



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Children and Family Services Office
DSHS-DCFS

MS W14-4 • 415 W. Wishkah St. Suite 2C • Aberdeen, WA 98520 •

**At-Risk Youth Petition (ARYP)
INFORMATION SHEET**

In 1990, a state law was originally passed to assist parents with out of control and “at-risk” children. This law was strengthened with the passage of what is referred to as the “Becca Bill,” which became effective in July of 1995. An “at-risk” youth is a child under the age of 18 whom:

- Is away from home for more than 72 consecutive hours without permission; and/or
- Is beyond the control of his/her parents such that the child’s behavior endangers the child or another person; and/or
- Has a serious substance abuse problem for which there are no pending criminal charges related to the substance abuse.

The petitioner (parent filing the petition) must be able to answer yes to the following:

- The child is at risk (meets the above criteria);
- The petitioning parent or guardian has legal custody of the child;
- Court intervention is necessary to assist the parents or guardian, and;
- Alternatives to court intervention have been attempted or there is a good reason why alternatives have not been attempted (alternatives include counseling, drug treatment, and so forth).

To begin the legal process, the custodial parent or guardian must contact the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) at 1-888-713-6115 to request an At-Risk Youth Petition. The intake worker will gather information from you and let you know that a social worker will be contacting you. Please leave alternative daytime telephone numbers such as a message number or work number. The assigned Family Reconciliation Services (FRS) social worker will contact you to set up an appointment for a family assessment. The initial contact will be made by mail so please ensure your correct mailing address is provided.

During the family assessment, the social worker will explain the petitioning process, gather a detailed family history, ask about current or past problems, and inquire about successes. The social worker will also ask you about how the problems were resolved.



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The social worker may make recommendations that may include rules specifically related to you child. These rules may include attendance at school, prohibiting the possession and use of drugs, that the child will abide by a curfew, attend anger management etc... The parent or guardian may be ordered to attend a parenting class and/or participate in family counseling. The parent or guardian is financially responsible for court-ordered services.

The parent or guardian can complete the ARYP during the family assessment or complete it independently at another time. The parent is responsible for delivering the petition in person to the clerk at Grays Harbor Juvenile Court for filing. The case is scheduled for a “Fact-Finding” hearing. An attorney is appointed for the child and all parties are notified of the court date.

The social worker will write a report to the court along with the recommendations discussed in the family assessment. The parents or guardian, child, child’s attorney, and Juvenile Department will be provided with copies of the report.

Failure by either parent or child to comply with a court order can result in a contempt of court. When a child is found in contempt, he/she can be sentenced for up to seven days in detention for each violation. If a parent is found in contempt, the court may impose a fine of up to \$100 or jail for up to seven days or both for each violation.

Please note that the ARYP are designed to address juvenile behaviors which have become seriously concerning. These are not preventative measures.

If you are a non-custodial parent and you are dissatisfied with the parenting you child receives from the custodial parent, your concerns need to be addressed by modification of the parenting plan. The ARYP and associated procedures are not designed to interfere or supersede a pre-existing court order regarding the custody of your child.

**For more information, please contact DCFS at 1-888-713-6115
Monday – Friday 8:00 am ~ 4:30 pm. After 4:30 pm and on
weekends and holidays, please call 1-800-562-5624.**