of the date specified in the order.

(2) At any time during the period of incarceration, the person required to pay support may file a request to reverse or terminate the abatement of support.

(a) The request for reversal or termination of the abatement may be filed with the department or with the office of administrative hearings.

(b) The person required to pay support is not required to provide any documents or other evidence to support the request.

(3) Abatement of a support obligation does not constitute modification or adjustment of the order. [2020 c 227 § 8.]

Reviser's note: For the purposes of this section, "department" appears to refer to the department of social and health services, division of child support.

Effective date—2020 c 227 §§ 3-13: See note following RCW 26.09.320.

Findings—Intent—2020 c 227: See note following RCW 26.09.320.

NOTICE REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR RELOCATION OF CHILD

26.09.405 Applicability. (1) The provisions of RCW 26.09.405 through 26.09.560 and the chapter 21, Laws of 2000 amendments to RCW 26.09.260, *26.10.190, and 26.26B.090 apply to a court order regarding residential time or visitation with a child issued:

(a) After June 8, 2000; and

(b) Before June 8, 2000, if the existing court order does not expressly govern relocation of the child.

(2) To the extent that a provision of RCW 26.09.405 through 26.09.560 and the chapter 21, Laws of 2000 amendments to RCW 26.09.260, *26.10.190, and 26.26B.090 conflicts with the express terms of a court order existing prior to June 8, 2000, then RCW 26.09.405 through 26.09.560 and the chapter 21, Laws of 2000 amendments to RCW 26.09.260, *26.10.190, and 26.26B.090 do not apply to those terms of that order governing relocation of the child.

(3) The provisions of RCW 26.09.405 through 26.09.560 do not apply to visitation orders entered in dependency proceedings as provided in RCW 13.34.385. [2019 c 46 § 5021; 2008 c 259 § 2; 2000 c 21 § 3.]

***Reviser's note:** Chapter 26.10 RCW, with the exception of RCW 26.10.115, was repealed by 2020 c 312 § 905, effective January 1, 2021.

Intent—2000 c 21: "By this act, the legislature intends to supersede the state supreme court's decisions In Re the Marriage of Littlefield, 133 Wn.2d 39 (1997), and In Re the Marriage of Pape, Docket No. 67527-9, December 23, 1999." [2000 c 21 § 1.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.410 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout RCW 26.09.405 through 26.09.560 and 26.09.260 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Court order" means a temporary or permanent parenting plan, custody order, visitation order, or other order governing the residence of a child under this title.

(2) "Relocate" means a change in principal residence either permanently or for a protracted period of time, or a change in residence in cases where parents have substantially equal residential time as defined by RCW 26.09.525. [2019 c 79 § 4; 2000 c 21 § 2.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.420 Grant of authority. When entering or modifying a court order, the court has the authority to allow or not allow a person to relocate the child. [2000 c 21 § 4.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.430 Notice requirement. Except as provided in RCW 26.09.460, a person with whom the child resides a majority of the time, or a person with substantially equal residential time, shall notify every other person entitled to residential time or visitation with the child under a court order if

the person intends to relocate. Notice shall be given as prescribed in RCW 26.09.440 and 26.09.450. [2019 c 79 § 2; 2000 c 21 § 5.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.440 Notice—Contents and delivery. (1) Except as provided in RCW 26.09.450 and 26.09.460, the notice of an intended relocation of the child must be given by:

(a) Personal service or any form of mail requiring a return receipt; and

(b) No less than:

(i) Sixty days before the date of the intended relocation of the child; or

(ii) No more than five days after the date that the person knows the information required to be furnished under subsection (2) of this section, if the person did not know and could not reasonably have known the information in sufficient time to provide the sixty-days' notice, and it is not reasonable to delay the relocation.

(2)(a) The notice of intended relocation of the child must include: (i) An address at which service of process may be accomplished during the period for objection; (ii) a brief statement of the specific reasons for the intended relocation of the child; and (iii) a notice to the nonrelocating person that an objection to the intended relocation of the child or to the relocating person's proposed revised residential schedule must be filed with the court and served on the opposing person within thirty days or the relocation of the child will be permitted and the residential schedule may be modified pursuant to RCW 26.09.500. The notice shall not be deemed to be in substantial compliance for purposes of RCW 26.09.470 unless the notice contains the following statement: "THE RELOCATION OF THE CHILD WILL BE PERMITTED AND THE PROPOSED REVISED RESIDENTIAL SCHEDULE MAY BE CONFIRMED UNLESS, WITHIN THIRTY DAYS, YOU FILE A PETITION AND MOTION WITH THE COURT TO BLOCK THE RELOCATION OR OBJECT TO THE PROPOSED REVISED RESIDENTIAL SCHEDULE AND SERVE THE PETITION AND MOTION ON THE PERSON PROPOSING RELOCATION AND ALL OTHER PERSONS ENTITLED BY COURT ORDER TO RESIDENTIAL TIME OR VISITATION WITH THE CHILD."

(b) Except as provided in RCW 26.09.450 and 26.09.460, the following information shall also be included in every notice of intended relocation of the child, if available:

(i) The specific street address of the intended new residence, if known, or as much of the intended address as is known, such as city and state;

(ii) The new mailing address, if different from the intended new residence address;

(iii) The new home telephone number;

(iv) The name and address of the child's new school and day care facility, if applicable;

(v) The date of the intended relocation of the child; and

(vi) A proposal in the form of a proposed parenting plan for a revised schedule of residential time or visitation with the child, if any.

(3) A person required to give notice of an intended relocation of the child has a continuing duty to promptly update the information required with the notice as that new information becomes known. [2000 c 21 § 6.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.450 Notice—Relocation within the same school district. (1) When the intended relocation of the child is within the school district in which the child currently resides the majority of the time, the person intending to relocate the child, in lieu of notice prescribed in RCW 26.09.440, may provide actual notice by any reasonable means to every other person entitled to residential time or visitation with the child under a court order.

(2) A person who is entitled to residential time or visitation with the child under a court order may not object to the intended relocation of the child within the school district in which the child currently resides the majority of the time, but he or she retains the right to move for modification under RCW 26.09.260. [2000 c 21 § 7.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.460 Limitation of notices. (1) If a person intending to relocate the child is entering a domestic violence shelter due to the danger imposed by another person, notice may be delayed for twenty-one days. This section shall not be construed to compel the disclosure by any domestic violence shelter of information protected by confidentiality except as provided by RCW 70.123.075 or equivalent laws of the state in which the shelter is located.

(2) If a person intending to relocate the child is a participant in the address confidentiality program pursuant to chapter 40.24 RCW or has a court order which permits the party to withhold some or all of the information required by RCW 26.09.440(2)(b), the confidential or protected information is not required to be given with the notice.

(3) If a person intending to relocate the child is relocating to avoid a clear, immediate, and unreasonable risk to the health or safety of a person or the child, notice may be delayed for twenty-one days.

(4) A person intending to relocate the child who believes that his or her health or safety or the health or safety of the child would be unreasonably put at risk by notice or disclosure of certain information in the notice may request an ex parte hearing with the court to have all or part of the notice requirements waived. If the court finds that the health or safety of a person or a child would be unreasonably put at risk by notice or the disclosure of certain information in the notice, the court may:

(a) Order that the notice requirements be less than complete or waived to the extent necessary to protect confidentiality or the health or safety of a person or child; or

(b) Provide such other relief as the court finds necessary to facilitate the legitimate needs of the parties and the best interests of the child under the circumstances.

(5) This section does not deprive a person entitled to residential time or visitation with a child under a court order the opportunity to object to the intended relocation of the child or the proposed revised residential schedule before the relocation occurs. [2000 c 21 § 8.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.470 Failure to give notice. (1) The failure to provide the required notice is grounds for sanctions, including contempt if applicable.

(2) In determining whether a person has failed to comply with the notice requirements for the purposes of this section, the court may consider whether:

(a) The person has substantially complied with the notice requirements;

(b) The court order in effect at the time of the relocation was issued prior to June 8, 2000, and the person substantially complied with the notice requirements, if any, in the existing order;

(c) A waiver of notice was granted;

(d) A person entitled to receive notice was substantially harmed; and

(e) Any other factor the court deems relevant.

(3) A person entitled to file an objection to the intended relocation of the child may file such objection whether or not the person has received proper notice. [2000 c 21 § 9.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.480 Objection to relocation or proposed revised residential schedule. (1) A party objecting to the intended relocation of the child or the relocating parent's proposed revised residential schedule shall do so by filing the objection with the court and serving the objection on the relocating party and all other persons entitled by court order to residential time or visitation with the child by means of personal service or mailing by any form of mail requiring a return receipt to the relocating party at the address designated for service on the notice of intended relocation and to other parties requiring notice at their mailing address. The objection must be filed and served, including a three-day waiting period if the objection is served by mail, within thirty days of receipt of the notice of intended relocation of the child. The objection shall be in the form of: (a) A petition for modification of the parenting plan pursuant to relocation; or (b) other court proceeding adequate to provide grounds for relief.

(2) Unless the special circumstances described in RCW 26.09.460 apply, the person intending to relocate the child shall not, without a court order, change the principal residence of the child during the period in which a party may object. The order required under this subsection may be obtained ex parte. If the objecting party notes a court hearing to prevent the relocation of the child for a date not more than fifteen days following timely service of an objection to relocation, the party intending to relocate the child shall not change the principal residence of the child pending the hearing unless the special circumstances described in RCW 26.09.460(3) apply.

(3) The administrator for the courts shall develop a standard form, separate from existing dissolution or modification forms, for use in filing an objection to relocation of the child or objection of the relocating person's proposed revised residential schedule. [2000 c 21 § 10.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.490 Required provision in residential orders. Unless waived by court order, after June 8, 2000, every court order shall include a clear restatement of the provisions in RCW 26.09.430 through 26.09.480. [2000 c 21 § 11.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.500 Failure to object. (1) Except for good cause shown, if a person entitled to object to the relocation of the child does not file an objection with the court within thirty days after receipt of the relocation notice, then the relocation of the child shall be permitted.

(2) A nonobjecting person shall be entitled to the residential time or visitation with the child specified in the proposed residential schedule included with the relocation notice.

(3) Any person entitled to residential time or visitation with a child under a court order retains his or her right to move for modification under RCW 26.09.260.

(4) If a person entitled to object to the relocation of the child does not file an objection with the court within thirty days after receipt of the relocation notice, a person entitled to residential time with the child may not be held in contempt of court for any act or omission that is in compliance with the proposed revised residential schedule set forth in the notice given.

(5) Any party entitled to residential time or visitation with the child under a court order may, after thirty days have elapsed since the receipt of the notice, obtain ex parte and file with the court an order modifying the residential schedule in conformity with the relocating party's proposed residential schedule specified in the notice upon filing a copy of the notice and proof of service of such notice. A party may obtain ex parte and file with the court an order modifying the residential schedule in conformity with the proposed residential schedule specified in the notice before the thirty days have elapsed if the party files a copy of the notice, proof of service of such notice, and proof that no objection will be filed. [2000 c 21 § 12.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.510 Temporary orders. (1) The court may grant a temporary order restraining relocation of the child, or ordering return of the child if the child's relocation has occurred, if the court finds:

(a) The required notice of an intended relocation of the child was not provided in a timely manner and the nonrelocating party was substantially prejudiced;

(b) The relocation of the child has occurred without agreement of the parties, court order, or the notice required by RCW 26.09.405 through 26.09.560 and the chapter 21, Laws of 2000 amendments to RCW 26.09.260, *26.10.190, and 26.26B.090; or

(c) After examining evidence presented at a hearing for temporary orders in which the parties had adequate opportunity to prepare and be heard, there is a likelihood that on final hearing the court will not approve the intended relocation of the child or no circumstances exist sufficient to warrant a relocation of the child prior to a final determination at trial.

(2) The court may grant a temporary order authorizing the intended relocation of the child pending final hearing if the court finds:

(a) The required notice of an intended relocation of the child was provided in a timely manner or that the circumstances otherwise warrant issuance of a temporary order in the absence of compliance with the notice requirements and issues an order for a revised schedule for residential time with the child; and

(b) After examining the evidence presented at a hearing for temporary orders in which the parties had adequate opportunity to prepare and be heard, there is a likelihood that on final hearing the court will approve the intended relocation of the child. [2019 c 46 § 5022; 2000 c 21 § 13.]

***Reviser's note:** Chapter 26.10 RCW, with the exception of RCW 26.10.115, was repealed by 2020 c 312 § 905, effective January 1, 2021.

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.520 Basis for determination. The person proposing to relocate with the child shall provide his or her reasons for the intended relocation. There is a rebuttable presumption that the intended relocation of the child will be permitted. A person entitled to object to the intended relocation of the child may rebut the presumption by demonstrating that the detrimental effect of the relocation outweighs the benefit of the change to the child and the relocating person, based upon the following factors. The factors listed in this section are not weighted. No inference is to be drawn from the order in which the following factors are listed:

(1) The relative strength, nature, quality, extent of involvement, and stability of the child's relationship with each parent, siblings, and other significant persons in the child's life;

(2) Prior agreements of the parties;

(3) Whether disrupting the contact between the child and the person seeking relocation would be more detrimental to the child than disrupting contact between the child and the person objecting to the relocation;

(4) Whether either parent or a person entitled to residential time with the child is subject to limitations under RCW 26.09.191;

(5) The reasons of each person for seeking or opposing the relocation and the good faith of each of the parties in requesting or opposing the relocation;

(6) The age, developmental stage, and needs of the child, and the likely impact the relocation or its prevention will have on the child's physical, educational, and emotional development, taking into consideration any special needs of the child;

(7) The quality of life, resources, and opportunities available to the child and to the relocating party in the current and proposed geographic locations;

(8) The availability of alternative arrangements to foster and continue the child's relationship with and access to the other parent;

(9) The alternatives to relocation and whether it is feasible and desirable for the other party to relocate also;

(10) The financial impact and logistics of the relocation or its prevention; and

(11) For a temporary order, the amount of time before a final decision can be made at trial. [2019 c 79 § 3; 2000 c 21 § 14.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.525 Substantially equal residential time. (1) If the person proposing relocation of a child has substantially equal residential time:

(a) The presumption in RCW 26.09.520 does not apply; and

(b) In determining whether to restrict a parent's right to relocate with a child or in determining a modification of the court order as defined in RCW 26.09.410 based on the proposed relocation, the court shall make a determination in the best interests of the child considering the factors set forth in RCW 26.09.520.

(2) For the purposes of this section and RCW 26.09.430, "substantially equal residential time" includes arrangements in which forty-five percent or more of the child's residential time is spent with each parent. In determining the percentage, the court must (a) consider only time spent with parents and not any time ordered for nonparents under chapter 26.11 RCW; and (b) base its determination on the amount of time designated in the court order unless: (i) There has been an ongoing pattern of substantial deviation from the residential schedule; (ii) both parents have agreed to the deviation; and (iii) the deviation is not based on circumstances that are beyond either parent's ability to control. [2019 c 79 § 1.]

26.09.530 Factor not to be considered. In determining whether to permit or restrain the relocation of the child, the court may not admit evidence on the issue of whether the person seeking to relocate the child will forego his or her own relocation if the child's relocation is not permitted or whether the person opposing relocation will also relocate if the child's relocation is permitted. The court may admit and consider such evidence after it makes the decision to allow or restrain relocation of the child and other parenting, custody, or visitation issues remain before the court, such as what, if any, modifications to the parenting plan are appropriate and who the child will reside with the majority of the time if the court has denied relocation of the child and the person is relocating without the child. [2000 c 21 § 15.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.540 Objections by nonparents. A court may not restrict the right of a parent to relocate the child when the sole objection to the relocation is from a third party, unless that third party is entitled to residential time or visitation under a court order and has served as the primary residential care provider to the child for a substantial period of time during the thirty-six consecutive months preceding the intended relocation. [2000 c 21 § 16.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.550 Sanctions. The court may sanction a party if it finds that a proposal to relocate the child or an objection to an intended relocation or proposed revised residential sched-

ule was made to harass a person, to interfere in bad faith with the relationship between the child and another person entitled to residential time or visitation with the child, or to unnecessarily delay or needlessly increase the cost of litigation. [2000 c 21 § 17.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.560 Priority for hearing. A hearing involving relocations or intended relocations of children shall be accorded priority on the court's motion calendar and trial docket. [2000 c 21 § 18.]

Intent—Captions not law—2000 c 21: See notes following RCW 26.09.405.

26.09.900 Construction—Pending divorce actions. Notwithstanding the repeals of prior laws enumerated in section 30, chapter 157, Laws of 1973 1st ex. sess., actions for divorce which were properly and validly pending in the superior courts of this state as of the effective date of such repealer (July 15, 1973) shall be governed and may be pursued to conclusion under the provisions of law applicable thereto at the time of commencement of such action and all decrees and orders heretofore or hereafter in all other respects regularly entered in such proceedings are declared valid: PROVIDED, That upon proper cause being shown at any time before final decree, the court may convert such action to an action for dissolution of marriage as provided for in RCW 26.09.901. [1974 ex.s. c 15 § 1.]

26.09.901 Conversion of pending action to dissolution proceeding. Any divorce action which was filed prior to July 15, 1973 and for which a final decree has not been entered on February 11, 1974, may, upon order of the superior court having jurisdiction over such proceeding for good cause shown, be converted to a dissolution proceeding and thereafter be continued under the provisions of this chapter. [1974 ex.s. c 15 § 2.]

26.09.902 RCW 26.09.900 and 26.09.901 deemed in effect on July 16, 1973. The provisions of RCW 26.09.900 and 26.09.901 are remedial and procedural and shall be construed to have been in effect as of July 16, 1973. [1974 ex.s. c 15 § 3.]

26.09.907 Construction—Pending actions as of January 1, 1988. Notwithstanding the repeals of prior laws, actions which were properly and validly pending in the superior courts of this state as of January 1, 1988, shall not be governed by chapter 460, Laws of 1987 but shall be governed by the provisions of law in effect on December 31, 1987. [1989 c 375 § 17; 1987 c 460 § 23.]

26.09.909 Decrees entered into prior to January 1, 1988. (1) Decrees under this chapter involving child custody, visitation, or child support entered in actions commenced prior to January 1, 1988, shall be deemed to be parenting plans for purposes of this chapter.

(2) The enactment of the 1987 revisions to this chapter does not constitute substantially changed circumstances for the purposes of modifying decrees entered under this chapter in actions commenced prior to January 1, 1988, involving child custody, visitation, or child support. Any action to modify any decree involving child custody, visitation, child support, or a parenting plan shall be governed by the provisions of this chapter.

(3) Actions brought for clarification or interpretation of decrees entered under this chapter in actions commenced prior to January 1, 1988, shall be determined under the law in effect immediately prior to January 1, 1988. [1990 1st ex.s. c 2 § 16; 1989 c 375 § 18; 1987 c 460 § 24.]

Additional notes found at www.leg.wa.gov

26.09.910 Short title—1987 c 460. This act shall be known as the parenting act of 1987. [1987 c 460 § 57.]

26.09.911 Section captions—1987 c 460. Section captions as used in this act do not constitute any part of the law. [1987 c 460 § 58.]

26.09.912 Effective date—1987 c 460. This act shall take effect on January 1, 1988. [1987 c 460 § 59.]

26.09.915 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 § 65.]

26.09.916 Rule-making authority—2020 c 227. The department is granted rule-making authority to adopt rules necessary for the implementation of chapter 227, Laws of 2020. [2020 c 227 § 14.]

Findings—Intent—2020 c 227: See note following RCW 26.09.320.