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# Family Reconciliation Services

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*Keeping Families  
Together*

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Washington State Department of  
**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**



# Family Reconciliation Services

Family Reconciliation Services (FRS) is a voluntary program that serves youth and families who are in conflict, which may lead to a youth running away, not following house rules, substance abuse or other concerns within the family. The goal of FRS is to preserve, strengthen, reconcile families and prevent out-of-home placement of youth.

The program:

- Serves youth, ages 12 through 17.
- Seeks to develop skills and supports within families to resolve problems related to at-risk youth, children in need of services or family conflict.
- Preserves and strengthens the family unit.



Parents or youth may request FRS by calling central intake at 1-866-363-4276. A caregiver, tribal caseworker, DCYF caseworker, law enforcement, HOPE Center, Crisis Residential Center (CRC) or overnight youth shelter may also call on behalf of the youth or parent to request services.

A caseworker will contact the family within 24 hours of case assignment, excluding weekends and holidays, to schedule an interview and assessment. The caseworker, youth and family will discuss the current conflict and the resources that may be available to resolve their differences.

Services are designed to bring the youth and parents together. Services may include but are not limited to:

- Family Assessment
- Short-term family intervention services
- Referrals for substance abuse treatment and/or counseling
- Referrals for mental health services to include Wraparound with Intensive Services (WISe) if appropriate
- Assistance with filing an At-Risk Youth (ARY) or Child in Need of Services (CHINS) petition, when requested

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## Options for Youths and Parents

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### Family Assessment

The family assessment will gather information to gain a greater understanding of a family's strengths, needs and resources and their impact on the current family conflict. Assessments are completed in partnership with the parents and youth to identify community resources and/or DCYF services to support the reduction of family conflict and maintain the family unit. Referrals to resources may include short-term family intervention services, substance abuse assessment, mental health services and WISe.





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## At-Risk Youth (ARY)

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Washington state law defines an At-Risk Youth (ARY) as a juvenile:

- (a) Who is absent from home for at least 72 consecutive hours without the consent of the youth's parent;
- (b) Who is beyond the control of the youth's parent such that the youth's behavior endangers the health, safety or welfare of the youth or any other person; or
- (c) Who has a substance abuse problem for which there are no pending criminal charges related to substance abuse.

A family assessment must be completed prior to filing the ARY petition. This petition allows the parent or legal guardian to maintain custody of their youth while seeking the juvenile court's assistance by setting reasonable conditions that the youth must follow. This may include requiring the youth to engage in an educational program, following family rules and attending counseling services. The court may order the parent to participate in counseling or other services when granting the ARY. The parent shall be financially responsible for costs related to the court-ordered plan.

## Child in Need of Services (CHINS)

When counseling, living with relatives or similar efforts fail to resolve conflict between a youth and their parents and the youth needs to be placed outside of the family home, the youth or parent may file a CHINS petition.

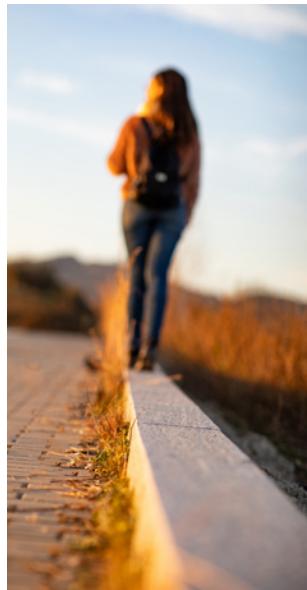
Washington state law defines a Child in Need of Services as a juvenile:

- (a) Who is beyond the control of the youth's parent such that the youth's behavior endangers the health, safety or welfare of the youth or other person;
- (b) Who has been reported to law enforcement as absent without consent for at least 24 consecutive hours on two or more separate occasions from the home of either parent, a CRC, an out-of-home placement or a court-ordered placement; and
  - (i) Has exhibited a serious substance abuse problem; or
  - (ii) Has exhibited behaviors that create a serious risk of harm to the health, safety or welfare of the child or any other person; or
- (c) (i) Who Is In need of:
  - A. Necessary services including food, shelter, health care, clothing or education; or
  - B. Services designed to maintain or reunite the family;
  - (ii) Who lacks access to or has declined to utilize these services; and
  - (iii) Whose parents have evidenced continuing but unsuccessful efforts to maintain the family structure or are unable or unwilling to continue efforts to maintain the family structure; or
- (d) Who is a "sexually exploited child."



Parents may file a CHINS petition when conditions regarding the youth outlined in the above definition are present. The youth or the DCYF caseworker may file a CHINS petition if any of the above conditions exist, particularly if the parent will not allow the youth to live in the parent's home and will not or is unable to arrange another place for the youth to live.

The person filing the petition must show that they have tried to work out the conflict, all reasonable alternatives have been exhausted and it is best for the youth to live outside the home while the family continues to work towards a resolution. A family assessment with a DCYF caseworker must be completed prior to filing the CHINS petition.



If the court approves the out-of-home placement, the youth will normally live with a relative or a family friend. DCYF supervises the placement and facilitates the delivery of services only if the child is placed in a licensed foster home or with a relative that is not required to be licensed. If the court places the youth in a non-relative, unlicensed home, DCYF closes the case and informs the court of that action. The parents or DCYF may request dismissal of the CHINS court proceeding if services cannot be provided because:

- (a) The youth has been absent from court-approved placement for 30 consecutive days or more;
- (b) The parents or the youth, or all of them, refuse to cooperate in available, appropriate intervention aimed at reunifying the family; or
- (c) DCYF has exhausted all available and appropriate resources that would result in reunification.

The court will hold a review hearing within 90 days to check on the family's progress in reunifying. If the youth cannot return home when the review hearing occurs, the youth may remain in placement for up to six months. The court may order the parents to participate in services to help reunite the family as soon as possible.



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## Community Resources

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### Treatment Services

For a life-threatening emergency, call 9-1-1. To seek behavioral health services, please contact the Washington State Mental Health Referral Service at 1-833-303-5437 and connect with a referral specialist. Medicaid-eligible children and youth up to 21 years of age who have complex behavioral needs may be eligible for additional supports through the Wraparound with Intensive Services (WISe) program. WISe can be provided in the home and community.

If someone is contemplating suicide, please contact the Suicide Prevention Life Line at 1-800-273-8255.

For information about mental health or chemical dependency programs, the youth or the parents can call the 24-Hour Washington Recovery Help Line at 1-866-789-1511. The Help Line provides anonymous and confidential crisis intervention and service referrals for Washington state residents.

For concerns about child abuse and neglect or a Commercially Sexually Exploited Child (CSEC), contact 1-866-ENDHARM (1-866-363-4276).

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*If you would like copies of this document in an alternative format or language, please contact DCYF Constituent Relations (1-800-723-4831 | 360-902-8060, [ConstRelations@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:ConstRelations@dcyf.wa.gov)).*