



AB 2668 (Quirk-Silva) – Non-Minor Dependents: Parenting Support Plan
As Introduced February 21, 2014

Purpose

Under current law, a “Shared Responsibility Plan” outlines the duties, rights, and responsibilities of a teen parent and his/her caregiver with regard to the teen’s parent’s child, and identifies supportive services to be offered to the teen parent. Upon completion of the plan, the caregiver’s foster care payment is increased by \$200 dollars each month.

AB 2668 (Quirk-Silva) would similarly encourage a custodial non-minor dependent parent living in a SILP to enter into a “Parenting Support Plan” with an identified responsible adult, such as a mentor or relative. The plan would identify ways in which the responsible adult will assist the youth and his/her baby. Upon completion of the plan, the custodial non-minor dependent parent’s foster care payment would be increased by \$200 dollars each month.

Formalizing a relationship with a responsible adult (ex: aunt, uncle, neighbor, former foster parent, etc.) will provide the young parent with guidance, support, and a shoulder to lean on. The simple, but significant, relationship will provide established support to these young parents – occasional babysitting or picking the child up from day care can be the difference between child protective services involvement or not. It will also help the youth to develop a relationship, which may outlast the non-minor dependent’s time in the foster care system, thereby providing a protective measure against future child welfare system involvement.

Background

Young parents in the foster care system face both the challenges of being in foster care as well as the challenges of being a young, usually single, parent. Studies of both groups have found that they will experience higher than average rates of poverty and unemployment and low educational attainment.

A 2013 Conrad N. Hilton Foundation study revealed that the rates of abuse and neglect among children born to teens with a history of maltreatment are 2-3 times higher than the rates of children whose teen mothers had no child welfare involvement. This underscores the need to provide young parents in foster care with adequate support and services to overcome the challenges they face, and to preserve and strengthen the family unit.

The issue of parenting youth in foster care has become more pressing with the implementation of extended foster care in California. The foundation study estimated that as many as one in three female youth may be parenting by the time they exit the foster care system on their 21st birthday.

Additionally, there are new placement options available to non-minor dependents remaining in extended foster care, known as a Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP), which enables them to live without a caregiver in an apartment, rented room, dorm room, etc. While SILP's provide youth with the independence and autonomy to properly prepare for life after foster care, an unintended shortcoming is the lack of support for custodial parenting non-minor dependents.

Unlike most young parents, foster youth who become parents at an early age typically cannot turn to their own parents for emotional support, daily or even occasional assistance most young parents receive from their families. Consequently, these young parents are often completely on their own as they struggle to balance work, school, and parenting responsibilities. Not surprisingly this stress, lack of resources, and simple lack of experience makes these young parents vulnerable and high risk for poor outcomes.

Support

Children's Law Center of California
John Burton Foundation

Opposition

None on file

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