

1 **FOSTER CHILDREN VISITATION AMENDMENTS**

2 2017 GENERAL SESSION

3 STATE OF UTAH

4 **Chief Sponsor: Ken Ivory**

5 Senate Sponsor: Wayne A. Harper

7 **LONG TITLE**

8 **General Description:**

9 This bill addresses sibling visitation for children in the custody of the Division of Child
10 and Family Services.

11 **Highlighted Provisions:**

12 This bill:

- 13 ▶ defines the term "sibling";
- 14 ▶ requires the division to make reasonable efforts for sibling visitation when siblings
15 are separated due to foster care or adoptive placement;
- 16 ▶ allows the court to order sibling visitation when the visitation is in the best interest
17 of the child; and
- 18 ▶ makes technical changes.

19 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

20 None

21 **Other Special Clauses:**

22 None

23 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

24 AMENDS:

25 **62A-4a-101**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2009, Chapter 75

26 **62A-4a-103**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2014, Chapter 265

27 **62A-4a-205**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2015, Chapter 322

28 **78A-6-301**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2008, Chapter 3

29 **78A-6-312**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2016, Chapter 231

30

31 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*32 Section 1. Section **62A-4a-101** is amended to read:33 **62A-4a-101. Definitions.**

34 As used in this chapter:

35 (1) "Abuse" [~~is as~~] means the same as that term is defined in Section 78A-6-105.

36 (2) "Adoption services" means:

37 (a) placing children for adoption;

38 (b) subsidizing adoptions under Section **62A-4a-105**;

39 (c) supervising adoption placements until the adoption is finalized by the court;

40 (d) conducting adoption studies;

41 (e) preparing adoption reports upon request of the court; and

42 (f) providing postadoptive placement services, upon request of a family, for the

43 purpose of stabilizing a possible disruptive placement.

44 (3) "Child" means, except as provided in Part 7, Interstate Compact on Placement of
45 Children, a person under 18 years of age.46 [~~(5)~~] (4) "Chronic abuse" means repeated or patterned abuse.47 [~~(6)~~] (5) "Chronic neglect" means repeated or patterned neglect.48 [~~(4)~~] (6) "Consumer" means a person who receives services offered by the division in
49 accordance with this chapter.50 (7) "Custody," with regard to the division, means the custody of a minor in the division
51 as of the date of disposition.52 (8) "Day-care services" means care of a child for a portion of the day which is less than
53 24 hours:

54 (a) in the child's own home by a responsible person; or

55 (b) outside of the child's home in a:

56 (i) day-care center;

57 (ii) family group home; or

- 58 (iii) family child care home.
- 59 (9) "Dependent child" or "dependency" means a child, or the condition of a child, who
- 60 is homeless or without proper care through no fault of the child's parent, guardian, or custodian.
- 61 (10) "Director" means the director of the Division of Child and Family Services.
- 62 (11) "Division" means the Division of Child and Family Services.
- 63 (12) "Domestic violence services" means:
- 64 (a) temporary shelter, treatment, and related services to:
- 65 (i) a person who is a victim of abuse, as defined in Section 78B-7-102; and
- 66 (ii) the dependent children of a person described in Subsection (12)(a)(i); and
- 67 (b) treatment services for a person who is alleged to have committed, has been
- 68 convicted of, or has pled guilty to, an act of domestic violence as defined in Section 77-36-1.
- 69 (13) "Harm" [~~is as~~] means the same as that term is defined in Section 78A-6-105.
- 70 (14) "Homemaking service" means the care of individuals in their domiciles, and help
- 71 given to individual caretaker relatives to achieve improved household and family management
- 72 through the services of a trained homemaker.
- 73 (15) "Incest" [~~is as~~] means the same as that term is defined in Section 78A-6-105.
- 74 (16) "Minor" means, except as provided in Part 7, Interstate Compact on Placement of
- 75 Children:
- 76 (a) a child; or
- 77 (b) a person:
- 78 (i) who is at least 18 years of age and younger than 21 years of age; and
- 79 (ii) for whom the division has been specifically ordered by the juvenile court to provide
- 80 services.
- 81 (17) "Molestation" [~~is as~~] means the same as that term is defined in Section 78A-6-105.
- 82 (18) "Natural parent" means a minor's biological or adoptive parent, and includes a
- 83 minor's noncustodial parent.
- 84 (19) "Neglect" [~~is as~~] means the same as that term is defined in Section 78A-6-105.
- 85 (20) "Protective custody," with regard to the division, means the shelter of a child by

86 the division from the time the child is removed from the child's home until the earlier of:

87 (a) the shelter hearing; or

88 (b) the child's return home.

89 (21) "Protective services" means expedited services that are provided:

90 (a) in response to evidence of neglect, abuse, or dependency of a child;

91 (b) to a cohabitant who is neglecting or abusing a child, in order to:

92 (i) help the cohabitant develop recognition of the cohabitant's duty of care and of the
93 causes of neglect or abuse; and

94 (ii) strengthen the cohabitant's ability to provide safe and acceptable care; and

95 (c) in cases where the child's welfare is endangered:

96 (i) to bring the situation to the attention of the appropriate juvenile court and law
97 enforcement agency;

98 (ii) to cause a protective order to be issued for the protection of the child, when
99 appropriate; and

100 (iii) to protect the child from the circumstances that endanger the child's welfare
101 including, when appropriate:

102 (A) removal from the child's home;

103 (B) placement in substitute care; and

104 (C) petitioning the court for termination of parental rights.

105 (22) "Severe abuse" [~~is as~~] means the same as that term is defined in Section
106 78A-6-105.

107 (23) "Severe neglect" [~~is as~~] means the same as that term is defined in Section
108 78A-6-105.

109 (24) "Sexual abuse" [~~is as~~] means the same as that term is defined in Section
110 78A-6-105.

111 (25) "Sexual exploitation" [~~is as~~] means the same as that term is defined in Section
112 78A-6-105.

113 (26) "Shelter care" means the temporary care of a minor in a nonsecure facility.

114 (27) "Sibling" means a child who shares or has shared at least one parent in common
115 either by blood or adoption.

116 (28) "Sibling visitation" means services provided by the division to facilitate the
117 interaction between a child in division custody with a sibling of that child.

118 [~~27~~] (29) "State" means:

119 (a) a state of the United States;

120 (b) the District of Columbia;

121 (c) the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico;

122 (d) the Virgin Islands;

123 (e) Guam;

124 (f) the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; or

125 (g) a territory or possession administered by the United States.

126 [~~28~~] (30) "State plan" means the written description of the programs for children,
127 youth, and family services administered by the division in accordance with federal law.

128 [~~29~~] (31) "Status offense" means a violation of the law that would not be a violation
129 but for the age of the offender.

130 [~~30~~] (32) "Substance abuse" [~~is as~~] means the same as that term is defined in Section
131 78A-6-105.

132 [~~31~~] (33) "Substantiated" or "substantiation" means a judicial finding based on a
133 preponderance of the evidence that abuse or neglect occurred. Each allegation made or
134 identified in a given case shall be considered separately in determining whether there should be
135 a finding of substantiated.

136 [~~32~~] (34) "Substitute care" means:

137 (a) the placement of a minor in a family home, group care facility, or other placement
138 outside the minor's own home, either at the request of a parent or other responsible relative, or
139 upon court order, when it is determined that continuation of care in the minor's own home
140 would be contrary to the minor's welfare;

141 (b) services provided for a minor awaiting placement; and

142 (c) the licensing and supervision of a substitute care facility.

143 [~~(33)~~] (35) "Supported" means a finding by the division based on the evidence
144 available at the completion of an investigation that there is a reasonable basis to conclude that
145 abuse, neglect, or dependency occurred. Each allegation made or identified during the course
146 of the investigation shall be considered separately in determining whether there should be a
147 finding of supported.

148 [~~(34)~~] (36) "Temporary custody," with regard to the division, means the custody of a
149 child in the division from the date of the shelter hearing until disposition.

150 [~~(35)~~] (37) "Transportation services" means travel assistance given to an individual
151 with escort service, if necessary, to and from community facilities and resources as part of a
152 service plan.

153 [~~(36)~~] (38) "Unsubstantiated" means a judicial finding that there is insufficient
154 evidence to conclude that abuse or neglect occurred.

155 [~~(37)~~] (39) "Unsupported" means a finding at the completion of an investigation that
156 there is insufficient evidence to conclude that abuse, neglect, or dependency occurred.
157 However, a finding of unsupported means also that the division worker did not conclude that
158 the allegation was without merit.

159 [~~(38)~~] (40) "Without merit" means a finding at the completion of an investigation by
160 the division, or a judicial finding, that the alleged abuse, neglect, or dependency did not occur,
161 or that the alleged perpetrator was not responsible for the abuse, neglect, or dependency.

162 Section 2. Section **62A-4a-103** is amended to read:

163 **62A-4a-103. Division -- Creation -- Purpose.**

164 (1) (a) There is created the Division of Child and Family Services within the
165 department, under the administration and general supervision of the executive director.

166 (b) The division is the child, youth, and family services authority of the state and has
167 all functions, powers, duties, rights, and responsibilities created in accordance with this
168 chapter, except those assumed by the department.

169 (2) (a) The primary purpose of the division is to provide child welfare services.

170 (b) The division shall, when possible and appropriate, provide in-home services for the
171 preservation of families in an effort to protect the child from the trauma of separation from
172 [his] the child's family, protect the integrity of the family, and the constitutional rights of
173 parents. In keeping with its ultimate goal and purpose of protecting children, however, when a
174 child's welfare is endangered or reasonable efforts to maintain or reunify a child with [his] the
175 child's family have failed, the division shall act in a timely fashion in accordance with the
176 requirements of this chapter and Title 78A, Chapter 6, Part 3, Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency
177 Proceedings, to provide the child with a stable, permanent environment.

178 (3) The division shall also provide domestic violence services in accordance with
179 federal law.

180 Section 3. Section **62A-4a-205** is amended to read:

181 **62A-4a-205. Child and family plan -- Parent-time and relative visitation.**

182 (1) No more than 45 days after a child enters the temporary custody of the division, the
183 child's child and family plan shall be finalized.

184 (2) (a) The division may use an interdisciplinary team approach in developing each
185 child and family plan.

186 (b) The interdisciplinary team described in Subsection (2)(a) may include
187 representatives from the following fields:

- 188 (i) mental health;
- 189 (ii) education; and
- 190 (iii) if appropriate, law enforcement.

191 (3) (a) The division shall involve all of the following in the development of a child's
192 child and family plan:

- 193 (i) both of the child's natural parents, unless the whereabouts of a parent are unknown;
- 194 (ii) the child;
- 195 (iii) the child's foster parents;
- 196 (iv) if appropriate, the child's stepparent; and
- 197 (v) the child's guardian ad litem, if one has been appointed by the court.

198 (b) In relation to all information considered by the division in developing a child and
199 family plan, additional weight and attention shall be given to the input of the child's natural and
200 foster parents upon their involvement pursuant to Subsections (3)(a)(i) and (iii).

201 (c) (i) The division shall make a substantial effort to develop a child and family plan
202 with which the child's parents agree.

203 (ii) If a parent does not agree with a child and family plan:

204 (A) the division shall strive to resolve the disagreement between the division and the
205 parent; and

206 (B) if the disagreement is not resolved, the division shall inform the court of the
207 disagreement.

208 (4) A copy of the child and family plan shall, immediately upon completion, or as soon
209 as reasonably possible thereafter, be provided to the:

210 (a) guardian ad litem;

211 (b) child's natural parents; and

212 (c) child's foster parents.

213 (5) Each child and family plan shall:

214 (a) specifically provide for the safety of the child, in accordance with federal law; and

215 (b) clearly define what actions or precautions will, or may be, necessary to provide for
216 the health, safety, protection, and welfare of the child.

217 (6) The child and family plan shall set forth, with specificity, at least the following:

218 (a) the reason the child entered into the custody of the division;

219 (b) documentation of the:

220 (i) reasonable efforts made to prevent placement of the child in the custody of the
221 division; or

222 (ii) emergency situation that existed and that prevented the reasonable efforts described
223 in Subsection (6)(b)(i), from being made;

224 (c) the primary permanency plan for the child and the reason for selection of that plan;

225 (d) the concurrent permanency plan for the child and the reason for the selection of that

226 plan;

227 (e) if the plan is for the child to return to the child's family:

228 (i) specifically what the parents must do in order to enable the child to be returned

229 home;

230 (ii) specifically how the requirements described in Subsection (6)(e)(i) may be

231 accomplished; and

232 (iii) how the requirements described in Subsection (6)(e)(i) will be measured;

233 (f) the specific services needed to reduce the problems that necessitated placing the

234 child in the division's custody;

235 (g) the name of the person who will provide for and be responsible for case

236 management;

237 (h) subject to Subsection (10), a parent-time schedule between the natural parent and

238 the child;

239 (i) subject to Subsection (7), the health and mental health care to be provided to

240 address any known or diagnosed mental health needs of the child;

241 (j) if residential treatment rather than a foster home is the proposed placement, a

242 requirement for a specialized assessment of the child's health needs including an assessment of

243 mental illness and behavior and conduct disorders; [~~and~~]

244 (k) social summaries that include case history information pertinent to case planning[.];

245 and

246 (l) subject to Subsection (12), a sibling visitation schedule.

247 (7) (a) Subject to Subsection (7)(b), in addition to the information required under

248 Subsection (6)(i), the plan shall include a specialized assessment of the medical and mental

249 health needs of a child, if the child:

250 (i) is placed in residential treatment; and

251 (ii) has medical or mental health issues that need to be addressed.

252 (b) Notwithstanding Subsection (7)(a), a parent shall retain the right to seek a separate

253 medical or mental health diagnosis of the parent's child from a licensed practitioner of the

254 parent's choice.

255 (8) (a) Each child and family plan shall be specific to each child and the child's family,
256 rather than general.

257 (b) The division shall train its workers to develop child and family plans that comply
258 with:

259 (i) federal mandates; and

260 (ii) the specific needs of the particular child and the child's family.

261 (c) All child and family plans and expectations shall be individualized and contain
262 specific time frames.

263 (d) Subject to Subsection (8)(h), child and family plans shall address problems that:

264 (i) keep a child in placement; and

265 (ii) keep a child from achieving permanence in the child's life.

266 (e) Each child and family plan shall be designed to minimize disruption to the normal
267 activities of the child's family, including employment and school.

268 (f) In particular, the time, place, and amount of services, hearings, and other
269 requirements ordered by the court in the child and family plan shall be designed, as much as
270 practicable, to help the child's parents maintain or obtain employment.

271 (g) The child's natural parents, foster parents, and where appropriate, stepparents, shall
272 be kept informed of and supported to participate in important meetings and procedures related
273 to the child's placement.

274 (h) For purposes of Subsection (8)(d), a child and family plan may only include
275 requirements that:

276 (i) address findings made by the court; or

277 (ii) (A) are requested or consented to by a parent or guardian of the child; and

278 (B) are agreed to by the division and the guardian ad litem.

279 (9) (a) Except as provided in Subsection (9)(b), with regard to a child who is three
280 years of age or younger, if the plan is not to return the child home, the primary permanency
281 plan for that child shall be adoption.

282 (b) Notwithstanding Subsection (9)(a), if the division documents to the court that there
283 is a compelling reason that adoption, reunification, guardianship, and a placement described in
284 Subsection 78A-6-306(6)(e) are not in the child's best interest, the court may order another
285 planned permanent living arrangement in accordance with federal law.

286 (10) (a) Except as provided in Subsection (10)(b), parent-time may only be denied by a
287 court order issued pursuant to Subsections 78A-6-312(3), (6), and (7).

288 (b) Notwithstanding Subsection (10)(a), the person designated by the division or a
289 court to supervise a parent-time session may deny parent-time for that session if the supervising
290 person determines that, based on the parent's condition, it is necessary to deny parent-time in
291 order to:

- 292 (i) protect the physical safety of the child;
- 293 (ii) protect the life of the child; or
- 294 (iii) consistent with Subsection (10)(c), prevent the child from being traumatized by
295 contact with the parent.

296 (c) In determining whether the condition of the parent described in Subsection (10)(b)
297 will traumatize a child, the person supervising the parent-time session shall consider the impact
298 that the parent's condition will have on the child in light of:

- 299 (i) the child's fear of the parent; and
- 300 (ii) the nature of the alleged abuse or neglect.

301 (11) The division shall consider visitation with their grandparents for children in state
302 custody if the division determines visitation to be in the best interest of the child and:

- 303 (a) there are no safety concerns regarding the behavior or criminal background of the
304 grandparents;
- 305 (b) allowing visitation would not compete with or undermine the reunification plan;
- 306 (c) there is a substantial relationship between the grandparents and children; and
- 307 (d) the visitation will not unduly burden the foster parents.

308 (12) The child and family plan shall incorporate reasonable efforts to:

- 309 (a) provide sibling visitation when:

- 310 (i) siblings are separated due to foster care or adoptive placement;
- 311 (ii) visitation is in the best interest of the child for whom the plan is developed; and
- 312 (iii) the division has consent for sibling visitation from the legal guardian of the
- 313 sibling; and
- 314 (b) obtain consent for sibling visitation from the sibling's legal guardian when the
- 315 criteria of Subsections (12)(a)(i) and (ii) are met.

316 Section 4. Section **78A-6-301** is amended to read:

317 **78A-6-301. Definitions.**

318 As used in this part:

319 (1) "Custody" means the custody of a minor in the Division of Child and Family
320 Services as of the date of disposition.

321 (2) "Protective custody" means the shelter of a child by the Division of Child and
322 Family Services from the time the child is removed from home until the earlier of:

323 (a) the shelter hearing; or

324 (b) the child's return home.

325 (3) "Sibling" means the same as that term is defined in Section [62A-4a-101](#).

326 (4) "Sibling visitation" means the same as that term is defined in Section [62A-4a-101](#).

327 [~~3~~] (5) "Temporary custody" means the custody of a child in the Division of Child
328 and Family Services from the date of the shelter hearing until disposition.

329 Section 5. Section **78A-6-312** is amended to read:

330 **78A-6-312. Dispositional hearing -- Reunification services -- Exceptions.**

331 (1) The court may:

332 (a) make any of the dispositions described in Section [78A-6-117](#);

333 (b) place the minor in the custody or guardianship of any:

334 (i) individual; or

335 (ii) public or private entity or agency; or

336 (c) order:

337 (i) protective supervision;

338 (ii) family preservation;
339 (iii) subject to Subsections (12)(b), 78A-6-105(27)(d), and 78A-6-117(2)(n) and
340 Section 78A-6-301.5, medical or mental health treatment; [or]
341 (iv) sibling visitation; or
342 [~~(iv)~~] (v) other services.

343 (2) Whenever the court orders continued removal at the dispositional hearing, and that
344 the minor remain in the custody of the division, the court shall first:

345 (a) establish a primary permanency plan for the minor; and
346 (b) determine whether, in view of the primary permanency plan, reunification services
347 are appropriate for the minor and the minor's family, pursuant to Subsections [~~(20)~~] (21)
348 through [~~(22)~~] (23).

349 (3) Subject to Subsections (6) and (7), if the court determines that reunification
350 services are appropriate for the minor and the minor's family, the court shall provide for
351 reasonable parent-time with the parent or parents from whose custody the minor was removed,
352 unless parent-time is not in the best interest of the minor.

353 (4) In cases where obvious sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, abandonment, severe
354 abuse, or severe neglect are involved, neither the division nor the court has any duty to make
355 "reasonable efforts" or to, in any other way, attempt to provide reunification services, or to
356 attempt to rehabilitate the offending parent or parents.

357 (5) In all cases, the minor's health, safety, and welfare shall be the court's paramount
358 concern in determining whether reasonable efforts to reunify should be made.

359 (6) For purposes of Subsection (3), parent-time is in the best interests of a minor unless
360 the court makes a finding that it is necessary to deny parent-time in order to:

361 (a) protect the physical safety of the minor;
362 (b) protect the life of the minor; or
363 (c) prevent the minor from being traumatized by contact with the parent due to the
364 minor's fear of the parent in light of the nature of the alleged abuse or neglect.

365 (7) Notwithstanding Subsection (3), a court may not deny parent-time based solely on a

366 parent's failure to:

367 (a) prove that the parent has not used legal or illegal substances; or

368 (b) comply with an aspect of the child and family plan that is ordered by the court.

369 (8) (a) In addition to the primary permanency plan, the court shall establish a

370 concurrent permanency plan that shall include:

371 (i) a representative list of the conditions under which the primary permanency plan will
372 be abandoned in favor of the concurrent permanency plan; and

373 (ii) an explanation of the effect of abandoning or modifying the primary permanency
374 plan.

375 (b) In determining the primary permanency plan and concurrent permanency plan, the
376 court shall consider:

377 (i) the preference for kinship placement over nonkinship placement;

378 (ii) the potential for a guardianship placement if the parent-child relationship is legally
379 terminated and no appropriate adoption placement is available; and

380 (iii) the use of an individualized permanency plan, only as a last resort.

381 (9) A permanency hearing shall be conducted in accordance with Subsection

382 [78A-6-314\(1\)\(b\)](#) within 30 days after the day on which the dispositional hearing ends if

383 something other than reunification is initially established as a minor's primary permanency
384 plan.

385 (10) (a) The court may amend a minor's primary permanency plan before the
386 establishment of a final permanency plan under Section [78A-6-314](#).

387 (b) The court is not limited to the terms of the concurrent permanency plan in the event
388 that the primary permanency plan is abandoned.

389 (c) If, at any time, the court determines that reunification is no longer a minor's primary
390 permanency plan, the court shall conduct a permanency hearing in accordance with Section

391 [78A-6-314](#) on or before the earlier of:

392 (i) 30 days after the day on which the court makes the determination described in this

393 Subsection (10)(c); or

394 (ii) the day on which the provision of reunification services, described in Section
395 78A-6-314, ends.

396 (11) (a) If the court determines that reunification services are appropriate, it shall order
397 that the division make reasonable efforts to provide services to the minor and the minor's
398 parent for the purpose of facilitating reunification of the family, for a specified period of time.

399 (b) In providing the services described in Subsection (11)(a), the minor's health, safety,
400 and welfare shall be the division's paramount concern, and the court shall so order.

401 (12) (a) The court shall:

402 (i) determine whether the services offered or provided by the division under the child
403 and family plan constitute "reasonable efforts" on the part of the division;

404 (ii) determine and define the responsibilities of the parent under the child and family
405 plan in accordance with Subsection 62A-4a-205(6)(e); and

406 (iii) identify verbally on the record, or in a written document provided to the parties,
407 the responsibilities described in Subsection (12)(a)(ii), for the purpose of assisting in any future
408 determination regarding the provision of reasonable efforts, in accordance with state and
409 federal law.

410 (b) If the parent is in a substance abuse treatment program, other than a certified drug
411 court program:

412 (i) the court may order the parent to submit to supplementary drug or alcohol testing in
413 addition to the testing recommended by the parent's substance abuse program based on a
414 finding of reasonable suspicion that the parent is abusing drugs or alcohol; and

415 (ii) the court may order the parent to provide the results of drug or alcohol testing
416 recommended by the substance abuse program to the court or division.

417 (13) (a) The time period for reunification services may not exceed 12 months from the
418 date that the minor was initially removed from the minor's home, unless the time period is
419 extended under Subsection 78A-6-314(7).

420 (b) Nothing in this section may be construed to entitle any parent to an entire 12
421 months of reunification services.

422 (14) (a) If reunification services are ordered, the court may terminate those services at
423 any time.

424 (b) If, at any time, continuation of reasonable efforts to reunify a minor is determined
425 to be inconsistent with the final permanency plan for the minor established pursuant to Section
426 78A-6-314, then measures shall be taken, in a timely manner, to:

427 (i) place the minor in accordance with the permanency plan; and

428 (ii) complete whatever steps are necessary to finalize the permanent placement of the
429 minor.

430 (15) Any physical custody of the minor by the parent or a relative during the period
431 described in Subsections (11) through (14) does not interrupt the running of the period.

432 (16) (a) If reunification services are ordered, a permanency hearing shall be conducted
433 by the court in accordance with Section 78A-6-314 at the expiration of the time period for
434 reunification services.

435 (b) The permanency hearing shall be held no later than 12 months after the original
436 removal of the minor.

437 (c) If reunification services are not ordered, a permanency hearing shall be conducted
438 within 30 days, in accordance with Section 78A-6-314.

439 (17) With regard to a minor in the custody of the division whose parent or parents are
440 ordered to receive reunification services but who have abandoned that minor for a period of six
441 months from the date that reunification services were ordered:

442 (a) the court shall terminate reunification services; and

443 (b) the division shall petition the court for termination of parental rights.

444 (18) When a court conducts a permanency hearing for a minor under Section
445 78A-6-314, the court shall attempt to keep the minor's sibling group together if keeping the
446 sibling group together is:

447 (a) practicable; and

448 (b) in accordance with the best interest of the minor.

449 (19) When a child is under the custody of the division and has been separated from a

450 sibling due to foster care or adoptive placement, a court may order sibling visitation, subject to
451 the division obtaining consent from the sibling's legal guardian, according to the court's
452 determination of the best interests of the child for whom the hearing is held.

453 ~~[(19)]~~ (20) (a) Because of the state's interest in and responsibility to protect and provide
454 permanency for minors who are abused, neglected, or dependent, the Legislature finds that a
455 parent's interest in receiving reunification services is limited.

456 (b) The court may determine that:

457 (i) efforts to reunify a minor with the minor's family are not reasonable or appropriate,
458 based on the individual circumstances; and

459 (ii) reunification services should not be provided.

460 (c) In determining "reasonable efforts" to be made with respect to a minor, and in
461 making "reasonable efforts," the minor's health, safety, and welfare shall be the paramount
462 concern.

463 ~~[(20)]~~ (21) There is a presumption that reunification services should not be provided to
464 a parent if the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that any of the following
465 circumstances exist:

466 (a) the whereabouts of the parents are unknown, based upon a verified affidavit
467 indicating that a reasonably diligent search has failed to locate the parent;

468 (b) subject to Subsection ~~[(21)]~~ (22)(a), the parent is suffering from a mental illness of
469 such magnitude that it renders the parent incapable of utilizing reunification services;

470 (c) the minor was previously adjudicated as an abused child due to physical abuse,
471 sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation, and following the adjudication the minor:

472 (i) was removed from the custody of the minor's parent;

473 (ii) was subsequently returned to the custody of the parent; and

474 (iii) is being removed due to additional physical abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual
475 exploitation;

476 (d) the parent:

477 (i) caused the death of another minor through abuse or neglect;

- 478 (ii) committed, aided, abetted, attempted, conspired, or solicited to commit:
- 479 (A) murder or manslaughter of a child; or
- 480 (B) child abuse homicide;
- 481 (iii) committed sexual abuse against the child;
- 482 (iv) is a registered sex offender or required to register as a sex offender; or
- 483 (v) (A) intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causes the death of another parent of the
- 484 child;
- 485 (B) is identified by a law enforcement agency as the primary suspect in an investigation
- 486 for intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing the death of another parent of the child; or
- 487 (C) is being prosecuted for or has been convicted of intentionally, knowingly, or
- 488 recklessly causing the death of another parent of the child;
- 489 (e) the minor suffered severe abuse by the parent or by any person known by the
- 490 parent, if the parent knew or reasonably should have known that the person was abusing the
- 491 minor;
- 492 (f) the minor is adjudicated an abused child as a result of severe abuse by the parent,
- 493 and the court finds that it would not benefit the minor to pursue reunification services with the
- 494 offending parent;
- 495 (g) the parent's rights are terminated with regard to any other minor;
- 496 (h) the minor was removed from the minor's home on at least two previous occasions
- 497 and reunification services were offered or provided to the family at those times;
- 498 (i) the parent has abandoned the minor for a period of six months or longer;
- 499 (j) the parent permitted the child to reside, on a permanent or temporary basis, at a
- 500 location where the parent knew or should have known that a clandestine laboratory operation
- 501 was located;
- 502 (k) except as provided in Subsection [~~(21)~~] (22)(b), with respect to a parent who is the
- 503 child's birth mother, the child has fetal alcohol syndrome, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, or
- 504 was exposed to an illegal or prescription drug that was abused by the child's mother while the
- 505 child was in utero, if the child was taken into division custody for that reason, unless the

506 mother agrees to enroll in, is currently enrolled in, or has recently and successfully completed a
507 substance abuse treatment program approved by the department; or

508 (l) any other circumstance that the court determines should preclude reunification
509 efforts or services.

510 ~~[(21)]~~ (22) (a) The finding under Subsection ~~[(20)]~~ (21)(b) shall be based on competent
511 evidence from at least two medical or mental health professionals, who are not associates,
512 establishing that, even with the provision of services, the parent is not likely to be capable of
513 adequately caring for the minor within 12 months after the day on which the court finding is
514 made.

515 (b) A judge may disregard the provisions of Subsection ~~[(20)]~~ (21)(k) if the court finds,
516 under the circumstances of the case, that the substance abuse treatment described in Subsection
517 ~~[(20)]~~ (21)(k) is not warranted.

518 ~~[(22)]~~ (23) In determining whether reunification services are appropriate, the court
519 shall take into consideration:

520 (a) failure of the parent to respond to previous services or comply with a previous child
521 and family plan;

522 (b) the fact that the minor was abused while the parent was under the influence of
523 drugs or alcohol;

524 (c) any history of violent behavior directed at the child or an immediate family
525 member;

526 (d) whether a parent continues to live with an individual who abused the minor;

527 (e) any patterns of the parent's behavior that have exposed the minor to repeated abuse;

528 (f) testimony by a competent professional that the parent's behavior is unlikely to be
529 successful; and

530 (g) whether the parent has expressed an interest in reunification with the minor.

531 ~~[(23)]~~ (24) (a) If reunification services are not ordered pursuant to Subsections ~~[(19)]~~
532 (20) through ~~[(21)]~~ (22), and the whereabouts of a parent become known within six months
533 after the day on which the out-of-home placement of the minor is made, the court may order

534 the division to provide reunification services.

535 (b) The time limits described in Subsections (2) through (18) are not tolled by the
536 parent's absence.

537 ~~[(24)]~~ (25) (a) If a parent is incarcerated or institutionalized, the court shall order
538 reasonable services unless it determines that those services would be detrimental to the minor.

539 (b) In making the determination described in Subsection ~~[(24)]~~ (25)(a), the court shall
540 consider:

541 (i) the age of the minor;

542 (ii) the degree of parent-child bonding;

543 (iii) the length of the sentence;

544 (iv) the nature of the treatment;

545 (v) the nature of the crime or illness;

546 (vi) the degree of detriment to the minor if services are not offered;

547 (vii) for a minor 10 years old or older, the minor's attitude toward the implementation
548 of family reunification services; and

549 (viii) any other appropriate factors.

550 (c) Reunification services for an incarcerated parent are subject to the time limitations
551 imposed in Subsections (2) through (18).

552 (d) Reunification services for an institutionalized parent are subject to the time
553 limitations imposed in Subsections (2) through (18), unless the court determines that continued
554 reunification services would be in the minor's best interest.

555 ~~[(25)]~~ (26) If, pursuant to Subsections ~~[(20)]~~ (21)(b) through (l), the court does not
556 order reunification services, a permanency hearing shall be conducted within 30 days, in
557 accordance with Section [78A-6-314](#).