



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

P.O. Box 45010, Olympia, Washington 98504-5010

February 7, 2008

TO: Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor

FROM: Robin Arnold-Williams  
Secretary

SUBJECT: **Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) Report on Alternative Service Models for Children with Significant Behavioral Challenges**

This report is in response to your Directive of May 2007 requesting the Department of Social and Health Services to:

1. Reduce reliance on institutional placements for children and ensure that children are supported to live with their families or as close to them as possible.
2. Work with school superintendents and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to ensure that Individual Education Plans for any children placed in institutional settings conform to federal IDEA requirements for an education in the least restrictive setting.
3. Identify alternative service models, including those used in other states, that might be effective in supporting families to care for children with significant needs at home or in placing children in less restrictive out-of-home community placements rather than in institutional settings.

The enclosed report describes the service models in other states. A survey was sent to state directors of developmental disability programs and staff followed up with phone calls and in a site visit to Oregon. The report contrasts and compares services for Oregon, Colorado, Wisconsin, and Massachusetts, including eligibility, waivers, number of children served and cost limits.

The approach that seems the most promising to reduce the Department's reliance on institutional placements is an intensive in-home services program that is tailored to each family's unique needs. Families with children with significant behavioral challenges often have to cope with frequent sleepless nights, destruction of property in the home, aggressive behaviors towards others, and problem behaviors that profoundly affect everyone in the family. According to what we heard from other states, providing families with intensive services and supports assists them to balance and stabilize their family life, helps families learn new skills and ways to adapt to significantly challenging behaviors, and helps families avoid institutionalizing their children or requesting an out-of-home placement.

Christine O. Gregoire, Governor

February 7, 2008

Page 2

Working intensively with families who have not yet asked for out-of-home placement is an important investment in the future. Your supplemental budget request included funding to start implementing this type of program.

Feel free to contact me at (360) 902-7800 if you have any questions.

Enclosure

cc: Kathy Leitch, Assistant Secretary, Aging and Disability Services Administration  
Linda Rolfe, Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities  
Kari Burrell, OFM Executive Policy