

Assembly Bill No. 1696

CHAPTER 831

An act to amend Sections 628, 636, 636.1, 658, 706.6, 727.1, 727.31, 727.4, and 728 of, to add Section 727.32 to, and to repeal and add Sections 706.5, 727.2, and 727.3 of, the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to minors.

[Approved by Governor October 12, 2001. Filed
with Secretary of State October 13, 2001.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1696, Committee on Human Services. Minors.

(1) Existing law requires a probation officer, upon delivery of a minor who has been taken into temporary custody, to immediately investigate the circumstances of the minor and the facts surrounding the minor being taken into custody and to immediately release the minor to the custody of his or her parent, legal guardian, or responsible relative unless evidence before the court demonstrates that continuance in the home is contrary to the minor's welfare, as specified.

This bill would require the probation officer, if he or she has reason to believe that the minor is at risk of entering foster care placement, to make reasonable efforts, as defined, to prevent or eliminate the need for removing the minor from the minor's home. Because this bill would impose additional duties on county probation officers, it would create a state-mandated local program.

(2) Where it appears that a minor has violated an order of the juvenile court, or escaped from a commitment of the juvenile court, or where it is a matter of immediate or urgent necessity to protect the minor or reasonably necessary to protect the person or property of another, existing law authorizes the court to order that the minor be detained in the juvenile hall or other suitable place for up to 15 days. If the first contact with the family has occurred in an emergency situation in which the family could not exercise effective care and control over the minor, even if reasonable services were provided, the court must make a finding that the lack of preplacement preventive efforts was reasonable.

This bill would revise the latter provision. The bill would require the probation officer to submit specified documentation to the court regarding whether reasonable efforts were made to prevent or eliminate the need to remove the minor from the home and whether continuance in the home is contrary to the minor's welfare. The bill would also require the court to make the determination whether continuance in the

home is contrary to the minor's welfare and whether there are available services that would prevent the need for further detention of the minor. The bill would also make other changes. By imposing additional duties on probation officers, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

(3) Existing law requires the probation officer to prepare a specified case plan regarding a minor who has been removed from the home of his or her parent or legal guardian following a finding by the court that continuance in the home is contrary to the minor's welfare within a specified time period.

This bill would revise the contents of the case plan, as specified. The bill would revise the provisions governing the preparation and submission of the social study or case plan. By imposing additional duties on probation officers, the bill would create a state-mandated local program.

(4) Existing law provides for the filing of a petition to declare a minor a ward of the juvenile court and, under certain circumstances, for the removal of the minor from his or her home. Existing law authorizes the juvenile court to make any and all reasonable orders for the care, custody, conduct, maintenance, and support of minors who have been adjudged wards of the court. Existing law generally requires that reunification services be provided to a minor and his or her family when the minor is removed from the minor's home. Existing law also provides for periodic status review hearings and permanency planning hearings for wards of the court. Under certain conditions, parental rights may be terminated.

This bill would revise the circumstances under which reunification services need not be provided to a parent or legal guardian to specifically include circumstances where the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent has been convicted of certain criminal acts, including the murder or voluntary manslaughter of another child of the parent. The bill would revise procedures for the conduct of status review hearings and permanency planning hearings for wards of the court. The bill would also require the clerk of the court to provide a copy of a specified notice to foster parents, legal guardians, or relatives providing care to the minor where the care, custody, and control of the minor is under the supervision of the probation officer for foster care placement.

The bill would require the probation department to follow procedures for the termination of parental rights where a minor has been declared a ward of the juvenile court and has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, unless the probation department has documented in the file a compelling reason for determining that termination of parental rights would not be in the minor's best interest. The bill would also provide that when the court orders the care, custody, and control of a



minor to be under the supervision of the probation officer for foster care, the decision regarding choice of placement shall be based upon selection of a safe setting that meets other specified criteria. The bill would revise and recast other, related provisions and make technical changes.

By imposing additional duties on probation officers, the bill would create a state-mandated local program.

(5) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement, including the creation of a State Mandates Claims Fund to pay the costs of mandates that do not exceed \$1,000,000 statewide and other procedures for claims whose statewide costs exceed \$1,000,000.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 628 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

628. (a) Upon delivery to the probation officer of a minor who has been taken into temporary custody under the provisions of this article, the probation officer shall immediately investigate the circumstances of the minor and the facts surrounding his or her being taken into custody and shall immediately release the minor to the custody of his or her parent, legal guardian, or responsible relative unless it can be demonstrated upon the evidence before the court that continuance in the home is contrary to the minor's welfare and one or more of the following conditions exist:

(1) The minor is in need of proper and effective parental care or control and has no parent, legal guardian, or responsible relative; or has no parent, legal guardian, or responsible relative willing to exercise or capable of exercising that care or control; or has no parent, legal guardian, or responsible relative actually exercising that care or control.

(2) The minor is destitute or is not provided with the necessities of life or is not provided with a home or suitable place of abode.

(3) The minor is provided with a home which is an unfit place for him or her by reason of neglect, cruelty, depravity or physical abuse by either of his or her parents, or by his or her legal guardian or other person in whose custody or care he or she is entrusted.



(4) Continued detention of the minor is a matter of immediate and urgent necessity for the protection of the minor or reasonable necessity for the protection of the person or property of another.

(5) The minor is likely to flee the jurisdiction of the court.

(6) The minor has violated an order of the juvenile court.

(7) The minor is physically dangerous to the public because of a mental or physical deficiency, disorder or abnormality.

(b) If the probation officer has reason to believe that the minor is at risk of entering foster care placement as defined in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (d) of Section 727.4, then the probation officer shall, as part of the investigation undertaken pursuant to subdivision (a), make reasonable efforts, as described in paragraph (5) of subdivision (d) of Section 727.4, to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the minor from his or her home.

(c) In any case in which there is reasonable cause for believing that a minor who is under the care of a physician or surgeon or a hospital, clinic, or other medical facility and cannot be immediately moved is a person described in subdivision (d) of Section 300, the minor shall be deemed to have been taken into temporary custody and delivered to the probation officer for the purposes of this chapter while he or she is at the office of the physician or surgeon or that medical facility.

SEC. 2. Section 636 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

636. (a) If it appears upon the hearing that the minor has violated an order of the juvenile court or has escaped from a commitment of the juvenile court or that it is a matter of immediate and urgent necessity for the protection of the minor or reasonably necessary for the protection of the person or property of another that he or she be detained or that the minor is likely to flee to avoid the jurisdiction of the court, and that continuance in the home is contrary to the minor's welfare, the court may make its order that the minor be detained in the juvenile hall or other suitable place designated by the juvenile court for a period not to exceed 15 judicial days and shall enter said order together with its findings of fact in support thereof in the records of the court. The circumstances and gravity of the alleged offense may be considered, in conjunction with other factors, to determine whether it is a matter of immediate and urgent necessity for the protection of the minor or the person or property of another that the minor be detained.

(b) If the court finds that the criteria of Section 628.1 are applicable, the court shall place the minor on home supervision for a period not to exceed 15 judicial days, and shall enter the order together with its findings of fact in support thereof in the records of the court. If the court releases the minor on home supervision, the court may continue, modify,



or augment any conditions of release previously imposed by the probation officer, or may impose new conditions on a minor released for the first time. If there are new or modified conditions, the minor shall be required to sign a written promise to obey those conditions pursuant to Section 628.1.

(c) If the probation officer is recommending that the minor be detained, the probation officer shall submit to the court documentation, as follows:

(1) Documentation that continuance in the home is contrary to the minor's welfare shall be submitted to the court as part of the detention report prepared pursuant to Section 635.

(2) Documentation that reasonable efforts were made to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the minor from the home and documentation of the nature and results of the services provided shall be submitted to the court either as part of the detention report prepared pursuant to Section 635, or as part of a case plan prepared pursuant to Section 636.1, but in no case later than 30 days from the date of detention.

(d) Before detaining the minor, the court shall determine whether continuance in the home is contrary to the minor's welfare and whether there are available services that would prevent the need for further detention. The court shall make that determination on a case-by-case basis and shall make reference to the documentation provided by the probation officer or other evidence relied upon in reaching its decision.

(1) If the minor can be returned to the custody of his or her parent or legal guardian at the detention hearing, through the provision of services to prevent removal, the court shall release the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or legal guardian and order that those services shall be provided.

(2) If the minor cannot be returned to the custody of his or her parent or legal guardian at the detention hearing, the court shall state the facts upon which the detention is based. The court shall make the following findings on the record and reference the probation officer's report or other evidence relied upon to make its determinations:

(A) Whether continuance in the home of the parent or legal guardian is contrary to the minor's welfare.

(B) Whether reasonable efforts have been made to safely maintain the minor in the home of his or her parent or legal guardian and to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the minor from his or her home. This finding shall be made at the detention hearing if possible, but in no case later than 60 days following the minor's removal from the home.



(3) If the minor cannot be returned to the custody of his or her parent or legal guardian at the detention hearing, the court shall make the following orders:

(A) The probation officer shall provide services as soon as possible which will enable the minor's parent or legal guardian to obtain such assistance as may be needed to enable the parent or guardian to effectively provide the care and control necessary for the minor to return to the home.

(B) The minor's placement and care shall be the responsibility of the probation department pending disposition or further order of the court.

(4) If the matter is set for rehearing pursuant to Section 637, or continued pursuant to Section 638, or continued for any other reason, the court shall find that the continuance of the minor in the parent's or guardian's home is contrary to the minor's welfare at the initial petition hearing or order the release of the minor from custody.

(e) Whether the minor is returned home or detained, the court shall order the minor's parent or guardian to cooperate with the probation officer in obtaining those services described in paragraph (1) or in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (3).

SEC. 3. Section 636.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

636.1. (a) When a minor is detained pursuant to Section 636 following a finding by the court that continuance in the home is contrary to the minor's welfare and the minor is at risk of entering foster care, the probation officer shall, within 30 calendar days of initial removal, or by the date of the disposition hearing, whichever occurs first, complete a case plan.

(b) If the probation officer believes that reasonable efforts by the minor, his or her parent or legal guardian, and the probation officer will enable the minor to safely return home, the case plan shall focus on those issues and activities associated with those efforts, including a description of the strengths and needs of the minor and his or her family and identification of the services that will be provided to the minor and his or her family in order to reduce or eliminate the need for the minor to be placed in foster care and make it possible for the minor to safely return to his or her home.

(c) If, based on the information available to the probation officer, the probation officer believes that foster care placement is the most appropriate disposition, the case plan shall include all the information required by Section 706.6.

SEC. 4. Section 658 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:



658. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b), upon the filing of the petition, the clerk of the juvenile court shall issue a notice, to which shall be attached a copy of the petition, and he or she shall cause the same to be served upon the minor, if the minor is eight or more years of age, and upon each of the persons described in subdivision (e) of Section 656 whose residence addresses are set forth in the petition and thereafter before the hearing upon all persons whose residence addresses become known to the clerk. If the court has ordered the care, custody, and control of the minor to be under the supervision of the probation officer for foster care placement pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 727, the clerk shall also issue a copy of that notice to any foster parents, preadoptive parents, legal guardians or relatives providing care to the minor. The clerk shall issue a copy of the petition, to the minor's attorney and to the district attorney, if the district attorney has notified the clerk of the court that he or she wishes to receive the petition, containing the time, date, and place of the hearing.

(b) Upon the filing of a supplemental petition where the minor has been declared a ward of the court or a probationer under Section 602 in the original matter, the clerk of the juvenile court shall issue a notice, to which shall be attached a copy of the petition, and he or she shall cause the notice to be served upon the minor, if the minor is eight or more years of age, and upon each of the persons described in subdivision (e) of Section 656 whose residence addresses are set forth in the supplemental petition and thereafter known to the clerk. The clerk shall issue a copy of the supplemental petition to the minor's attorney, and to the district attorney if the probation officer is the petitioner, or, to the probation officer if the district attorney is the petitioner, containing the time, date, and place of the hearing. If the court has ordered the care, custody, and control of the minor to be under the supervision of the probation officer for foster care placement pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 727, the clerk shall also issue a copy of that notice to any foster parents, preadoptive parents, legal guardians, or relatives providing care to the minor.

SEC. 5. Section 706.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is repealed.

SEC. 6. Section 706.5 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

706.5. (a) In any case where placement in foster care is recommended by the probation officer, or where the minor is already in foster care placement or pending placement pursuant to an earlier order, the social study prepared by the probation officer that is received into evidence at disposition pursuant to Section 706 shall include a case plan, as described in Section 706.6. If the court elects to hold the first status



review at the disposition hearing, then the social study shall also include, but not be limited to, the factual material described in subdivision (c) of this section.

(b) In any case where placement in foster care is not recommended by the probation officer prior to disposition, but the court orders foster care placement, the court shall order the probation officer to prepare a case plan, as described in Section 706.6, within 30 days of the placement order. The case plan shall be filed with the court.

(c) At each status review hearing, the social study shall include, but not be limited to, an updated case plan as described in Section 706.6 and the following information:

(1) The continuing necessity for and appropriateness of the placement.

(2) The extent of the probation department's compliance with the case plan in making reasonable efforts to safely return the minor to the minor's home or to complete whatever steps are necessary to finalize the permanent placement of the minor.

(3) The extent of progress that has been made by the minor and parent or guardian toward alleviating or mitigating the causes necessitating placement in foster care.

(4) If the first permanency planning hearing has not yet occurred, the social study shall include the likely date by which the minor may be returned to and safely maintained in the home or placed for adoption, appointed a legal guardian, permanently placed with a fit and willing relative, or referred to another planned permanent living arrangement.

(5) Whether the minor has been or will be referred to educational services and what services the minor is receiving, including special education and related services if the minor has exceptional needs as described in Part 30 (commencing with Section 56000) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code or accommodations if the child has disabilities as described in Chapter 16 (commencing with Section 701) of Title 29 of the United States Code Annotated. The probation officer or child advocate shall solicit comments from the appropriate local education agency prior to completion of the social study.

(6) Whether the right of the parent or guardian to make educational decisions for the minor should be limited by the court pursuant to Section 7579.5 of the Government Code.

(d) At each permanency planning hearing, the social study shall include, but not be limited to, an updated case plan as described in Section 706.6, the factual material described in subdivision (c) of this section, and a recommended permanent plan for the minor.

SEC. 7. Section 706.6 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:



706.6. A case plan prepared as required by Section 706.5 shall be submitted to the court. It shall either be attached to the social study or incorporated as a separate section within the social study. The case plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:

(a) A description of the circumstances that resulted in the minor being placed under the supervision of the probation department and in foster care.

(b) An assessment of the minor's and family's strengths and needs and the type of placement best equipped to meet those needs.

(c) A description of the type of home or institution in which the minor is to be placed, including a discussion of the safety and appropriateness of the placement. An appropriate placement is a placement in the least restrictive, most family-like environment, in closest proximity to the minor's home, that meets the minor's best interests and special needs.

(d) Specific time-limited goals and related activities designed to enable the safe return of the minor to his or her home, or in the event that return to his or her home is not possible, activities designed to result in permanent placement or emancipation. Specific responsibility for carrying out the planned activities shall be assigned to one or more of the following:

(1) The probation department.

(2) The minor's parent or parents or legal guardian or guardians, as applicable.

(3) The minor.

(4) The foster parents or licensed agency providing foster care.

(e) The projected date of completion of the case plan objectives and the date services will be terminated.

(f) Scheduled visits between the minor and his or her family and an explanation if no visits are made.

(g) (1) When placement is made in a foster family home, group home, or other child care institution that is either a substantial distance from the home of the minor's parent or legal guardian or out-of-state, the case plan shall specify the reasons why the placement is the most appropriate and is in the best interest of the minor.

(2) When an out-of-state group home placement is recommended or made, the case plan shall comply with Section 727.1 and Section 7911.1 of the Family Code. In addition, documentation of the recommendation of the multidisciplinary team and the rationale for this particular placement shall be included. The case plan shall also address what in-state services or facilities were used or considered and why they were not recommended.



(h) If applicable, efforts to make it possible to place siblings together, unless it has been determined that placement together is not in the best interest of one or more siblings.

(i) A schedule of visits between the minor and the probation officer, including a monthly visitation schedule for those children placed in group homes.

(j) Health and education information about the minor, school records, immunizations, known medical problems, and any known medications the minor may be taking, names and addresses of the minor's health and educational providers; the minor's grade level performance; assurances that the minor's placement in foster care takes into account proximity to the school in which the minor was enrolled at the time of placement; and other relevant health and educational information.

(k) When out-of-home services are used and the goal is reunification, the case plan shall describe the services that were provided to prevent removal of the minor from the home, those services to be provided to assist in reunification and the services to be provided concurrently to achieve legal permanency if efforts to reunify fail.

(l) The updated case plan prepared for a permanency planning hearing shall include a recommendation for a permanent plan for the minor. If, after considering reunification, adoptive placement, legal guardianship, or permanent placement with a fit and willing relative the probation officer recommends placement in a planned permanent living arrangement, the case plan shall include documentation of a compelling reason or reasons why termination of parental rights is not in the minor's best interest. For purposes of this subdivision, a "compelling reason" shall have the same meaning as in subdivision (c) of Section 727.3.

(m) Each updated case plan shall include a description of the services that have been provided to the minor under the plan and an evaluation of the appropriateness and effectiveness of those services.

(n) A statement that the parent or legal guardian, and the minor have had an opportunity to participate in the development of the case plan, to review the case plan, to sign the case plan, and to receive a copy of the plan, or an explanation about why the parent, legal guardian, or minor was not able to participate or sign the case plan.

(o) For a minor in out-of-home care who is 16 years of age or older, a written description of the programs and services, which will help the minor prepare for the transition from foster care to independent living.

SEC. 8. Section 727.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

727.1. (a) When the court orders the care, custody, and control of the minor to be under the supervision of the probation officer for foster care placement pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 727, the decision



regarding choice of placement shall be based upon selection of a safe setting that is the least restrictive or most family like, and the most appropriate setting that is available and in close proximity to the parent's home, consistent with the selection of the environment best suited to meet the minor's special needs and best interests. The selection shall consider, in order of priority, placement with relatives, tribal members, and foster family, group care, and residential treatment pursuant to Section 7950 of the Family Code.

(b) Unless otherwise authorized by law, the court may not order the placement of a minor who is adjudged a ward of the court on the basis that he or she is a person described by either Section 601 or 602 in a private residential facility or program that provides 24-hour supervision, outside of the state, unless the court finds, in its order of placement, that all of the following conditions are met:

(1) In-state facilities or programs have been determined to be unavailable or inadequate to meet the needs of the minor.

(2) The State Department of Social Services or its designee has performed initial and continuing inspection of the out-of-state residential facility or program and has either certified that the facility or program meets all licensure standards required of group homes operated in California or that the department has granted a waiver to a specific licensing standard upon a finding that there exists no adverse impact to health and safety, pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 7911.1 of the Family Code.

(3) The requirements of Section 7911.1 of the Family Code are met.

(c) If, upon inspection, the probation officer of the county in which the minor is adjudged a ward of the court determines that the out-of-state facility or program is not in compliance with the standards required under paragraph (2) of subdivision (b) or has an adverse impact on the health and safety of the minor, the probation officer may temporarily remove the minor from the facility or program. The probation officer shall promptly inform the court of the minor's removal, and shall return the minor to the court for a hearing to review the suitability of continued out-of-state placement. The probation officer shall, within one business day of removing the minor, notify the State Department of Social Services' Compact Administrator, and, within five working days, submit a written report of the findings and actions taken.

(d) The court shall review each of these placements for compliance with the requirements of subdivision (b) at least once every six months.

(e) The county shall not be entitled to receive or expend any public funds for the placement of a minor in an out-of-state group home unless the conditions of subdivisions (b) and (d) are met.



SEC. 9. Section 727.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is repealed.

SEC. 10. Section 727.2 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

727.2. The purpose of this section is to provide a means to monitor the safety and well-being of every minor in foster care who has been declared a ward of the juvenile court pursuant to Section 601 or 602 and to ensure that everything reasonably possible is done to facilitate the safe and early return of the minor to his or her home or to establish an alternative permanent plan for the minor.

(a) Whenever the court orders the care, custody, and control of the minor to be under the supervision of the probation officer for placement pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 727, the juvenile court shall order the probation department to ensure the provision of reunification services to facilitate the safe return of the minor to his or her home or the permanent placement of the minor, and to address the needs of the minor while in foster care, except as provided in subdivision (b) of this section.

(b) Reunification services need not be provided to a parent or legal guardian when the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that one or more of the following is true:

(1) Reunification services were previously terminated for that parent or guardian, pursuant to Section 366.21 or 366.22, or not offered, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 361.5, in reference to the same minor.

(2) The parent has been convicted of:

(A) Murder of another child of the parent.

(B) Voluntary manslaughter of another child of the parent.

(C) Aiding or abetting, attempting, conspiring, or soliciting to commit such a murder or such a voluntary manslaughter.

(D) A felony assault that results in serious bodily injury to the minor or another child of the parent.

(3) The parental rights of the parent with respect to a sibling have been terminated involuntarily, and it is not in the best interest of the minor to reunify with his or her parent or legal guardian.

If no reunification services are offered to the parent or guardian, the permanency planning hearing, as described in Section 727.3, shall occur within 30 days of the date of the hearing at which the decision is made not to offer services.

(c) The status of every minor declared a ward and ordered to be placed in foster care shall be reviewed by the court no less frequently than once every six months. The six-month time periods shall be calculated from the date the minor entered foster care, as defined in paragraph (4) of subdivision (d) of Section 727.4. If the court so elects, the court may



declare the hearing at which the court orders the care, custody, and control of the minor to be under the supervision of the probation officer for foster care placement pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 727 at the first status review hearing. It shall be the duty of the probation officer to prepare a written social study report including an updated case plan, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 706.5, and submit the report to the court prior to each status review hearing, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 727.4. The social study report shall include all reports the probation officer relied upon in making his or her recommendations.

(d) Prior to any status review hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a community care facility or foster family agency, the facility or agency may provide the probation officer with a report containing its recommendations. Prior to any status review hearing involving the physical custody of a foster parent, relative caregiver, preadoptive parent, or legal guardian, that person may present to the court a report containing his or her recommendations. The court shall consider all reports and recommendations filed pursuant to subdivision (c) and pursuant to this subdivision.

(e) At any status review hearing prior to the first permanency planning hearing, the court shall consider the safety of the minor and make findings and orders which determine the following:

(1) The continuing necessity for and appropriateness of the placement.

(2) The extent of the probation department's compliance with the case plan in making reasonable efforts to safely return the minor to the minor's home or to complete whatever steps are necessary to finalize the permanent placement of the minor.

(3) The extent of progress that has been made by the minor and parent or guardian toward alleviating or mitigating the causes necessitating placement in foster care.

(4) The likely date by which the minor may be returned to and safely maintained in the home or placed for adoption, appointed a legal guardian, permanently placed with a fit and willing relative or referred to another planned permanent living arrangement.

(5) In the case of a minor who has reached 16 years of age, the court shall, in addition, determine the services needed to assist the minor to make the transition from foster care to independent living.

The court shall make these determinations on a case-by-case basis and reference in its written findings the probation officer's report and any other evidence relied upon in reaching its decision.

(f) At any status review hearing prior to the first permanency hearing, the court shall order return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or legal guardian unless the court finds, by a preponderance



of evidence, that the return of the minor to his or her parent or legal guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation department shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the social study report, recommendations, and the case plan pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 706.5, the report and recommendations of any child advocate appointed for the minor in the case, and any other reports submitted to the court pursuant to subdivision (d), and shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the minor and family and the extent to which the minor availed himself or herself of the services provided.

(g) At all status review hearings subsequent to the first permanency planning hearing, the court shall consider the safety of the minor and make the findings and orders as described in paragraphs (1) to (3), inclusive, and paragraph (5) of subdivision (e). The court shall either make a finding that the previously ordered permanent plan continues to be appropriate, or, shall order that a new permanent plan be adopted pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 727.3. However, the court shall not order a permanent plan of “return to the physical custody of the parent or legal guardian after further reunification services are offered,” as described in paragraph (2) of subdivision (b) of Section 727.3.

(h) The status review hearings required by subdivision (c) may be heard by an administrative review panel, provided that the administrative panel meets all of the requirements listed in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (7) of subdivision (d) of Section 727.4.

SEC. 11. Section 727.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is repealed.

SEC. 12. Section 727.3 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

727.3. The purpose of this section is to provide a means to monitor the safety and well-being of every minor in foster care who has been declared a ward of the juvenile court pursuant to Section 601 or 602 and to ensure that everything reasonably possible is done to facilitate the safe and early return of the minor to his or her own home or to establish an alternative permanent plan for the minor.

(a) (1) For every minor declared a ward and ordered to be placed in foster care, a permanency planning hearing shall be conducted within 12 months of the date the minor entered foster care, as defined in paragraph (4) of subdivision (d) of Section 727.4. Subsequent permanency planning hearings shall be conducted periodically, but no less frequently than once every 12 months thereafter during the period of placement. It shall be the duty of the probation officer to prepare a written social study



report including an updated case plan and a recommendation for a permanent plan, pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 706.5, and submit the report to the court prior to each permanency planning hearing, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 727.4.

(2) Prior to any permanency planning hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a community care facility or foster family agency, the facility or agency may file with the court a report containing its recommendations, in addition to the probation officer's social study. Prior to any permanency planning hearing involving the physical custody of a foster parent, relative caregiver, preadoptive parent, or legal guardian, that person may present to the court a report containing his or her recommendations. The court shall consider all reports and recommendations filed pursuant to this subdivision.

(3) If the minor has a continuing involvement with his or her parents or legal guardians, the parents or legal guardians shall be involved in the planning for a permanent placement. The court order placing the minor in a permanent placement shall include a specification of the nature and frequency of visiting arrangements with the parents or legal guardians.

(4) At each permanency planning hearing, the court shall order a permanent plan for the minor, as described in subdivision (b). The court shall also make findings, as described in subdivision (e) of Section 727.2. In the case of a minor who has reached 16 years of age or older, the court shall, in addition, determine the services needed to assist the minor to make the transition from foster care to independent living. The court shall make all of these determinations on a case-by-case basis and make reference to the probation officer's report, the case plan, or other evidence relied upon in making its decisions.

(b) At all permanency planning hearings, the court shall determine the permanent plan for the minor. The court shall order one of the following permanent plans, which are, in order of priority:

(1) Return of the minor to physical custody of the parent or legal guardian. The court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or legal guardian unless:

(A) Reunification services were not offered, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 727.2.

(B) The court finds, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the minor to his or her parent or legal guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation department shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the social study report and recommendations pursuant to Section 706.5, the report and recommendations of any child advocate appointed for the minor in the



case, and any other reports submitted pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (a), and shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the minor and family and the extent to which the minor availed himself or herself of the services provided.

(2) Order that the permanent plan for the minor will be to return the minor to the physical custody of the parent or legal guardian, order further reunification services to be provided to the minor and his or her parent or legal guardian for a period not to exceed six months and continue the case for up to six months for a subsequent permanency planning hearing, provided that the subsequent hearing shall occur within 18 months of the date the minor was originally taken from physical custody of his or her parent or legal guardian. The court shall continue the case only if it finds that there is a substantial probability that the minor will be returned to the physical custody of his or her parent or legal guardian and safely maintained in the home within the extended period of time or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or guardian. For purposes of this section, in order to find that there is a substantial probability that the minor will be returned to the physical custody of his or her parent or legal guardian, the court shall be required to find that the minor and his or her parent or legal guardian have demonstrated the capacity and ability to complete the objectives of the case plan.

The court shall inform the parent or legal guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next permanency planning hearing, a proceeding pursuant to Section 727.31 may be initiated.

The court shall not continue the case for further reunification services if it has been 18 months or more since the date the minor was originally taken from the physical custody of his or her parent or legal guardian.

(3) Identify adoption as the permanent plan and order that a hearing be held within 120 days, pursuant to the procedures described in Section 727.31. The court shall only set a hearing pursuant to Section 727.31 if there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parents. When the court sets a hearing pursuant to Section 727.31, it shall order that an adoption assessment report be prepared, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 727.31.

(4) Order a legal guardianship, pursuant to procedures described in subdivisions (c) to (f), inclusive, of Section 728.

(5) Place the minor with a fit and willing relative. “Placement with a fit and willing relative” means placing the minor with an appropriate relative on a permanent basis. When a minor is placed with a fit and willing relative, the court may authorize the relative to provide the same legal consent for the minor’s medical, surgical, and dental care, and education as the custodial parent of the minor.



(6) Place the minor in a planned permanent living arrangement. A “planned permanent living arrangement” means any permanent living arrangement described in Section 11402 and not listed in paragraphs (1) to (5), inclusive, such as placement in a specific, identified foster family home, program, or facility on a permanent basis, or placement in a transitional housing placement facility. When the court places a minor in a planned permanent living arrangement, the court shall specify the goal of the placement, which may include, but shall not be limited to, return home, emancipation, guardianship, or permanent placement with a relative.

The court shall only order that the minor remain in a planned permanent living arrangement if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence, based upon the evidence already presented to it that there is a compelling reason, as defined in subdivision (c), for determining that a plan of termination of parental rights and adoption is not in the best interest of the minor.

(c) A compelling reason for determining that a plan of termination of parental rights and adoption is not in the best interest of the minor is any of the following:

(1) Documentation by the probation department that adoption is not in the best interest of the minor and is not an appropriate permanency goal. That documentation may include, but is not limited to, documentation that:

(A) The minor is 12 years of age or older and objects to termination of parental rights.

(B) The minor is an older teen who specifically requests that emancipation be established as his or her permanent plan.

(C) The parent or guardian and the minor have a significant bond, but the parent or guardian is unable to care for the minor because of an emotional or physical disability, and the minor’s caregiver has committed to raising the minor to the age of majority and facilitating visitation with the disabled parent or guardian.

(D) The minor agrees to continued placement in a residential treatment facility that provides services specifically designed to address the minor’s treatment needs, and the minor’s needs could not be served by a less restrictive placement.

The probation department’s recommendation that adoption is not in the best interest of the minor shall be based on the present family circumstances of the minor and shall not preclude a different recommendation at a later date if the minor’s family circumstances change.

(2) Documentation by the probation department that no grounds exist to file for termination of parental rights.



(3) Documentation by the probation department that the minor is an unaccompanied refugee minor, or there are international legal obligations or foreign policy reasons that would preclude terminating parental rights.

(4) A finding by the court that the probation department was required to make reasonable efforts to reunify the minor with the family pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 727.2, and did not make those efforts.

(5) Documentation by the probation department that the minor is living with a relative who is unable or unwilling to adopt the minor because of exceptional circumstances that do not include an unwillingness to accept legal or financial responsibility for the minor, but who is willing and capable of providing the minor with a stable and permanent home environment, and the removal of the minor from the physical custody of his or her relative would be detrimental to the minor's emotional well-being.

(d) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the ability of a parent to voluntarily relinquish his or her child to the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency in counties that are not served by a county adoption agency or to a licensed county adoption agency at any time while the minor is a ward of the juvenile court if the department or agency is willing to accept the relinquishment.

(e) Any change in the permanent plan of a minor placed with a fit and willing relative or in a planned permanent living arrangement shall be made only by order of the court pursuant to a Section 778 petition or at a regularly scheduled and noticed status review hearing or permanency planning hearing. Any change in the permanent plan of a minor placed in a guardianship shall be made only by order of the court pursuant to a motion filed in accordance with Section 728.

SEC. 13. Section 727.31 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

727.31. (a) This section applies to all minors placed in out-of-home care pursuant to Section 727.2 or 727.3 and for whom the juvenile court orders a hearing to consider permanently terminating parental rights to free the minor for adoption.

Except for subdivision (j) of Section 366.26, the procedures for permanently terminating parental rights for minors described by this section shall proceed exclusively pursuant to Section 366.26.

At the beginning of any proceeding pursuant to this section, if the minor is not being represented by previously retained or appointed counsel, the court shall appoint counsel to represent the minor, and the minor shall be present in court unless the minor or the minor's counsel so requests and the court so orders. If a parent appears without counsel and is unable to afford counsel, the court shall appoint counsel for the



parent, unless this representation is knowingly and intelligently waived. The same counsel shall not be appointed to represent both the minor and the parent. Private counsel appointed under this section shall receive a reasonable sum for compensation and expenses as specified in subdivision (f) of paragraph (3) of Section 366.26.

(b) Whenever the court orders that a hearing pursuant to this section shall be held, it shall direct the agency supervising the minor and the licensed county adoption agency, or the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency in counties that are not served by a county adoption agency, to prepare an assessment that shall include all of the following:

(1) Current search efforts for an absent parent or parents.

(2) A review of the amount and nature of any contact between the minor and his or her parents and other members of his or her extended family since the time of placement. Although the extended family of each minor shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, “extended family” for the purpose of the paragraph shall include, but not be limited to, the minor’s siblings, grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

(3) An evaluation of the minor’s medical, developmental, scholastic, mental, and emotional status.

(4) A preliminary assessment of the eligibility and commitment of any identified prospective adoptive parent or guardian, particularly the caretaker, to include a social history, including screening for criminal records and prior referrals for child abuse or neglect, the capability to meet the minor’s needs, and the understanding of the legal and financial rights and responsibilities of adoption and guardianship. If a proposed guardian is a relative of the minor, and the relative was assessed for foster care placement of the minor prior to January 1, 1998, the assessment shall also consider, but need not be limited to, all of the factors specified in subdivision (a) of Section 361.3.

(5) The relationship of the minor to any identified prospective adoptive parent or guardian, the duration and character of the relationship, the motivation for seeking adoption or guardianship, and a statement from the minor concerning placement and the adoption or guardianship, unless the minor’s age or physical, emotional, or other condition precludes his or her meaningful response, and if so, a description of the condition.

(6) An analysis of the likelihood that the minor will be adopted if parental rights are terminated.

(c) Whenever the court orders that a hearing pursuant to procedures described in this section be held, it shall order that the licensed county adoption agency, or the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency in counties that are not served by a county



adoption agency, has exclusive responsibility for determining the adoptive placement and making all adoption-related decisions.

(d) If the court, by order of judgment declares the minor free from the custody and control of both parents, or one parent if the other does not have custody and control, the court shall at the same time order the minor referred to the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency in counties that are not served by a county adoption agency or a licensed county adoption agency for adoptive placement by the agency. The order shall state that responsibility for custody of the minor shall be held jointly by the probation department and the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency in counties that are not served by a county adoption agency or the licensed county adoption agency. The order shall also state that the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency in counties that are not served by a county adoption agency or the licensed county adoption agency has exclusive responsibility for determining the adoptive placement and for making all adoption-related decisions. However, no petition for adoption may be granted until the appellate rights of the natural parents have been exhausted.

(e) The notice procedures for terminating parental rights for minors described by this section shall proceed exclusively pursuant to Section 366.23.

SEC. 14. Section 727.32 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

727.32. (a) In any case where a minor has been declared a ward of the juvenile court and has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, the probation department shall follow the procedures described in Section 727.31 to terminate the parental rights of the minor's parents, unless the probation department has documented in the probation department file a compelling reason for determining that termination of the parental rights would not be in the minor's best interests, or the probation department has not provided the family with reasonable efforts necessary to achieve reunification. For purposes of this section, compelling reasons for not terminating parental rights are those described in subdivision (c) of Section 727.3.

(b) For the purposes of this section, 15 out of the 22 months shall be calculated from the "date entered foster care," as defined in paragraph (4) of subdivision (d) of Section 727.4. When a minor experiences multiple exits from and entries into foster care during the 22-month period, the 15 months shall be calculated by adding together the total number of months the minor spent in foster care in the past 22 months. However, trial home visits and runaway episodes should not be included in calculating 15 months in foster care.



(c) If the probation department documented a compelling reason at the time of the permanency planning hearing, pursuant to subdivision (l) of Section 706.6, the probation department need not provide any additional documentation to comply with the requirements of this section.

(d) When the probation department sets a hearing pursuant to Section 727.31, it shall concurrently make efforts to identify an approved family for adoption, and follow the procedures described in subdivision (b) of Section 727.31.

SEC. 15. Section 727.4 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

727.4. (a) Notice of any hearing pursuant to Section 727, 727.2, or 727.3 shall be mailed by the probation officer to the minor, the minor's parent or guardian, any adult provider of care to the minor including, but not limited to, foster parents, relative caregivers, preadoptive parents, community care facility, or foster family agency and to the counsel of record if the counsel of record was not present at the time that the hearing was set by the court, by first-class mail addressed to the last known address of the person to be notified, or shall be personally served on those persons, not earlier than 30 days nor later than 15 days preceding the date of the hearing. The notice shall contain a statement regarding the nature of the status review or permanency planning hearing and any change in the custody or status of the minor being recommended by the probation department. The notice shall also include a statement informing the foster parents, relative caregivers, or preadoptive parents that he or she may attend all hearings or may submit any information he or she deems relevant to the court in writing. The foster parents, relative caregiver, and preadoptive parents are entitled to notice and opportunity to be heard but need not be made parties to the proceedings. Proof of notice shall be filed with the court.

(b) At least 10 calendar days prior to each status review and permanency planning hearing, after the hearing during which the court orders that the care, custody and control of the minor to be under the supervision of the probation officer for placement pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 727, the probation officer shall file a social study report with the court, pursuant to the requirements listed in Section 706.5.

(c) The probation department shall inform the minor, the minor's parent or guardian, and all counsel of record that a copy of the social study prepared for the hearing will be available 10 days prior to the hearing and may be obtained from the probation officer.

(d) As used in Article 15 (commencing with Section 625) to Article 18 (commencing with Section 725), inclusive:



(1) “Foster care” means residential care provided in any of the settings described in Section 11402.

(2) “At risk of entering foster care” means that conditions within a minor’s family may necessitate his or her entry into foster care unless those conditions are resolved.

(3) “Preadoptive parent” means a licensed foster parent who has been approved for adoption by the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency or by a licensed adoption agency.

(4) “Date of entry into foster care” means the date that is 60 days after the date on which the minor was removed from his or her home, unless one of the exceptions below applies:

(A) If the minor is detained pending foster care placement, and remains detained for more than 60 days, then the date of entry into foster care means the date the court adjudges the minor a ward and orders the minor placed in foster care under the supervision of the probation officer.

(B) If, before the minor is placed in foster care, the minor is committed to a ranch, camp, school, or other institution pending placement, and remains in that facility for more than 60 days, then the “date of entry into foster care” is the date the minor is physically placed in foster care.

(C) If at the time the wardship petition was filed, the minor was a dependent of the juvenile court and in out-of-home placement, then the “date of entry into foster care” is the earlier of the date the juvenile court made a finding of abuse or neglect, or 60 days after the date on which the child was removed from his or her home.

(5) “Reasonable efforts” means:

(A) Efforts made to prevent or eliminate the need for removing the minor from the minor’s home;

(B) Efforts to make it possible for the minor to return home, including, but not limited to, case management, counseling, parenting training, mentoring programs, vocational training, educational services, substance abuse treatment, transportation, and therapeutic day services; and

(C) Efforts to complete whatever steps are necessary to finalize a permanent plan for the minor.

(6) “Relative” means an adult who is related to the minor by blood, adoption, or affinity within the fifth degree of kinship including stepparents, stepsiblings, and all relatives whose status is preceded by the words “great,” “great-great,” “grand,” or the spouse of any of these persons even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution.

(7) “Hearing” means a noticed proceeding with findings and orders that are made on a case-by-case basis, heard by either of the following:

(A) A judicial officer, in a courtroom, recorded by a court reporter.



(B) An administrative panel, provided that the hearing is a status review hearing and that the administrative panel meets the following conditions:

(i) The administrative review shall be open to participation by the minor and parents or legal guardians and all those persons entitled to notice under subdivision (a) of Section 727.4.

(ii) The minor and his or her parents or legal guardians receive proper notice as required in subdivision (a) of Section 727.4.

(iii) The administrative review panel is composed of persons appointed by the presiding judge of the juvenile court, the membership of which shall include at least one person who is not responsible for the case management of, or delivery of services to, the minor or the parents who are subject of the review.

(iv) The findings of the administrative review panel shall be submitted to the juvenile court for the court's approval and shall become part of the official court record.

SEC. 16. Section 728 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

728. (a) The juvenile court may terminate or modify a guardianship of the person of a minor previously established under the Probate Code, or appoint a coguardian or successor guardian of the person of the minor, if the minor is the subject of a petition filed under Section 300, 601, or 602. If the probation officer supervising the minor provides information to the court regarding the minor's present circumstances and makes a recommendation to the court regarding a motion to terminate or modify a guardianship established in any county under the Probate Code, or to appoint a coguardian or successor guardian, of the person of a minor who is before the juvenile court under a petition filed under Section 300, 601, or 602, the court shall order the appropriate county department, or the district attorney or county counsel, to file the recommended motion. The motion may also be made by the guardian or the minor's attorney. The hearing on the motion may be held simultaneously with any regularly scheduled hearing held in proceedings to declare the minor a dependent child or ward of the court, or at any subsequent hearing concerning the dependent child or ward. Notice requirements of Section 1511 of the Probate Code shall apply to the proceedings in juvenile court under this subdivision.

(b) If the juvenile court decides to terminate or modify a guardianship previously established under the Probate Code pursuant to subdivision (a), the juvenile court shall provide notice of that decision to the court in which the guardianship was originally established. The clerk of the superior court, upon receipt of the notice, shall file the notice with other



documents and records of the pending proceeding and send by first-class mail a copy of the notice to all parties of record in the superior court.

(c) If, at any time during the period a minor under the age of 18 years is a ward of the juvenile court, the probation officer supervising the minor recommends to the court that the court establish a guardianship of the person of the minor and appoint a specific adult to act as guardian, or on the motion of the minor's attorney, or on the order of the court that a guardianship shall be established as the minor's permanent plan pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (b) of Section 727.3, the court shall set a hearing to consider the recommendation or motion and shall order the clerk to notice the minor's parents and relatives as required in Section 1511 of the Probate Code. If the motion is not made by the minor's attorney, the court may appoint the district attorney or county counsel to prosecute the action.

(d) At the hearing described in subdivision (c), the court shall determine if the appointment of a guardian of the person of the minor appears necessary or convenient, and is consistent with the rehabilitation and protection of the minor and with public safety, and if the court so determines, it shall appoint a guardian of the person of the minor and order that letters of guardianship issue pursuant to the standards and procedures specified in the Probate Code.

(e) Upon the appointment of a guardian pursuant to subdivision (d), the court may continue wardship and conditions of probation, or may terminate the wardship of the minor.

(f) Notwithstanding Section 1601 of the Probate Code, the proceedings to modify or terminate a guardianship granted under this section shall be held in the juvenile court unless the termination is due to the emancipation or adoption of the minor.

(g) The Judicial Council shall develop rules of court and adopt appropriate forms for the findings and orders under this section.

SEC. 17. Notwithstanding Section 17610 of the Government Code, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code. If the statewide cost of the claim for reimbursement does not exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000), reimbursement shall be made from the State Mandates Claims Fund.

