

Assembly Bill No. 1524

CHAPTER 1083

An act to amend Sections 366.21, 366.26, 16100, 16122, and 16501 of, and to amend, repeal, and add Section 361.5 of, the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to children.

[Approved by Governor September 29, 1996. Filed
with Secretary of State September 30, 1996.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1524, Granlund. Children: dependency proceedings: adoption.

(1) Existing law requires the juvenile court, when a minor is removed from the parent's or guardian's custody, to order the probation officer to provide child welfare services to the family for the purpose of facilitating reunification within a maximum time period not to exceed 12 months, except where the court finds that certain conditions exist. Under this provision, services may be extended up to an additional 6 months, as specified.

This bill would revise the time periods governing provision of reunification services and would require specified notice to the parent or guardian of a child who was under the age of 3 years on the date of removal from the home. The bill would add to the conditions under which the court is not required to order reunification services, that the parent is not receiving reunification services for a sibling or a half-sibling of the minor pursuant to other conditions specified in existing law, or that the parent or guardian willfully abandoned the minor and the abandonment constituted a serious danger to the child, as specified. The bill would make related changes.

(2) Under existing law, whenever the court orders a specified hearing, it is required to direct the preparation of an assessment that includes an analysis of the likelihood that the minor will be adopted if parental rights are terminated.

This bill would revise the requirements of this assessment. These revisions would be operative only until January 1, 1999.

(3) Under existing law, the status of every dependent child in foster care is required to be reviewed periodically but no less than once every 6 months. Existing law provides that at the review hearing held 6 months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parents or guardians unless the court finds that the return would create a substantial risk of detriment to the physical or emotional well-being of the minor.

This bill would require the court, if the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, to specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The bill would authorize the court, in the case of a minor who is under 3 years of age on the date of removal from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, to schedule a hearing regarding the termination of parental rights under specified circumstances. The bill would make related changes.

(4) Existing law, operative January 1, 1996, prohibits the State Department of Social Services and any licensed adoption agency to which a child has been freed for adoption by either relinquishment or termination of parental rights from discriminating in the placement of the child on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as provided. Existing law also authorizes the department and these agencies to consider the cultural, ethnic, or racial background of the child and the capacity of the prospective adoptive parent to meet the needs of a child of this background as one of a number of factors used to determine the best interest of the child, and to consider the child's religious background. Existing law relating to dependency proceedings and the placement of a minor who has a probability for adoption but is difficult to place for adoption, requires a public agency to conduct a search for adoptive parents pursuant to the former provision described above under certain conditions.

This bill would instead provide that the public agency must conduct a search for adoptive parents in the same manner as prescribed for children in both of the provisions described above.

(5) Under existing law, in proceedings for the adoption of a minor who is a dependent child where the juvenile court has found that adoption is the appropriate permanency plan, the court is required to read and consider certain assessments prepared pursuant to specified provisions of law.

This bill would instead require the court to read and consider the full report prepared by the State Department of Social Services or an adoption agency pursuant to existing law relating to adoption.

(6) Existing law authorizes the State Department of Social Services to license any county agency as a licensed county adoption agency.

This bill would authorize a licensed county adoption agency to purchase specified services from any licensed private adoption agency which the private adoption agency is licensed to provide, to facilitate adoptive placement of a category of children for whom the county adoption agency has determined it cannot provide adequate services.

(7) Existing law establishes the Adoption Assistance Program, under which financial assistance is provided for the adoption of defined special needs children. Existing law requires the state to reimburse licensed private adoption agencies for costs of aid to



adoption for special needs children, as provided, from any funds appropriated for this purpose.

This bill would revise the latter provision to require the state to compensate licensed private adoption agencies for costs of placing for adoption children eligible for Adoption Assistance Program benefits, as provided.

(8) The bill would incorporate additional amendments to Sections 361.5 and 366.26 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, that are substantially the same as those proposed by AB 2679, contingent upon this bill being chaptered last as specified, and to Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, proposed by SB 1516 or AB 2679, or both, to become operative only if one or both of those bills and this bill are chaptered and become effective, on or before January 1, 1997, and this bill is chaptered last.

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

SECTION 1. Section 361.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

361.5. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b) or upon the establishment of an order of guardianship pursuant to Section 360, whenever a minor is removed from a parent's or guardian's custody, the juvenile court shall order the probation officer to provide child welfare services to the minor and the minor's parents or guardians for the purpose of facilitating reunification of the family as follows:

(1) For a minor who, on the date of initial removal from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, was three years of age or older, court-ordered services shall not exceed a period of 12 months.

(2) For a minor who, on the date of initial removal from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, was under the age of three years, court-ordered services shall not exceed a period of six months.

However, court-ordered services may be extended up to a maximum time period not to exceed 18 months if it can be shown that the objectives of the service plan can be achieved within the extended time period. The court shall extend the time period 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 guardian within the extended time period or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or guardian. If the court extends the time period, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that there is a substantial probability that the minor will be returned to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian within the extended time period. The court also shall make findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366. When counseling or other treatment services are ordered, the parent or guardian shall be ordered to



participate in those services, unless the parent's or guardian's participation is deemed by the court to be inappropriate or potentially detrimental to the child. Physical custody of the minor by the parents or guardians during the 18-month period shall not serve to interrupt the running of the period. If at the end of the 18-month period, a child cannot be safely returned to the care and custody of a parent or guardian without court supervision, but the child clearly desires contact with the parent or guardian, the court shall take the child's desire into account in devising a permanency plan.

In cases where the minor was under the age of three years on the date of the initial removal from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, the court shall inform the parent or guardian that the failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment programs or to cooperate or avail himself or herself of services provided as part of the child welfare services case plan may result in a termination of efforts to reunify the family after six months.

Except in cases where, pursuant to subdivision (b), the court does not order reunification services, the court shall inform the parent or parents of Section 366.25 or 366.26 and shall specify that the parent's or parents' parental rights may be terminated.

(b) Reunification services need not be provided to a parent or guardian described in this subdivision when the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, any of the following:

(1) That the whereabouts of the parent or guardian is unknown. A finding pursuant to this paragraph shall be supported by an affidavit or by proof that a reasonably diligent search has failed to locate the parent or guardian. The posting or publication of notices is not required in that search.

(2) That the parent or guardian is suffering from a mental disability that is described in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 7820) of Part 4 of Division 12 of the Family Code and that renders him or her incapable of utilizing those services.

(3) That the minor had been previously adjudicated a dependent pursuant to any subdivision of Section 300 as a result of physical or sexual abuse, that following that adjudication the minor had been removed from the custody of his or her parent or guardian pursuant to Section 361, that the minor has been returned to the custody of the parent or parents or guardian or guardians from whom the minor had been taken originally, and that the minor is being removed pursuant to Section 361, due to additional physical or sexual abuse.

(4) That the parent or guardian of the minor has been convicted of causing the death of another child through abuse or neglect.

(5) That the minor was brought within the jurisdiction of the court under subdivision (e) of Section 300 because of the conduct of that parent or guardian.



(6) That the minor has been adjudicated a dependent pursuant to any subdivision of Section 300 as a result of severe sexual abuse or the infliction of severe physical harm by a parent or guardian, as defined in this subdivision, and the court makes a factual finding that it would not benefit the child to pursue reunification services with the offending parent or guardian.

A finding of severe sexual abuse, for the purposes of this subdivision, may be based on, but is not limited to, sexual intercourse or stimulation involving genital-genital, oral-genital, anal-genital, or oral-anal contact, whether between the parent or guardian and the child, or between the child and another person or animal with the actual or implied consent of, and for the financial gain or other advantage of, the parent or guardian; or the penetration or manipulation of the child's genital organs or rectum by any animate or inanimate object, for the sexual gratification of the parent or guardian, or for the sexual gratification of another person with the actual or implied consent of, and for the financial gain or other advantage of, the parent or guardian.

A finding of the infliction of severe physical harm, for the purposes of this subdivision, may be based on, but is not limited to, deliberate and serious injury inflicted to or on a child's body by an act or omission of the parent or guardian, or of another individual or animal with the consent of the parent or guardian; deliberate and torturous confinement of the child in a closed space; or any other torturous act or omission which would be reasonably understood to cause serious emotional damage.

(7) That the parent is not receiving reunification services for a sibling or a half-sibling of the minor pursuant to paragraph (3), (5), or (6).

(8) That the minor was conceived by means of the commission of an offense listed in Section 288 or 288.5 of the Penal Code, or by an act committed outside this state which if committed in this state would constitute such an offense. This paragraph only applies to the parent who perpetrated the offense or act.

(9) That the minor has been found to be a child described in subdivision (g) of Section 300, that the parent or guardian of the minor willfully abandoned the minor, and the court finds that the abandonment itself constituted a serious danger to the child. For the purposes of this paragraph, "serious danger" means that, without intervention by another person or agency, the minor would have sustained severe or permanent disability, injury, illness, or death.

(c) In deciding whether to order reunification in any case in which this section applies, the court shall hold a dispositional hearing. The probation officer shall prepare a report which discusses whether reunification services shall be provided. When it is alleged, pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (b), that the parent is incapable of utilizing services due to mental disability, the court shall order



reunification services unless competent evidence from mental health professionals establishes that, even with the provision of services, the parent is unlikely to be capable of adequately caring for the child within 12 months.

When paragraph (3), (4), (5), or (9) of subdivision (b) is applicable, the court shall not order reunification unless it finds that, based on competent testimony, those services are likely to prevent reabuse or continued neglect of the child or that failure to try reunification will be detrimental to the child because the child is closely and positively attached to that parent. The probation officer shall investigate the circumstances leading to the removal of the minor and advise the court whether there are circumstances which indicate that reunification is likely to be successful or unsuccessful and whether failure to order reunification is likely to be detrimental to the child.

The failure of the parent to respond to previous services, the fact that the child was abused while the parent was under the influence of drugs or alcohol, a past history of violent behavior, or testimony by a competent professional that the parent's behavior is unlikely to be changed by services are among the factors indicating that reunification services are unlikely to be successful. The fact that a parent or guardian is no longer living with an individual who severely abused the minor may be considered in deciding that reunification services are likely to be successful, provided that the court shall consider any pattern of behavior on the part of the parent that has exposed the child to repeated abuse.

The court shall not order reunification for a parent who perpetrated an offense or act specified in paragraph (7) of subdivision (b) unless the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that reunification is in the best interest of the minor.

(d) If reunification services are not ordered pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) and the whereabouts of a parent become known within six months of the out-of-home placement of the minor, the court shall order the probation officer to provide family reunification services in accordance with this subdivision. However, the time limits specified in subdivision (a) and Section 366.25 are not tolled by the parent's absence.

(e) (1) If the parent or guardian is incarcerated or institutionalized, the court shall order reasonable services unless the court determines, by clear and convincing evidence, those services would be detrimental to the minor. In determining detriment, the court shall consider the age of the child, the degree of parent-child bonding, the length of the sentence, the nature of the treatment, the nature of crime or illness, the degree of detriment to the child if services are not offered and, for minors 10 years of age or older, the minor's attitude toward the implementation of family reunification services, and any other appropriate factors. Reunification services



are subject to the 18-month limitation imposed in subdivision (a). Services may include, but shall not be limited to, all of the following:

(A) Maintaining contact between parent and child through collect telephone calls.

(B) Transportation services, where appropriate.

(C) Visitation services, where appropriate.

(D) Reasonable services to extended family members or foster parents providing care for the child if the services are not detrimental to the child.

An incarcerated parent may be required to attend counseling, parenting classes, or vocational training programs as part of the service plan if these programs are available.

(2) The presiding judge of the juvenile court of each county may convene representatives of the county welfare department, the sheriff's department, and other appropriate entities for the purpose of developing and entering into protocols for ensuring the notification, transportation, and presence of an incarcerated or institutionalized parent at all court hearings involving proceedings affecting the minor pursuant to Section 2625 of the Penal Code.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the incarcerated parent is a woman seeking to participate in the community treatment program operated by the Department of Corrections pursuant to Chapter 4.8 (commencing with Section 1174) of Title 7 of Part 2 of, or Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 3410) of Title 2 of Part 3 of, the Penal Code, the court shall determine whether the parent's participation in a program is in the child's best interest and whether it is suitable to meet the needs of the parent and child.

(f) If a court, pursuant to paragraph (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), or (9) of subdivision (b) or paragraph (1) of subdivision (e), does not order reunification services, it shall conduct a hearing pursuant to Section 366.25 or 366.26 within 120 days of the dispositional hearing. However, the court shall not schedule a hearing so long as the other parent is being provided reunification services pursuant to subdivision (a). The court may continue to permit the parent to visit the minor unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the minor.

(g) Whenever a court orders that a hearing shall be held pursuant to Section 366.25 or 366.26, it shall direct the agency supervising the child and the licensed county adoption agency, or the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency in counties which are not served by a county adoption agency, to prepare an assessment regarding the likelihood that the minor will be adopted if parental rights are terminated. The assessment shall include:

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



(2) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the minor and his or her parents since the time of placement.

(3) An evaluation of the minor's medical, developmental, scholastic, mental, and emotional status and an analysis of whether any of the minor's characteristics would make it difficult to find a person willing to adopt the minor.

(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.

(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.

(h) In determining whether reunification services will benefit the child pursuant to paragraph (6) or (7) of subdivision (b), the court shall consider any information it deems relevant, including the following factors:

(1) The specific act or omission comprising the severe sexual abuse or the severe physical harm inflicted on the child or the child's sibling or half-sibling.

(2) The circumstances under which the abuse or harm was inflicted on the child or the child's sibling or half-sibling.

(3) The severity of the emotional trauma suffered by the child or the child's sibling or half-sibling.

(4) Any history of abuse of other children by the offending parent or guardian.

(5) The likelihood that the child may be safely returned to the care of the offending parent or guardian within 18 months with no continuing supervision.

(6) Whether or not the child desires to be reunified with the offending parent or guardian.

(i) The court shall read into the record the basis for a finding of severe sexual abuse or the infliction of severe physical harm under paragraph (6) of subdivision (b), and shall also specify the factual findings used to determine that the provision of reunification services to the offending parent or guardian would not benefit the child.

(j) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 1999, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, which is enacted on or before January 1, 1999, deletes or extends that date.



SEC. 2. Section 361.5 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

361.5. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b) or upon the establishment of an order of guardianship pursuant to Section 360, whenever a minor is removed from a parent's or guardian's custody, the juvenile court shall order the probation officer to provide child welfare services to the minor and the minor's parents or guardians for the purpose of facilitating reunification of the family as follows:

(1) For a minor who, on the date of initial removal from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, was age three years or older, court-ordered services shall not exceed a period of 12 months.

(2) For a minor who, on the date of initial removal from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, was under the age of three years, court-ordered services shall not exceed a period of six months.

However, court-ordered services may be extended up to a maximum time period not to exceed 18 months if it can be shown that the objectives of the service plan can be achieved within the extended time period. The court shall extend the time period 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 guardian within the extended time period or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or guardian. If the court extends the time period, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that there is a substantial probability that the minor will be returned to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian within the extended time period. The court also shall make findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366. When counseling or other treatment services are ordered, the parent or guardian shall be ordered to participate in those services, unless the parent's or guardian's participation is deemed by the court to be inappropriate or potentially detrimental to the child. Physical custody of the minor by the parents or guardians during the 18-month period shall not serve to interrupt the running of the period. If at the end of the 18-month period, a child cannot be safely returned to the care and custody of a parent or guardian without court supervision, but the child clearly desires contact with the parent or guardian, the court shall take the child's desire into account in devising a permanency plan.

In cases where the minor was under the age of three years on the date of the initial removal from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, the court shall inform the parent or guardian that the failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment programs or to cooperate or avail himself or herself of services provided as part of the child welfare services case plan may result in a termination of efforts to reunify the family after six months.



Except in cases where, pursuant to subdivision (b), the court does not order reunification services, the court shall inform the parent or parents of Section 366.25 or 366.26 and shall specify that the parent's or parents' parental rights may be terminated.

(b) Reunification services need not be provided to a parent or guardian described in this subdivision when the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, any of the following:

(1) That the whereabouts of the parent or guardian is unknown. A finding pursuant to this paragraph shall be supported by an affidavit or by proof that a reasonably diligent search has failed to locate the parent or guardian. The posting or publication of notices is not required in that search.

(2) That the parent or guardian is suffering from a mental disability that is described in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 7820) of Part 4 of Division 12 of the Family Code and that renders him or her incapable of utilizing those services.

(3) That the minor has been previously adjudicated a dependent pursuant to any subdivision of Section 300 as a result of physical or sexual abuse, that following that adjudication the minor had been removed from the custody of his or her parent or guardian pursuant to Section 361, that the minor has been returned to the custody of the parent or parents or guardian or guardians from whom the minor had been taken originally, and that the minor is being removed pursuant to Section 361, due to additional physical or sexual abuse.

(4) That the parent or guardian of the minor has been convicted of causing the death of another child through abuse or neglect.

(5) That the minor was brought within the jurisdiction of the court under subdivision (c) of Section 300 because of the conduct of that parent or guardian.

(6) That the minor has been adjudicated a dependent pursuant to any subdivision of Section 300 as a result of severe sexual abuse or the infliction of severe physical harm by a parent or guardian, as defined in this subdivision, and the court makes a factual finding that it would not benefit the child to pursue reunification services with the offending parent or guardian.

A finding of severe sexual abuse, for the purposes of this subdivision, may be based on, but is not limited to, sexual intercourse or stimulation involving genital-genital, oral-genital, anal-genital, or oral-anal contact, whether between the parent or guardian and the child, or between the child and another person or animal with the actual or implied consent of, and for the financial gain or other advantage of, the parent or guardian; or the penetration or manipulation of the child's genital organs or rectum by any animate or inanimate object for the sexual gratification of the parent or guardian, or for the sexual gratification of another person with the actual or implied consent of, and of the financial gain or other advantage of, the parent or guardian.



A finding of the infliction of severe physical harm, for the purposes of this subdivision, may be based on, but is not limited to, deliberate and serious injury inflicted to or on a child's body by an act or omission of the parent or guardian, or of another individual or animal with the consent of the parent or guardian; deliberate and torturous confinement of the child in a closed space; or any other torturous act or omission which would be reasonably understood to cause serious emotional damage.

(7) That the parent is not receiving reunification services for a sibling or a half-sibling of the minor pursuant to paragraph (3), (5), or (6).

(8) That the minor was conceived by means of the commission of an offense listed in Section 288 or 288.5 of the Penal Code, or by an act committed outside this state which if committed in this state would constitute such an offense. This paragraph only applies to the parent who perpetrated the offense or act.

(9) That the minor has been found to be a child described in subdivision (g) of Section 300, that the parent or guardian of the minor willfully abandoned the minor, and the court finds that the abandonment itself constituted a serious danger to the child. For the purposes of this paragraph, "serious danger" means that, without intervention by another person or agency, the minor would have sustained severe or permanent disability, injury, illness, or death.

(c) In deciding whether to order reunification in any case in which this section applies, the court shall hold a dispositional hearing. The probation officer shall prepare a report which discusses whether reunification services shall be provided. When it is alleged, pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (b), that the parent is incapable of utilizing services due to mental disability, the court shall order reunification services unless competent evidence from mental health professionals establishes that, even with the provision of services, the parent is unlikely to be capable of adequately caring for the child within 12 months.

When paragraph (3), (4), (5), or (9) of subdivision (b) is applicable, the court shall not order reunification unless it finds that, based on competent testimony, those services are likely to prevent reabuse or continued neglect of the child or that failure to try reunification will be detrimental to the child because the child is closely and positively attached to that parent. The probation officer shall investigate the circumstances leading to the removal of the minor and advise the court whether there are circumstances which indicate that reunification is likely to be successful or unsuccessful and whether failure to order reunification is likely to be detrimental to the child.

The failure of the parent to respond to previous services, the fact that the child was abused while the parent was under the influence of drugs or alcohol, a past history of violent behavior, or testimony by



a competent professional that the parent's behavior is unlikely to be changed by services are among the factors indicating that reunification services are unlikely to be successful. The fact that a parent or guardian is no longer living with an individual who severely abused the minor may be considered in deciding that reunification services are likely to be successful, provided that the court shall consider any pattern of behavior on the part of the parent that has exposed the child to repeated abuse.

The court shall not order reunification for a parent who perpetrated an offense or act specified in paragraph (8) of subdivision (b) unless the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that reunification is in the best interest of the minor.

(d) If reunification services are not ordered pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) and the whereabouts of a parent become known within six months of the out-of-home placement of the minor, the court shall order the probation officer to provide family reunification services in accordance with this subdivision. However, the time limits specified in subdivision (a) and Section 366.25 are not tolled by the parent's absence.

(e) (1) If the parent or guardian is incarcerated or institutionalized, the court shall order reasonable services unless the court determines, by clear and convincing evidence, those services would be detrimental to the minor. In determining detriment, the court shall consider the age of the child, the degree of parent-child bonding, the length of the sentence, the nature of the treatment, the nature of crime or illness, the degree of detriment to the child if services are not offered and, for minors 10 years of age or older, the minor's attitude toward the implementation of family reunification services, and any other appropriate factors. Reunification services are subject to the 18-month limitation imposed in subdivision (a). Services may include, but shall not be limited to, all of the following:

(A) Maintaining contact between parent and child through collect telephone calls.

(B) Transportation services, where appropriate.

(C) Visitation services, where appropriate.

(D) Reasonable services to extended family members or foster parents providing care for the child if the services are not detrimental to the child.

An incarcerated parent may be required to attend counseling, parenting classes, or vocational training programs as part of the service plan if these programs are available.

(2) The presiding judge of the juvenile court of each county may convene representatives of the county welfare department, the sheriff's department, and other appropriate entities for the purpose of developing and entering into protocols for ensuring the notification, transportation, and presence of an incarcerated or



institutionalized parent at all court hearings involving proceedings affecting the minor pursuant to Section 2625 of the Penal Code.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the incarcerated parent is a woman seeking to participate in the community treatment program operated by the Department of Corrections pursuant to Chapter 4.8 (commencing with Section 1174) of Title 7 of Part 2 of, Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 3410) of Title 2 of Part 3 of, the Penal Code, the court shall determine whether the parent's participation in a program is in the child's best interest and whether it is suitable to meet the needs of the parent and child.

(f) If a court, pursuant to paragraph (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), or (9) of subdivision (b) or paragraph (1) of subdivision (e), does not order reunification services, it shall conduct a hearing pursuant to Section 366.25 or 366.26 within 120 days of the dispositional hearing. However, the court shall not schedule a hearing so long as the other parent is being provided reunification services pursuant to subdivision (a). The court may continue to permit the parent to visit the minor unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the minor.

(g) Whenever a court orders that a hearing shall be held pursuant to Section 366.25 or 366.26, it shall direct the agency supervising the child and the licensed county adoption agency, or the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency in counties which are not served by a county adoption agency, to prepare an assessment which shall include:

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

(2) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the minor and his or her parents since the time of placement.

(3) An evaluation of the minor's medical, development, 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.

(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.



(h) In determining whether reunification services will benefit the child pursuant to paragraph (6) or (7) of subdivision (b), the court shall consider any information it deems relevant, including the following factors:

(1) The specific act or omission compromising the severe sexual abuse or the severe physical harm inflicted on the child or the child's sibling or half-sibling.

(2) The circumstances under which the abuse or harm was inflicted on the child or the child's sibling or half-sibling.

(3) The severity of the emotional trauma suffered by the child or the child's sibling or half-sibling.

(4) Any history of abuse of other children by the offending parent or guardian.

(5) The likelihood that the child may be safely returned to the care of the offending parent or guardian within 18 months with no continuing supervision.

(6) Whether or not the child desires to be reunified with the offending parent or guardian.

(i) The court shall read into the record the basis for a finding of severe sexual abuse or the infliction of severe physical harm under paragraph (6) of subdivision (b), and shall also specify the factual findings used to determine that the provision of reunification services to the offending parent or guardian would not benefit the child.

(j) This section shall become operative January 1, 1999.

SEC. 2.5. Section 361.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

361.5. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b) or upon the establishment of an order of guardianship pursuant to Section 360, whenever a minor is removed from a parent's or guardian's custody, the juvenile court shall order the probation officer to provide child welfare services to the minor and the minor's parents or guardians for the purpose of facilitating reunification of the family as follows:

(1) For a minor who, on the date of initial removal from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, was three years of age or older, court-ordered services shall not exceed a period of 12 months.

(2) For a minor who, on the date of initial removal from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, was under the age of three years, court-ordered services shall not exceed a period of six months.

However, court-ordered services may be extended up to a maximum time period not to exceed 18 months if it can be shown that the objectives of the service plan can be achieved within the extended time period. The court shall extend the time period 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 guardian within the extended time period or that reasonable services have not



been provided to the parent or guardian. If the court extends the time period, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that there is a substantial probability that the minor will be returned to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian within the extended time period. The court also shall make findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366. When counseling or other treatment services are ordered, the parent or guardian shall be ordered to participate in those services, unless the parent's or guardian's participation is deemed by the court to be inappropriate or potentially detrimental to the minor. Physical custody of the minor by the parents or guardians during the 18-month period shall not serve to interrupt the running of the period. If at the end of the 18-month period, a minor cannot be safely returned to the care and custody of a parent or guardian without court supervision, but the minor clearly desires contact with the parent or guardian, the court shall take the child's desire into account in devising a permanency plan.

In cases where the minor was under the age of three years on the date of the initial removal from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, the court shall inform the parent or guardian that the failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment programs or to cooperate or avail himself or herself of services provided as part of the child welfare services case plan may result in a termination of efforts to reunify the family after six months.

Except in cases where, pursuant to subdivision (b), the court does not order reunification services, the court shall inform the parent or parents of Section 366.25 or 366.26 and shall specify that the parent's or parents' parental rights may be terminated.

(b) Reunification services need not be provided to a parent or guardian described in this subdivision when the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, any of the following:

(1) That the whereabouts of the parent or guardian is unknown. A finding pursuant to this paragraph shall be supported by an affidavit or by proof that a reasonably diligent search has failed to locate the parent or guardian. The posting or publication of notices is not required in that search.

(2) That the parent or guardian is suffering from a mental disability that is described in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 7820) of Part 4 of Division 12 of the Family Code and that renders him or her incapable of utilizing those services.

(3) That the minor or a sibling of the minor had been previously adjudicated a dependent pursuant to any subdivision of Section 300 as a result of physical or sexual abuse, that following that adjudication the minor had been removed from the custody of his or her parent or guardian pursuant to Section 361, that the minor has been returned to the custody of the parent or guardian from whom the



minor had been taken originally, and that the minor is being removed pursuant to Section 361, due to additional physical or sexual abuse.

(4) That the parent or guardian of the minor has caused the death of another minor through abuse or neglect.

(5) That the minor was brought within the jurisdiction of the court under subdivision (e) of Section 300 because of the conduct of that parent or guardian.

(6) That the minor has been adjudicated a dependent pursuant to any subdivision of Section 300 as a result of severe sexual abuse or the infliction of severe physical harm to the minor, a sibling, or a half-sibling by a parent or guardian, as defined in this subdivision, and the court makes a factual finding that it would not benefit the minor to pursue reunification services with the offending parent or guardian.

A finding of severe sexual abuse, for the purposes of this subdivision, may be based on, but is not limited to, sexual intercourse or stimulation involving genital-genital, oral-genital, anal-genital, or oral-anal contact, whether between the parent or guardian and the minor, or a sibling or half-sibling of the minor, or between the minor or a sibling or half-sibling of the minor, and another person or animal with the actual or implied consent of the parent or guardian, or the penetration or manipulation of the minor's, sibling's, or half-sibling's genital organs or rectum by any animate or inanimate object, for the sexual gratification of the parent or guardian, or for the sexual gratification of another person with the actual or implied consent of the parent or guardian.

A finding of the infliction of severe physical harm, for the purposes of this subdivision, may be based on, but is not limited to, deliberate and serious injury inflicted to or on a minor's body, or the body of a sibling or half-sibling of the minor, by an act or omission of the parent or guardian, or of another individual or animal with the consent of the parent or guardian; deliberate and torturous confinement of the minor, sibling, or half-sibling, in a closed space; or any other torturous act or omission which would be reasonably understood to cause serious emotional damage.

(7) That the parent is not receiving reunification services for a sibling or a half-sibling of the minor pursuant to paragraph (3), (5), or (6).

(8) That the minor was conceived by means of the commission of an offense listed in Section 288 or 288.5 of the Penal Code, or by an act committed outside of this state which if committed in this state would constitute such an offense. This paragraph only applies to the parent who committed the offense or act.

(9) That the minor was brought within the jurisdiction of the court under subdivision (g) of Section 300, that the parent or guardian of the minor willfully abandoned the minor, and the court finds that the abandonment itself constituted a serious danger to the minor. For



purposes of this paragraph, a “serious danger” means that without the intervention of another person or agency, the minor would have sustained severe or permanent disability, injury, illness, or death. For purposes of this paragraph, “willful abandonment” shall not be construed as actions taken in good faith by the parent without the intent of placing the minor in serious danger.

(10) That (A) the court ordered a permanent plan of adoption, guardianship, or long-term foster care for any siblings or half-siblings of the minor because the parent or guardian failed to reunify with the sibling or half-sibling after the sibling or half-sibling had been removed from that parent or guardian pursuant to Section 361 and that parent or guardian is the same parent or guardian described in subdivision (a), or (B) the parental rights of a parent or guardian over any sibling or half-sibling of the minor had been permanently severed and that, according to the findings of the court, this parent or guardian has not subsequently made a reasonable effort to treat the problems that led to removal of the sibling or half-sibling of that minor from that parent or guardian.

(11) That the parent or guardian has been convicted of a violent felony, as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 667.5 of the Penal Code.

(12) That the parent or guardian of the minor has a history of extensive, abusive, and chronic use of drugs or alcohol and has resisted prior treatment for this problem during a three-year period immediately prior to the filing of the petition which brought that minor to the court’s attention, or has failed or refused to comply with a program of drug or alcohol treatment described in the case plan required by Section 358.1 on at least two prior occasions, even though the programs identified were available and accessible.

(c) In deciding whether to order reunification in any case in which this section applies, the court shall hold a dispositional hearing. The probation officer shall prepare a report which discusses whether reunification services shall be provided. When it is alleged, pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (b), that the parent is incapable of utilizing services due to mental disability, the court shall order reunification services unless competent evidence from mental health professionals establishes that, even with the provision of services, the parent is unlikely to be capable of adequately caring for the child within 12 months.

The court shall not order reunification for a parent or guardian described in paragraph (3), (4), (6), (8), (9), (11), or (12) of subdivision (b) unless the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that reunification is in the best interest of the minor.

In addition, the court shall not order reunification in any situation described in paragraph (5) of subdivision (b) unless it finds that, based on competent testimony, those services are likely to prevent reabuse or continued neglect of the minor or that failure to try



reunification will be detrimental to the minor because the minor is closely and positively attached to that parent. The probation officer shall investigate the circumstances leading to the removal of the minor and advise the court whether there are circumstances which indicate that reunification is likely to be successful or unsuccessful and whether failure to order reunification is likely to be detrimental to the minor.

The failure of the parent to respond to previous services, the fact that the minor was abused while the parent was under the influence of drugs or alcohol, a past history of violent behavior, or testimony by a competent professional that the parent's behavior is unlikely to be changed by services are among the factors indicating that reunification services are unlikely to be successful. The fact that a parent or guardian is no longer living with an individual who severely abused the minor may be considered in deciding that reunification services are likely to be successful, provided that the court shall consider any pattern of behavior on the part of the parent that has exposed the minor to repeated abuse.

(d) If reunification services are not ordered pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) and the whereabouts of a parent become known within six months of the out-of-home placement of the minor, the court shall order the probation officer to provide family reunification services in accordance with this subdivision. However, the time limits specified in subdivision (a) and Section 366.25 are not tolled by the parent's absence.

(e) (1) If the parent or guardian is incarcerated or institutionalized, the court shall order reasonable services unless the court determines, by clear and convincing evidence, those services would be detrimental to the minor. In determining detriment, the court shall consider the age of the minor, the degree of parent-child bonding, the length of the sentence, the nature of the treatment, the nature of crime or illness, the degree of detriment to the minor if services are not offered and, for minors 10 years of age or older, the minor's attitude toward the implementation of family reunification services, and any other appropriate factors. Reunification services are subject to the 18-month limitation imposed in subdivision (a). Services may include, but shall not be limited to, all of the following:

(A) Maintaining contact between parent and minor through collect telephone calls.

(B) Transportation services, where appropriate.

(C) Visitation services, where appropriate.

(D) Reasonable services to extended family members or foster parents providing care for the minor if the services are not detrimental to the minor.

An incarcerated parent may be required to attend counseling, parenting classes, or vocational training programs as part of the service plan if these programs are available.



(2) The presiding judge of the juvenile court of each county may convene representatives of the county welfare department, the sheriff's department, and other appropriate entities for the purpose of developing and entering into protocols for ensuring the notification, transportation, and presence of an incarcerated or institutionalized parent at all court hearings involving proceedings affecting the minor pursuant to Section 2625 of the Penal Code.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the incarcerated parent is a woman seeking to participate in the community treatment program operated by the Department of Corrections pursuant to Chapter 4.8 (commencing with Section 1174) of Title 7 of Part 2 of, or Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 3410) of Title 2 of Part 3 of the Penal Code, the court shall determine whether the parent's participation in a program is in the child's best interest and whether it is suitable to meet the needs of the parent and child.

(f) If a court, pursuant to paragraph (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), (9), (10), (11), or (12) of subdivision (b) or paragraph (1) of subdivision (e), does not order reunification services, it shall conduct a hearing pursuant to Section 366.25 or 366.26 within 120 days of the dispositional hearing. However, the court shall not schedule a hearing so long as the other parent is being provided reunification services pursuant to subdivision (a). The court may continue to permit the parent to visit the minor unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the minor.

(g) Whenever a court orders that a hearing shall be held pursuant to Section 366.25 or 366.26 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 which are not served by a county adoption agency, to prepare an assessment regarding the likelihood that the minor will be adopted if parental rights are terminated. The assessment shall include:

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

(2) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the minor and his or her parents since the time of placement.

(3) An evaluation of the minor's medical, developmental, scholastic, mental, and emotional status and an analysis of whether any of the minor's characteristics would make it difficult to find a person willing to adopt the minor.

(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.



(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.

(h) In determining whether reunification services will benefit the minor pursuant to paragraph (6) or (7) of subdivision (b), the court shall consider any information it deems relevant, including the following factors:

(1) The specific act or omission comprising the severe sexual abuse or the severe physical harm inflicted on the minor or the minor's sibling or half-sibling.

(2) The circumstances under which the abuse or harm was inflicted on the minor or the minor's sibling or half-sibling.

(3) The severity of the emotional trauma suffered by the minor or the minor's sibling or half-sibling.

(4) Any history of abuse of other children by the offending parent or guardian.

(5) The likelihood that the minor may be safely returned to the care of the offending parent or guardian within 18 months with no continuing supervision.

(6) Whether or not the minor desires to be reunified with the offending parent or guardian.

(i) The court shall read into the record the basis for a finding of severe sexual abuse or the infliction of severe physical harm under paragraph (6) of subdivision (b), and shall also specify the factual findings used to determine that the provision of reunification services to the offending parent or guardian would not benefit the minor.

(j) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 1999, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, which is enacted on or before January 1, 1999, deletes or extends that date.

SEC. 2.7. Section 361.5 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

361.5. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b) or upon the establishment of an order of guardianship pursuant to Section 360, whenever a minor is removed from a parent's or guardian's custody, the juvenile court shall order the probation officer to provide child welfare services to the minor and the minor's parents or guardians for the purpose of facilitating reunification of the family as follows:

(1) For a minor who, on the date of initial removal from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, was three years of age or older, court-ordered services shall not exceed a period of 12 months.

(2) For a minor who, on the date of initial removal from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, was under the age



of three years, court-ordered services shall not exceed a period of six months.

However, court-ordered services may be extended up to a maximum time period not to exceed 18 months if it can be shown that the objectives of the service plan can be achieved within the extended time period. The court shall extend the time period 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 guardian within the extended time period or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or guardian. If the court extends the time period, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that there is a substantial probability that the minor will be returned to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian within the extended time period. The court also shall make findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366. When counseling or other treatment services are ordered, the parent or guardian shall be ordered to participate in those services, unless the parent's or guardian's participation is deemed by the court to be inappropriate or potentially detrimental to the minor. Physical custody of the minor by the parents or guardians during the 18-month period shall not serve to interrupt the running of the period. If at the end of the 18-month period, a minor cannot be safely returned to the care and custody of a parent or guardian without court supervision, but the minor clearly desires contact with the parent or guardian, the court shall take the child's desire into account in devising a permanency plan.

In cases where the minor was under the age of three years on the date of the initial removal from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, the court shall inform the parent or guardian that the failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment programs or to cooperate or avail himself or herself of services provided as part of the child welfare services case plan may result in a termination of efforts to reunify the family after six months.

Except in cases where, pursuant to subdivision (b), the court does not order reunification services, the court shall inform the parent or parents of Section 366.25 or 366.26 and shall specify that the parent's or parents' parental rights may be terminated.

(b) Reunification services need not be provided to a parent or guardian described in this subdivision when the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, any of the following:

(1) That the whereabouts of the parent or guardian is unknown. A finding pursuant to this paragraph shall be supported by an affidavit or by proof that a reasonably diligent search has failed to locate the parent or guardian. The posting or publication of notices is not required in that search.



(2) That the parent or guardian is suffering from a mental disability that is described in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 7820) of Part 4 of Division 12 of the Family Code and that renders him or her incapable of utilizing those services.

(3) That the minor or a sibling of the minor has been previously adjudicated a dependent pursuant to any subdivision of Section 300 as a result of physical or sexual abuse, that following that adjudication the minor had been removed from the custody of his or her parent or guardian pursuant to Section 361, that the minor has been returned to the custody of the parent or guardian from whom the minor had been taken originally, and that the minor is being removed pursuant to Section 361, due to additional physical or sexual abuse.

(4) That the parent or guardian of the minor has caused the death of another minor through abuse or neglect.

(5) That the minor was brought within the jurisdiction of the court under subdivision (c) of Section 300 because of the conduct of that parent or guardian.

(6) That the minor has been adjudicated a dependent pursuant to any subdivision of Section 300 as a result of severe sexual abuse or the infliction of severe physical harm to the minor, a sibling, or a half-sibling by a parent or guardian, as defined in this subdivision, and the court makes a factual finding that it would not benefit the minor to pursue reunification services with the offending parent or guardian.

A finding of severe sexual abuse, for the purposes of this subdivision, may be based on, but is not limited to, sexual intercourse, or stimulation involving genital-genital, oral-genital, anal-genital, or oral-anal contact, whether between the parent or guardian and the minor or a sibling or half-sibling of the minor, or between the minor or a sibling or half-sibling of the minor and another person or animal with the actual or implied consent of the parent or guardian; or the penetration or manipulation of the minor's, sibling's, or half-sibling's genital organs or rectum by any animate or inanimate object for the sexual gratification of the parent or guardian, or for the sexual gratification of another person with the actual or implied consent of the parent or guardian.

A finding of the infliction of severe physical harm, for the purposes of this subdivision, may be based on, but is not limited to, deliberate and serious injury inflicted to or on a minor's body or the body of a sibling or half-sibling of the minor by an act or omission of the parent or guardian, or of another individual or animal with the consent of the parent or guardian; deliberate and torturous confinement of the minor, sibling, or half-sibling in a closed space; or any other torturous act or omission which would be reasonably understood to cause serious emotional damage.



(7) That the parent is not receiving reunification services for a sibling or a half-sibling of the minor pursuant to paragraph (3), (5), or (6).

(8) That the minor was conceived by means of the commission of an offense listed in Section 288 or 288.5 of the Penal Code, or by an act committed outside of this state which if committed in this state would constitute such an offense. This paragraph only applies to the parent who committed the offense or act.

(9) That the minor has been found to be a child described in subdivision (g) of Section 300, that the parent or guardian of the minor willfully abandoned the minor, and the court finds that the abandonment itself constituted a serious danger to the child. For the purposes of this paragraph, “serious danger” means that without the intervention of another person or agency, the minor would have sustained severe or permanent disability, injury, illness, or death. For purposes of this paragraph, “willful abandonment” shall not be construed as actions taken in good faith by the parent without the intent of placing the minor in serious danger.

(10) That (A) the court ordered a permanent plan of adoption, guardianship, or long-term foster care for any siblings or half-siblings of the minor because the parent or guardian failed to reunify with the sibling or half-sibling after the sibling or half-sibling had been removed from that parent or guardian pursuant to Section 361 and that parent or guardian is the same parent or guardian described in subdivision (a), or (B) the parental rights of a parent or guardian over any sibling or half-sibling of the minor had been permanently severed and that, according to the findings of the court, this parent or guardian has not subsequently made a reasonable effort to treat the problems that led to removal of the sibling or half-sibling of that minor from that parent or guardian.

(11) That the parent or guardian has been convicted of a violent felony, as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 667.5 of the Penal Code.

(12) That the parent or guardian of the minor has a history of extensive, abusive, and chronic use of drugs or alcohol and has resisted prior treatment for this problem during a three-year period immediately prior to the filing of the petition which brought that minor to the court’s attention, or has failed or refused to comply with a program of drug or alcohol treatment described in the case plan required by Section 358.1 on at least two prior occasions, even though the programs identified were available and accessible.

(c) In deciding whether to order reunification in any case in which this section applies, the court shall hold a dispositional hearing. The probation officer shall prepare a report which discusses whether reunification services shall be provided. When it is alleged, pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (b), that the parent is incapable of utilizing services due to mental disability, the court shall order



reunification services unless competent evidence from mental health professionals establishes that, even with the provision of services, the parent is unlikely to be capable of adequately caring for the minor within 12 months.

The court shall not order reunification for a parent or guardian described in paragraph (3), (4), (6), (8), (9), (11), or (12) of subdivision (b) unless the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that reunification is in the best interest of the minor.

In addition, the court shall not order reunification in any situation described in paragraph (5) of subdivision (b) unless it finds that, based on competent testimony, those services are likely to prevent reabuse or continued neglect of the minor or that failure to try reunification will be detrimental to the minor because the minor is closely and positively attached to that parent. The probation officer shall investigate the circumstances leading to the removal of the minor and advise the court whether there are circumstances which indicate that reunification is likely to be successful or unsuccessful and whether failure to order reunification is likely to be detrimental to the minor.

The failure of the parent to respond to previous services, the fact that the minor was abused while the parent was under the influence of drugs or alcohol, a past history of violent behavior, or testimony by a competent professional that the parent's behavior is unlikely to be changed by services are among the factors indicating that reunification services are unlikely to be successful. The fact that a parent or guardian is no longer living with an individual who severely abused the minor may be considered in deciding that reunification services are likely to be successful, provided that the court shall consider any pattern of behavior on the part of the parent that has exposed the minor to repeated abuse.

(d) If reunification services are not ordered pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) and the whereabouts of a parent become known within six months of the out-of-home placement of the minor, the court shall order the probation officer to provide family reunification services in accordance with this subdivision. However, the time limits specified in subdivision (a) and Section 366.25 are not tolled by the parent's absence.

(e) (1) If the parent or guardian is incarcerated or institutionalized, the court shall order reasonable services unless the court determines, by clear and convincing evidence, those services would be detrimental to the minor. In determining detriment, the court shall consider the age of the minor, the degree of parent-child bonding, the length of the sentence, the nature of the treatment, the nature of crime or illness, the degree of detriment to the minor if services are not offered and, for minors 10 years of age or older, the minor's attitude toward the implementation of family reunification services, and any other appropriate factors. Reunification services



are subject to the 18-month limitation imposed in subdivision (a). Services may include, but shall not be limited to, all of the following:

(A) Maintaining contact between the parent and minor through collect telephone calls.

(B) Transportation services, where appropriate.

(C) Visitation services, where appropriate.

(D) Reasonable services to extended family members or foster parents providing care for the minor if the services are not detrimental to the minor.

An incarcerated parent may be required to attend counseling, parenting classes, or vocational training programs as part of the service plan if these programs are available.

(2) The presiding judge of the juvenile court of each county may convene representatives of the county welfare department, the sheriff's department, and other appropriate entities for the purpose of developing and entering into protocols for ensuring the notification, transportation, and presence of an incarcerated or institutionalized parent at all court hearings involving proceedings affecting the minor pursuant to Section 2625 of the Penal Code.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the incarcerated parent is a woman seeking to participate in the community treatment program operated by the Department of Corrections pursuant to Chapter 4.8 (commencing with Section 1174) of Title 7 of Part 2 of, Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 3410) of Title 2 of Part 3 of, the Penal Code, the court shall determine whether the parent's participation in a program is in the child's best interest and whether it is suitable to meet the needs of the parent and child.

(f) If a court, pursuant to paragraph (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), (9), (10), (11), or (12) of subdivision (b) or paragraph (1) of subdivision (e), does not order reunification services, it shall conduct a hearing pursuant to Section 366.25 or 366.26 within 120 days of the dispositional hearing. However, the court shall not schedule a hearing so long as the other parent is being provided reunification services pursuant to subdivision (a). The court may continue to permit the parent to visit the minor unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the minor.

(g) Whenever a court orders that a hearing shall be held pursuant to Section 366.25 or 366.26, 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 which are not served by a county adoption agency, to prepare an assessment which shall include:

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

(2) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the minor and his or her parents since the time of placement.



(3) An evaluation of the minor's medical, development, 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.

(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.

(h) In determining whether reunification services will benefit the minor pursuant to paragraph (6) or (7) of subdivision (b), the court shall consider any information it deems relevant, including the following factors:

(1) The specific act or omission compromising the severe sexual abuse or the severe physical harm inflicted on the minor or the minor's sibling or half-sibling.

(2) The circumstances under which the abuse or harm was inflicted on the minor or the minor's sibling or half-sibling.

(3) The severity of the emotional trauma suffered by the minor or the minor's sibling or half-sibling.

(4) Any history of abuse of other children by the offending parent or guardian.

(5) The likelihood that the minor may be safely returned to the care of the offending parent or guardian within 18 months with no continuing supervision.

(6) Whether or not the minor desires to be reunified with the offending parent or guardian.

(i) The court shall read into the record the basis for a finding of severe sexual abuse or the infliction of severe physical harm under paragraph (6) of subdivision (b), and shall also specify the factual findings used to determine that the provision of reunification services to the offending parent or guardian would not benefit the minor.

(j) This section shall become operative January 1, 1999.

SEC. 3. Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, as amended by Section 2 of Chapter 540 of the Statutes of 1995, is amended to read:

366.21. (a) Every hearing conducted by the juvenile court reviewing the status of a dependent child shall be placed on the



appearance calendar. The court shall advise all persons present at the hearing of the date of the future hearing, of their right to be present and represented by counsel.

(b) Except as provided in Section 366.23 and subdivision (a) of Section 366.3, notice of the hearing shall be mailed by the probation officer to the same persons as in the original proceeding, to the minor's parent or guardian, to the foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having physical custody of the minor in the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, 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 to which the hearing was continued. Service of a copy of the notice personally or by certified mail return receipt requested, or any other form of actual notice is equivalent to service by first-class mail.

The notice shall contain a statement regarding the nature of the hearing to be held and any change in the custody or status of the minor being recommended by the supervising agency. The notice to the foster parent shall indicate that the foster parent may attend all hearings or may submit any information he or she deems relevant to the court in writing.

(c) At least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing the probation officer shall file a supplemental report with the court regarding the services provided or offered to the parent or guardian to enable them to assume custody, the progress made, and, where relevant, the prognosis for return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, and make his or her recommendation for disposition. If the recommendation is not to return the minor to a parent or guardian, the report shall specify why the return of the minor would be detrimental to the minor. The probation officer shall provide the parent or guardian with a copy of the report, including his or her recommendation for disposition, at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. In the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, the probation officer shall provide a summary of his or her recommendation for disposition to the counsel for the minor, any court-appointed child advocate, foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having the physical custody of the minor at least 10 calendar days before the hearing.

(d) Prior to any hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a community care facility or foster family agency that may result in the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, or in adoption or the creation of a legal guardianship, the facility or agency shall file with the court a report containing its recommendation for disposition. Prior to such a hearing involving a



minor in the physical custody of a foster parent, the foster parent may file with the court a report containing his or her recommendation for disposition. The court shall consider the report and recommendation filed pursuant to this subdivision prior to determining any disposition.

(e) At the review hearing held six months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parents or guardians unless, by a preponderance of the evidence, it finds that the return of the child would create a substantial risk of detriment to the physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation department shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment programs shall constitute prima facie evidence that return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review the probation officer's report, shall review and consider the report and recommendations of any child advocate appointed pursuant to Section 356.5, and shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she cooperated and availed himself or herself of services provided. If the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366; and where relevant, shall order any additional services reasonably believed to facilitate the return of the minor to the custody of his or her parent or guardian. The court shall also inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a proceeding pursuant to Section 366.26 may be instituted. This section does not apply in a case where, pursuant to Section 361.5, the court has ordered that reunification services shall not be provided.

If the minor was under the age of three years on the date of the initial removal and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent failed to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment plan, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If, however, the court finds there is a substantial probability that the minor, who was under the age of three years on the date of initial removal, may be returned to his or her parent or guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided, the court shall continue the case.

If the minor was removed initially under subdivision (g) of Section 300 and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the whereabouts of the parent are still unknown, or if the parent has failed to contact and visit the child, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent has been convicted of a



felony indicating parental unfitness, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days.

If the minor had been placed under court supervision with a previously noncustodial parent pursuant to Section 361.2, the court shall determine whether supervision is still necessary. The court may terminate supervision and transfer permanent custody to that parent, as provided for by paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.2.

In all other cases, the court shall direct that any reunification services previously ordered shall continue to be offered to the parent or guardian pursuant to the time periods set forth in subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, provided that the court may modify the terms and conditions of those services. If the child is not returned to his or her parent or guardian, the court shall determine whether reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian which were designed to aid the parent or guardian in overcoming the problems which led to the initial removal and the continued custody of the minor. The court shall order that those services be initiated, continued, or terminated.

(f) At the review hearing held 12 months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian unless, by a preponderance of the evidence, it finds that return of the child would create a substantial risk of detriment to the physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation department shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The court shall also determine whether reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian which were designed to aid the parent or guardian to overcome the problems which led to the initial removal and continued custody of the minor. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment programs shall constitute prima facie evidence that the return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review the probation officer's report and shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she cooperated and availed himself or herself of services provided. If the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make a finding pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366.

(g) If the time period in which court-ordered services were provided has met or exceeded the time period set forth in paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, as appropriate, and a minor is not returned to the custody of a parent or guardian at the hearing held pursuant to subdivision (f), the court shall do one of the following:



(1) Continue the case for up to six months for another review hearing, provided that the hearing shall occur within 18 months of the date the child was originally taken from the physical custody of his or her parent or 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 guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or guardian. The court shall inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a permanent plan shall be developed at that hearing. The court shall not order that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 be held unless there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian.

(2) Order that the minor remain in long-term foster care, if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence, based upon the evidence already presented to it, that the minor is not a proper subject for adoption and has no one willing to accept legal guardianship.

(3) Order that a hearing be held within 120 days, pursuant to Section 366.26, if there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parents.

(h) In any case in which the court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall be held, it shall also order the termination of reunification services to the parent. The court shall continue to permit the parent to visit the minor pending the hearing unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the minor.

(i) Whenever a court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall be held, it shall direct the agency supervising the child and the licensed county adoption agency, or the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency in counties which are not served by a county adoption agency, to prepare an assessment regarding the likelihood that the minor will be adopted if parental rights are terminated. The assessment shall include:

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

(2) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the minor and his or her parents since the time of placement.

(3) An evaluation of the minor's medical, developmental, scholastic, mental, and emotional status and an analysis of whether any of the minor's characteristics would make it difficult to find a person willing to adopt the minor.

(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.



(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.

(j) This section shall apply to minors made dependents of the court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989.

(k) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 1999, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, which is enacted on or before January 1, 1999, deletes or extends that date.

SEC. 3.5. Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, as amended by Section 2 of Chapter 540 of the Statutes of 1995, is amended to read:

366.21. (a) Every hearing conducted by the juvenile court reviewing the status of a dependent minor shall be placed on the appearance calendar. The court shall advise all persons present at the hearing of the date of the future hearing, of their right to be present and represented by counsel.

(b) Except as provided in Section 366.23 and subdivision (a) of Section 366.3, notice of the hearing shall be mailed by the probation officer to the same persons as in the original proceeding, to the minor's parent or guardian, to the foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having physical custody of the minor in the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, 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 to which the hearing was continued. Service of a copy of the notice personally or by certified mail return receipt requested, or any other form of actual notice is equivalent to service by first-class mail.

The notice shall contain a statement regarding the nature of the hearing to be held and any change in the custody or status of the minor being recommended by the supervising agency. The notice to the foster parent shall indicate that the foster parent may attend all hearings or may submit any information he or she deems relevant to the court in writing.

(c) At least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing the probation officer shall file a supplemental report with the court regarding the services provided or offered to the parent or guardian to enable them to assume custody, the progress made, and, where relevant, the prognosis for return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, and make his or her recommendation for



disposition. If the recommendation is not to return the minor to a parent or guardian, the report shall specify why the return of the minor would be detrimental to the minor. The probation officer shall provide the parent or guardian with a copy of the report, including his or her recommendation for disposition, at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. In the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, the probation officer shall provide a summary of his or her recommendation for disposition to the counsel for the minor, any court-appointed child advocate, foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having the physical custody of the minor at least 10 calendar days before the hearing.

(d) Prior to any hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a community care facility or foster family agency that may result in the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, or in adoption or the creation of a legal guardianship, the facility or agency shall file with the court a report containing its recommendation for disposition. Prior to such a hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a foster parent, the foster parent may file with the court a report containing his or her recommendation for disposition. The court shall consider the report and recommendation filed pursuant to this subdivision prior to determining any disposition.

(e) At the review hearing held six months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parents or guardians unless, by a preponderance of the evidence, it finds that the return of the minor would create a substantial risk of detriment to the physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation department shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment programs shall constitute prima facie evidence that return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review the probation officer's report, shall review and consider the report and recommendations of any child advocate appointed pursuant to Section 356.5, and shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she cooperated and availed himself or herself of services provided. If the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366; and where relevant, shall order any additional services reasonably believed to facilitate the return of the minor to the custody of his or her parent or guardian. The court shall also inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a proceeding pursuant to Section 366.26 may be instituted. This section does not



apply in a case where, pursuant to Section 361.5, the court has ordered that reunification services shall not be provided.

If the minor was under the age of three years on the date of the initial removal and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent failed to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment plan, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If, however, the court finds there is a substantial probability that the minor, who was under the age of three years on the date of initial removal, may be returned to his or her parent or guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided, the court shall continue the case.

If the minor was removed initially under subdivision (g) of Section 300 and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the whereabouts of the parent are still unknown, or the parent has failed to contact and visit the minor, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent has been convicted of a felony indicating parental unfitness, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days.

If the minor had been placed under court supervision with a previously noncustodial parent pursuant to Section 361.2, the court shall determine whether supervision is still necessary. The court may terminate supervision and transfer permanent custody to that parent, as provided for by paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.2.

In all other cases, the court shall direct that any reunification services previously ordered shall continue to be offered to the parent or guardian pursuant to the time periods set forth in subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, provided that the court may modify the terms and conditions of those services. If the minor is not returned to his or her parent or guardian, the court shall determine whether reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian which were designed to aid the parent or guardian in overcoming the problems which led to the initial removal and the continued custody of the minor. The court shall order that those services be initiated, continued, or terminated.

(f) At the review hearing held 12 months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian unless, by a preponderance of the evidence, it finds that return of the child would create a substantial risk of detriment to the physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation department shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The court shall also determine whether reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian which were designed to aid the parent or guardian to overcome the problems which led to the initial removal and continued custody of the minor. The failure of the parent or



guardian to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment programs shall constitute prima facie evidence that the return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review the probation officer's report and shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she cooperated and availed himself or herself of services provided. If the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make a finding pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366.

(g) If the time period in which court-ordered services were provided has met or exceeded the time period set forth in paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, as appropriate, and a minor is not returned to the custody of a parent or guardian at the hearing held pursuant to subdivision (f), the court shall do one of the following:

(1) Continue the case for up to six months for another review hearing, provided that the hearing shall occur within 18 months of the date the minor was originally taken from the physical custody of his or her parent or 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 guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or guardian. The court shall inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a permanent plan shall be developed at that hearing. The court shall not order that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 be held unless there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian.

(2) Order that the minor remain in long-term foster care, if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence, based upon the evidence already presented to it, that the minor is not a proper subject for adoption and has no one willing to accept legal guardianship.

(3) Order that a hearing be held within 120 days, pursuant to Section 366.26, if there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parents. Evidence that the minor has been placed with a foster family that is eligible to adopt a minor, or has been placed in a preadoptive home, in and of itself, shall not be deemed a failure to provide or offer reasonable services.

(h) In any case in which the court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall be held, it shall also order the termination of reunification services to the parent. The court shall continue to permit the parent to visit the minor pending the hearing unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the minor.



(i) Whenever a court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall be held, it shall direct the agency supervising the child and the licensed county adoption agency, or the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency in counties which are not served by a county adoption agency, to prepare an assessment regarding the likelihood that the minor will be adopted if parental rights are terminated. The assessment shall include:

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

(2) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the minor and his or her parents since the time of placement.

(3) An evaluation of the minor's medical, developmental, scholastic, mental, and emotional status and an analysis of whether any of the minor's characteristics would make it difficult to find a person willing to adopt the minor.

(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.

(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.

(j) This section shall apply to minors made dependents of the court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989.

(k) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 1999, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, which is enacted on or before January 1, 1999, deletes or extends that date.

SEC. 3.7. Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, as amended by Section 2 of Chapter 540 of the Statutes of 1995, is amended to read:

366.21. (a) Every hearing conducted by the juvenile court reviewing the status of a dependent child shall be placed on the appearance calendar. The court shall advise all persons present at the hearing of the date of the future hearing and of their right to be present and represented by counsel.

(b) Except as provided in Section 366.23 and subdivision (a) of Section 366.3, notice of the hearing shall be mailed by the probation officer to the same persons as in the original proceeding, to the minor's parent or guardian, to the foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having physical custody of the minor



in the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, 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 to which the hearing was continued. Service of a copy of the notice personally or by certified mail return receipt requested, or any other form of actual notice is equivalent to service by first-class mail.

The notice shall contain a statement regarding the nature of the hearing to be held and any change in the custody or status of the minor being recommended by the supervising agency. The notice to the foster parent shall indicate that the foster parent may attend all hearings or may submit any information he or she deems relevant to the court in writing.

(c) At least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing the probation officer shall file a supplemental report with the court regarding the services provided or offered to the parent or guardian to enable them to assume custody, the progress made, and, where relevant, the prognosis for return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, and make his or her recommendation for disposition. If the recommendation is not to return the minor to a parent or guardian, the report shall specify why the return of the minor would be detrimental to the minor. The probation officer shall provide the parent or guardian with a copy of the report, including his or her recommendation for disposition, at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. In the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, the probation officer shall provide a summary of his or her recommendation for disposition to the counsel for the minor, any court-appointed child advocate, foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having the physical custody of the minor at least 10 calendar days before the hearing.

(d) Prior to any hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a community care facility or foster family agency that may result in the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, or in adoption or the creation of a legal guardianship, the facility or agency shall file with the court a report containing its recommendation for disposition. Prior to such a hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a foster parent, the foster parent may file with the court a report containing his or her recommendation for disposition. The court shall consider the report and recommendation filed pursuant to this subdivision prior to determining any disposition.

(e) At the review hearing held six months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian unless the court



finds, to the best of its knowledge and by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the minor to his or her parent or guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation officer shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in court-ordered treatment programs shall be prima facie evidence that return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the probation officer's report and recommendations and the report and recommendations of any child advocate appointed pursuant to Section 356.5; and shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she cooperated and availed himself or herself of services provided. Whether or not the minor is returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366; and where relevant, shall order any additional services reasonably believed to facilitate the return of the minor to the custody of his or her parent or guardian. The court shall also inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a proceeding pursuant to Section 366.26 may be instituted. This section does not apply in a case where, pursuant to Section 361.5, the court has ordered that reunification services shall not be provided.

If the minor was under the age of three years on the date of the initial removal and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent failed to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment plan, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If, however, the court finds there is a substantial probability that the minor, who was under the age of three years on the date of initial removal, may be returned to his or her parent or guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided, the court shall continue the case.

If the minor was removed initially under subdivision (g) of Section 300 and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the whereabouts of the parent are still unknown, or if the parent has failed to contact and visit the minor, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent has been convicted of a felony indicating parental unfitness, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days.

If the minor had been placed under court supervision with a previously noncustodial parent pursuant to Section 361.2, the court shall determine whether supervision is still necessary. The court may terminate supervision and transfer permanent custody to that



parent, as provided for by paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.2.

In all other cases, the court shall direct that any reunification services previously ordered shall continue to be offered to the parent or guardian pursuant to the time periods set forth in subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, provided that the court may modify the terms and conditions of those services. If the minor is not returned to his or her parent or guardian, the court shall determine whether reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian which were designed to aid the parent or guardian in overcoming the problems which led to the initial removal and the continued custody of the minor. The court shall order that those services be initiated, continued, or terminated.

(f) At the review hearing held 12 months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian unless the court finds, to the best of its knowledge and by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the minor to his or her parent or guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation officer shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The court shall also determine whether reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian which were designed to aid the parent or guardian to overcome the problems that led to the initial removal and continued custody of the minor. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in court-ordered treatment programs shall be prima facie evidence that return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the probation officer's report and recommendations and the report and recommendations of any child advocate appointed pursuant to Section 356.5; shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she availed himself or herself of services provided; and shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366. Whether or not the minor is returned to his or her parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its decision. If the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make a finding pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366.

(g) If the time period in which court-ordered services were provided has met or exceeded the time period set forth in paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, as appropriate, and a minor is not returned to the custody of a parent or guardian at the hearing held pursuant to subdivision (f), the court shall do one of the following:



(1) Continue the case for up to six months for another review hearing, provided that the hearing shall occur within 18 months of the date the child was originally taken from the physical custody of his or her parent or 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 guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or guardian. The court shall inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a permanent plan shall be developed at that hearing. The court shall not order that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 be held unless there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian.

(2) Order that the minor remain in long-term foster care, if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence, based upon the evidence already presented to it, that the minor is not a proper subject for adoption and has no one willing to accept legal guardianship.

(3) Order that a hearing be held within 120 days, pursuant to Section 366.26, if there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parents.

(h) In any case in which the court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall be held, it shall also order the termination of reunification services to the parent. The court shall continue to permit the parent to visit the minor pending the hearing unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the minor.

(i) Whenever a court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall be held, it shall direct the agency supervising the child and the licensed county adoption agency, or the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency in counties which are not served by a county adoption agency, to prepare an assessment regarding the likelihood that the minor will be adopted if parental rights are terminated. The assessment shall include:

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

(2) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the minor and his or her parents since the time of placement.

(3) An evaluation of the minor's medical, developmental, scholastic, mental, and emotional status and an analysis of whether any of the minor's characteristics would make it difficult to find a person willing to adopt the minor.

(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.



(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.

(j) This section shall apply to minors made dependents of the court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989.

(k) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 1999, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, which is enacted on or before January 1, 1999, deletes or extends that date.

SEC. 3.9. Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, as amended by Section 2 of Chapter 540 of the Statutes of 1995, is amended to read:

366.21. (a) Every hearing conducted by the juvenile court reviewing the status of a dependent minor shall be placed on the appearance calendar. The court shall advise all persons present at the hearing of the date of the future hearing and of their right to be present and represented by counsel.

(b) Except as provided in Section 366.23 and subdivision (a) of Section 366.3, notice of the hearing shall be mailed by the probation officer to the same persons as in the original proceeding, to the minor's parent or guardian, to the foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having physical custody of the minor in the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, 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 to which the hearing was continued. Service of a copy of the notice personally or by certified mail return receipt requested, or any other form of actual notice is equivalent to service by first-class mail.

The notice shall contain a statement regarding the nature of the hearing to be held and any change in the custody or status of the minor being recommended by the supervising agency. The notice to the foster parent shall indicate that the foster parent may attend all hearings or may submit any information he or she deems relevant to the court in writing.

(c) At least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing the probation officer shall file a supplemental report with the court regarding the services provided or offered to the parent or guardian to enable them to assume custody, the progress made, and, where relevant, the prognosis for return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, and make his or her recommendation for



disposition. If the recommendation is not to return the minor to a parent or guardian, the report shall specify why the return of the minor would be detrimental to the minor. The probation officer shall provide the parent or guardian with a copy of the report, including his or her recommendation for disposition, at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. In the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, the probation officer shall provide a summary of his or her recommendation for disposition to the counsel for the minor, any court-appointed child advocate, foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having the physical custody of the minor at least 10 calendar days before the hearing.

(d) Prior to any hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a community care facility or foster family agency that may result in the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, or in adoption or the creation of a legal guardianship, the facility or agency shall file with the court a report containing its recommendation for disposition. Prior to such a hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a foster parent, the foster parent may file with the court a report containing his or her recommendation for disposition. The court shall consider the report and recommendation filed pursuant to this subdivision prior to determining any disposition.

(e) At the review hearing held six months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian unless the court finds, to the best of its knowledge and by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the minor to his or her parent or guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation officer shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in court-ordered treatment programs shall be prima facie evidence that return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the probation officer's report and recommendations and the report and recommendations of any child advocate appointed pursuant to Section 356.5, and shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she cooperated and availed himself or herself of services provided. Whether or not the minor is returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366; and where relevant, shall order any additional services reasonably believed to facilitate the return of the minor to the custody of his or her parent or guardian. The court shall also inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next



review hearing, a proceeding pursuant to Section 366.26 may be instituted. This section does not apply in a case where, pursuant to Section 361.5, the court has ordered that reunification services shall not be provided.

If the minor was under the age of three years on the date of the initial removal and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent failed to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment plan, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If, however, the court finds there is a substantial probability that the minor, who was under the age of three years on the date of initial removal, may be returned to his or her parent or guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided, the court shall continue the case.

If the minor was removed initially under subdivision (g) of Section 300 and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the whereabouts of the parent are still unknown, or if the parent has failed to contact and visit the minor, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent has been convicted of a felony indicating parental unfitness, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days.

If the minor had been placed under court supervision with a previously noncustodial parent pursuant to Section 361.2, the court shall determine whether supervision is still necessary. The court may terminate supervision and transfer permanent custody to that parent, as provided for by paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.2.

In all other cases, the court shall direct that any reunification services previously ordered shall continue to be offered to the parent or guardian pursuant to the time periods set forth in subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, provided that the court may modify the terms and conditions of those services. If the minor is not returned to his or her parent or guardian, the court shall determine whether reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian which were designed to aid the parent or guardian in overcoming the problems which led to the initial removal and the continued custody of the minor. The court shall order that those services be initiated, continued, or terminated.

(f) At the review hearing held 12 months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian unless the court finds, to the best of its knowledge and by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the minor to his or her parent or guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation officer shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The court shall also determine whether reasonable services have been



provided or offered to the parent or guardian which were designed to aid the parent or guardian to overcome the problems that led to the initial removal and continued custody of the minor. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in court-ordered treatment programs shall be prima facie evidence that return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the probation officer's report and recommendations and the report and recommendations of any child advocate appointed pursuant to Section 356.5; shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she availed himself or herself of services provided; and shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366. Whether or not the minor is returned to his or her parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its decision. If the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make a finding pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366.

(g) If the time period in which court-ordered services were provided has met or exceeded the time period set forth in paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, as appropriate, and a minor is not returned to the custody of a parent or guardian at the hearing held pursuant to subdivision (f), the court shall do one of the following:

(1) Continue the case for up to six months for another review hearing, provided that the hearing shall occur within 18 months of the date the minor was originally taken from the physical custody of his or her parent or 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 guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or guardian. The court shall inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a permanent plan shall be developed at that hearing. The court shall not order that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 be held unless there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian.

(2) Order that the minor remain in long-term foster care, if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence, based upon the evidence already presented to it, that the minor is not a proper subject for adoption and has no one willing to accept legal guardianship.

(3) Order that a hearing be held within 120 days, pursuant to Section 366.26, if there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parents. Evidence that the minor has been placed with a foster family that is eligible to adopt a minor, or has been placed in a preadoptive home,



in and of itself, shall not be deemed a failure to provide or offer reasonable services.

(h) In any case in which the court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall be held, it shall also order the termination of reunification services to the parent. The court shall continue to permit the parent to visit the minor pending the hearing unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the minor.

(i) Whenever a court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall be held, it shall direct the agency supervising the child and the licensed county adoption agency, or the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency in counties which are not served by a county adoption agency, to prepare an assessment regarding the likelihood that the minor will be adopted if parental rights are terminated. The assessment shall include:

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

(2) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the minor and his or her parents since the time of placement.

(3) An evaluation of the minor's medical, developmental, scholastic, mental, and emotional status and an analysis of whether any of the minor's characteristics would make it difficult to find a person willing to adopt the minor.

(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.

(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.

(j) This section shall apply to minors made dependents of the court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989.

(k) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 1999, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, which is enacted on or before January 1, 1999, deletes or extends that date.

SEC. 4. Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, as added by Section 3 of Chapter 540 of the Statutes of 1995, is amended to read:

366.21. (a) Every hearing conducted by the juvenile court reviewing the status of a dependent child shall be placed on the appearance calendar. The court shall advise all persons present at the



hearing of the date of the future hearing, of their right to be present and represented by counsel.

(b) Except as provided in Section 366.23 and subdivision (a) of Section 366.3, notice of the hearing shall be mailed by the probation officer to the same persons as in the original proceeding, to the minor's parent or guardian, to the foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having physical custody of the minor in the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, 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 to which the hearing was continued. Service of a copy of the notice personally or by certified mail return receipt requested, or any other form of actual notice is equivalent to service by first-class mail.

The notice shall contain a statement regarding the nature of the hearing to be held and any change in the custody or status of the minor being recommended by the supervising agency. The notice to the foster parent shall indicate that the foster parent may attend all hearings or may submit any information he or she deems relevant to the court in writing.

(c) At least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing the probation officer shall file a supplemental report with the court regarding the services provided or offered to the parent or guardian to enable them to assume custody, the progress made, and, where relevant, the prognosis for return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, and make his or her recommendation for disposition. If the recommendation is not to return the minor to a parent or guardian, the report shall specify why the return of the minor would be detrimental to the minor. The probation officer shall provide the parent or guardian with a copy of the report, including his or her recommendation for disposition, at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. In the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, the probation officer shall provide a summary of his or her recommendation for disposition to the counsel for the minor, any court-appointed child advocate, foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having the physical custody of the minor at least 10 calendar days before the hearing.

(d) Prior to any hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a community care facility or foster family agency that may result in the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, or in adoption or the creation of a legal guardianship, the facility or agency shall file with the court a report containing its recommendation for disposition. Prior to such a hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a foster parent, the foster parent may



file with the court a report containing its recommendation for disposition. The court shall consider the report and recommendation filed pursuant to this subdivision prior to determining any disposition.

(e) At the review hearing held six months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parents or guardians unless, by a preponderance of the evidence, it finds that the return of the child would create a substantial risk of detriment to the physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation department shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment programs shall constitute prima facie evidence that return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review the probation officer's report, shall review and consider the report and recommendations of any child advocate appointed pursuant to Section 356.5, and shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she cooperated and availed himself or herself of services provided. If the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366; and where relevant, shall order any additional services reasonably believed to facilitate the return of the minor to the custody of his or her parent or guardian. The court shall also inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a proceeding pursuant to Section 366.26 may be instituted. This section does not apply in a case where, pursuant to Section 361.5, the court has ordered that reunification services shall not be provided.

If the minor was under the age of three years on the date of the initial removal and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent failed to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment plan, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If, however, the court finds there is a substantial probability that the minor, who was under the age of three years on the date of initial removal, may be returned to his or her parent or guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided, the court shall continue the case.

If the minor was removed initially under subdivision (g) of Section 300 and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the whereabouts of the parent are still unknown, or if the parent has failed to contact and visit the child, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent has been convicted of a felony indicating parental unfitness, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days.



If the minor had been placed under court supervision with a previously noncustodial parent pursuant to Section 361.2, the court shall determine whether supervision is still necessary. The court may terminate supervision and transfer permanent custody to that parent, as provided for by paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.2.

In all other cases, the court shall direct that any reunification services previously ordered shall continue to be offered to the parent or guardian pursuant to the time periods set forth in subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, provided that the court may modify the terms and conditions of those services.

If the child is not returned to his or her parent or guardian, the court shall determine whether reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian which were designed to aid the parent or guardian in overcoming the problems which led to the initial removal and the continued custody of the minor. The court shall order that those services be initiated, continued, or terminated.

(f) At the review hearing held 12 months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian unless, by a preponderance of the evidence, it finds that return of the child would create a substantial risk of detriment to the physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation department shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The court shall also determine whether reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian which were designed to aid the parent or guardian to overcome the problems which led to the initial removal and continued custody of the minor. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment programs shall constitute prima facie evidence that the return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review the probation officer's report and shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she cooperated and availed himself or herself of services provided. If the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make a finding pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366.

(g) If the time period in which court-ordered services were provided has met or exceeded the time period set forth in paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, as appropriate, and a minor is not returned to the custody of a parent or guardian at the hearing held pursuant to subdivision (f), the court shall do one of the following:

(1) Continue the case for up to six months for another review hearing, provided that the hearing shall occur within 18 months of



the date the child was originally taken from the physical custody of his or her parent or 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 guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or guardian. The court shall inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a permanent plan shall be developed at that hearing. The court shall not order that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 be held unless there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian.

(2) Order that the minor remain in long-term foster care, if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence, based upon the evidence already presented to it, that the minor is not a proper subject for adoption and has no one willing to accept legal guardianship.

(3) Order that a hearing be held within 120 days, pursuant to Section 366.26, if there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parents.

(h) In any case in which the court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall be held, it shall also order the termination of reunification services to the parent. The court shall continue to permit the parent to visit the minor pending the hearing unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the minor.

(i) Whenever a court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall be held, it shall direct the agency supervising the child and the licensed county adoption agency, or the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency in counties which are not served by a county adoption agency, to prepare an assessment which shall include:

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

(2) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the minor and his or her parents since the time of placement.

(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.

(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.

(j) This section shall apply to minors made dependents of the court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989.

(k) This section shall become operative January 1, 1999.

SEC. 4.5. Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, as added by Section 3 of Chapter 540 of the Statutes of 1995, is amended to read:

366.21. (a) Every hearing conducted by the juvenile court reviewing the status of a dependent child shall be placed on the appearance calendar. The court shall advise all persons present at the hearing of the date of the future hearing, of their right to be present and represented by counsel.

(b) Except as provided in Section 366.23 and subdivision (a) of Section 366.3, notice of the hearing shall be mailed by the probation officer to the same persons as in the original proceeding, to the minor's parent or guardian, to the foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having physical custody of the minor in the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, 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 to which the hearing was continued. Service of a copy of the notice personally or by certified mail return receipt requested, or any other form of actual notice is equivalent to service by first-class mail.

The notice shall contain a statement regarding the nature of the hearing to be held and any change in the custody or status of the minor being recommended by the supervising agency. The notice to the foster parent shall indicate that the foster parent may attend all hearings or may submit any information he or she deems relevant to the court in writing.

(c) At least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing the probation officer shall file a supplemental report with the court regarding the services provided or offered to the parent or guardian to enable them to assume custody, the progress made, and, where relevant, the prognosis for return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, and make his or her recommendation for disposition. If the recommendation is not to return the minor to a parent or guardian, the report shall specify why the return of the minor would be detrimental to the minor. The probation officer shall provide the parent or guardian with a copy of the report, including his or her recommendation for disposition, at least 10 calendar days



prior to the hearing. In the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, the probation officer shall provide a summary of his or her recommendation for disposition to the counsel for the minor, any court-appointed child advocate, foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having the physical custody of the minor at least 10 calendar days before the hearing.

(d) Prior to any hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a community care facility or foster family agency that may result in the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, or in adoption or the creation of a legal guardianship, the facility or agency shall file with the court a report containing its recommendation for disposition. Prior to such a hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a foster parent, the foster parent may file with the court a report containing its recommendation for disposition. The court shall consider the report and recommendation filed pursuant to this subdivision prior to determining any disposition.

(e) At the review hearing held six months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parents or guardians unless, by a preponderance of the evidence, it finds that the return of the minor would create a substantial risk of detriment to the physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation department shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment programs shall constitute prima facie evidence that return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review the probation officer's report, shall review and consider the report and recommendations of any child advocate appointed pursuant to Section 356.5, and shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she cooperated and availed himself or herself of services provided. If the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366; and where relevant, shall order any additional services reasonably believed to facilitate the return of the minor to the custody of his or her parent or guardian. The court shall also inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a proceeding pursuant to Section 366.26 may be instituted. This section does not apply in a case where, pursuant to Section 361.5, the court has ordered that reunification services shall not be provided.

If the minor was under the age of three years on the date of the initial removal and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent failed to participate regularly in any court-ordered



treatment plan, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If, however, the court finds there is a substantial probability that the minor, who was under the age of three years on the date of initial removal, may be returned to his or her parent or guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided, the court shall continue the case.

If the minor was removed initially under subdivision (g) of Section 300 and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the whereabouts of the parent are still unknown, or if the parent has failed to contact and visit the minor, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent has been convicted of a felony indicating parental unfitness, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days.

If the minor had been placed under court supervision with a previously noncustodial parent pursuant to Section 361.2, the court shall determine whether supervision is still necessary. The court may terminate supervision and transfer permanent custody to that parent, as provided for by paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.2.

In all other cases, the court shall direct that any reunification services previously ordered shall continue to be offered to the parent or guardian pursuant to the time periods set forth in subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, provided that the court may modify the terms and conditions of those services.

If the minor is not returned to his or her parent or guardian, the court shall determine whether reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian which were designed to aid the parent or guardian in overcoming the problems which led to the initial removal and the continued custody of the minor. The court shall order that those services be initiated, continued, or terminated.

(f) At the review hearing held 12 months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian unless, by a preponderance of the evidence, it finds that return of the minor would create a substantial risk of detriment to the physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation department shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The court shall also determine whether reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian which were designed to aid the parent or guardian to overcome the problems which led to the initial removal and continued custody of the minor. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment programs shall constitute prima facie evidence that the return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review the probation officer's report and shall consider the



efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she cooperated and availed himself or herself of services provided. If the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make a finding pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366.

(g) If the time period in which court-ordered services were provided has met or exceeded the time period set forth in paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, as appropriate, and a minor is not returned to the custody of a parent or guardian at the hearing held pursuant to subdivision (f), the court shall do one of the following:

(1) Continue the case for up to six months for another review hearing, provided that the hearing shall occur within 18 months of the date the minor was originally taken from the physical custody of his or her parent or 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 guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or guardian. The court shall inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a permanent plan shall be developed at that hearing. The court shall not order that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 be held unless there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian.

(2) Order that the minor remain in long-term foster care, if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence, based upon the evidence already presented to it, that the minor is not a proper subject for adoption and has no one willing to accept legal guardianship.

(3) Order that a hearing be held within 120 days, pursuant to Section 366.26, if there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parents. Evidence that the minor has been placed with a foster family that is eligible to adopt a minor, or has been placed in a preadoptive home, in and of itself, shall not be deemed a failure to provide or offer reasonable services.

(h) In any case in which the court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall be held, it shall also order the termination of reunification services to the parent. The court shall continue to permit the parent to visit the minor pending the hearing unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the minor.

(i) Whenever a court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 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



which are not served by a county adoption agency, to prepare an assessment which shall include:

- (1) Current search efforts for an absent parent or parents.
- (2) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the minor and his or her parents since the time of placement.
- (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.
- (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.

(j) This section shall apply to minors made dependents of the court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989.

(k) This section shall become operative January 1, 1999.

SEC. 4.7. Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, as added by Section 3 of Chapter 540 of the Statutes of 1995, is amended to read:

366.21. (a) Every hearing conducted by the juvenile court reviewing the status of a dependent child shall be placed on the appearance calendar. The court shall advise all persons present at the hearing of the date of the future hearing and of their right to be present and represented by counsel.

(b) Except as provided in Section 366.23 and subdivision (a) of Section 366.3, notice of the hearing shall be mailed by the probation officer to the same persons as in the original proceeding, to the minor's parent or guardian, to the foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having physical custody of the minor in the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, 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 to which the hearing was continued. Service of a copy of the notice



personally or by certified mail return receipt requested, or any other form of actual notice is equivalent to service by first-class mail.

The notice shall contain a statement regarding the nature of the hearing to be held and any change in the custody or status of the minor being recommended by the supervising agency. The notice to the foster parent shall indicate that the foster parent may attend all hearings or may submit any information he or she deems relevant to the court in writing.

(c) At least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing the probation officer shall file a supplemental report with the court regarding the services provided or offered to the parent or guardian to enable them to assume custody, the progress made, and, where relevant, the prognosis for return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, and make his or her recommendation for disposition. If the recommendation is not to return the minor to a parent or guardian, the report shall specify why the return of the minor would be detrimental to the minor. The probation officer shall provide the parent or guardian with a copy of the report, including his or her recommendation for disposition, at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. In the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, the probation officer shall provide a summary of his or her recommendation for disposition to the counsel for the minor, any court-appointed child advocate, foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having the physical custody of the minor at least 10 calendar days before the hearing.

(d) Prior to any hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a community care facility or foster family agency that may result in the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, or in adoption or the creation of a legal guardianship, the facility or agency shall file with the court a report containing its recommendation for disposition. Prior to such a hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a foster parent, the foster parent may file with the court a report containing its recommendation for disposition. The court shall consider the report and recommendation filed pursuant to this subdivision prior to determining any disposition.

(e) At the review hearing held six months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian unless the court finds, to the best of its knowledge and by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the minor to his or her parent or guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation officer shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in court-ordered treatment programs shall be prima facie evidence that



return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the probation officer's report and recommendations and the report and recommendations of any child advocate appointed pursuant to Section 356.5, and shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she availed himself or herself of services provided. If the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366. Whether or not the minor is returned to his or her parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its decision and where relevant, shall order any additional services reasonably believed to facilitate the return of the minor to the custody of his or her parent or guardian. The court shall also inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a proceeding pursuant to Section 366.26 may be instituted. This section does not apply in a case where, pursuant to Section 361.5, the court has ordered that reunification services shall not be provided.

If the minor was under the age of three years on the date of the initial removal and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent failed to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment plan, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If, however, the court finds there is a substantial probability that the minor, who was under the age of three years on the date of initial removal, may be returned to his or her parent or guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided, the court shall continue the case.

If the minor was removed initially under subdivision (g) of Section 300 and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the whereabouts of the parent are still unknown, or if the parent has failed to contact and visit the child, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent has been convicted of a felony indicating parental unfitness, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days.

If the minor had been placed under court supervision with a previously noncustodial parent pursuant to Section 361.2, the court shall determine whether supervision is still necessary. The court may terminate supervision and transfer permanent custody to that parent, as provided for by paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.2.

In all other cases, the court shall direct that any reunification services previously ordered shall continue to be offered to the parent or guardian pursuant to the time periods set forth in subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, provided that the court may modify the terms and conditions of those services.



If the minor is not returned to his or her parent or guardian, the court shall determine whether reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian which were designed to aid the parent or guardian in overcoming the problems which led to the initial removal and the continued custody of the minor. The court shall order that those services be initiated, continued, or terminated.

(f) At the review hearing held 12 months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian unless the court finds, to the best of its knowledge and by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the minor to his or her parent or guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation officer shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in court-ordered treatment programs shall be prima facie evidence that the return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the probation officer's report and recommendations and the report and recommendations of any child advocate appointed pursuant to Section 356.5; shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she availed himself or herself of services provided; and shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366. Whether or not the minor is returned to his or her parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its decision. If the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make a finding pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366.

(g) If the time period in which court-ordered services were provided has met or exceeded the time period set forth in paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, as appropriate, and a minor is not returned to the custody of a parent or guardian at the hearing held pursuant to subdivision (f), the court shall do one of the following:

(1) Continue the case for up to six months for another review hearing, provided that the hearing shall occur within 18 months of the date the child was originally taken from the physical custody of his or her parent or 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 guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or guardian. The court shall inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a permanent plan shall be developed at that hearing. The court shall not order that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 be



held unless there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian.

(2) Order that the minor remain in long-term foster care, if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence, based upon the evidence already presented to it, that the minor is not a proper subject for adoption and has no one willing to accept legal guardianship.

(3) Order that a hearing be held within 120 days, pursuant to Section 366.26, if there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parents.

(h) In any case in which the court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall be held, it shall also order the termination of reunification services to the parent. The court shall continue to permit the parent to visit the minor pending the hearing unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the minor.

(i) Whenever a court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall be held, it shall direct the agency supervising the child and the licensed county adoption agency, or the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency in counties which are not served by a county adoption agency, to prepare an assessment which shall include:

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

(2) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the minor and his or her parents since the time of placement.

(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.

(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.

(j) This section shall apply to minors made dependents of the court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989.

(k) This section shall become operative January 1, 1999.



SEC. 4.9. Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, as added by Section 3 of Chapter 540 of the Statutes of 1995, is amended to read:

366.21. (a) Every hearing conducted by the juvenile court reviewing the status of a dependent child shall be placed on the appearance calendar. The court shall advise all persons present at the hearing of the date of the future hearing and of their right to be present and represented by counsel.

(b) Except as provided in Section 366.23 and subdivision (a) of Section 366.3, notice of the hearing shall be mailed by the probation officer to the same persons as in the original proceeding, to the minor's parent or guardian, to the foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having physical custody of the minor in the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, 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 to which the hearing was continued. Service of a copy of the notice personally or by certified mail return receipt requested, or any other form of actual notice is equivalent to service by first-class mail.

The notice shall contain a statement regarding the nature of the hearing to be held and any change in the custody or status of the minor being recommended by the supervising agency. The notice to the foster parent shall indicate that the foster parent may attend all hearings or may submit any information he or she deems relevant to the court in writing.

(c) At least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing the probation officer shall file a supplemental report with the court regarding the services provided or offered to the parent or guardian to enable them to assume custody, the progress made, and, where relevant, the prognosis for return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, and make his or her recommendation for disposition. If the recommendation is not to return the minor to a parent or guardian, the report shall specify why the return of the minor would be detrimental to the minor. The probation officer shall provide the parent or guardian with a copy of the report, including his or her recommendation for disposition, at least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing. In the case of a minor removed from the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, the probation officer shall provide a summary of his or her recommendation for disposition to the counsel for the minor, any court-appointed child advocate, foster parents, community care facility, or foster family agency having the physical custody of the minor at least 10 calendar days before the hearing.



(d) Prior to any hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a community care facility or foster family agency that may result in the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, or in adoption or the creation of a legal guardianship, the facility or agency shall file with the court a report containing its recommendation for disposition. Prior to such a hearing involving a minor in the physical custody of a foster parent, the foster parent may file with the court a report containing its recommendation for disposition. The court shall consider the report and recommendation filed pursuant to this subdivision prior to determining any disposition.

(e) At the review hearing held six months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian unless the court finds, to the best of its knowledge and by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the minor to his or her parent or guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation officer shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in court-ordered treatment programs shall be prima facie evidence that return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the probation officer's report and recommendations and the report and recommendations of any child advocate appointed pursuant to Section 356.5; shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she availed himself or herself of services provided. If the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366. Whether or not the minor is returned to his or her parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its decision and where relevant, shall order any additional services reasonably believed to facilitate the return of the minor to the custody of his or her parent or guardian. The court shall also inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a proceeding pursuant to Section 366.26 may be instituted. This section does not apply in a case where, pursuant to Section 361.5, the court has ordered that reunification services shall not be provided.

If the minor was under the age of three years on the date of the initial removal and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent failed to participate regularly in any court-ordered treatment plan, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If, however, the court finds there is a substantial probability that the minor, who was under the age of three years on the date of initial removal, may be returned to his or her



parent or guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided, the court shall continue the case.

If the minor was removed initially under subdivision (g) of Section 300 and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the whereabouts of the parent are still unknown, or if the parent has failed to contact and visit the minor, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. If the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent has been convicted of a felony indicating parental unfitness, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days.

If the minor had been placed under court supervision with a previously noncustodial parent pursuant to Section 361.2, the court shall determine whether supervision is still necessary. The court may terminate supervision and transfer permanent custody to that parent, as provided for by paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.2.

In all other cases, the court shall direct that any reunification services previously ordered shall continue to be offered to the parent or guardian pursuant to the time periods set forth in subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, provided that the court may modify the terms and conditions of those services.

If the minor is not returned to his or her parent or guardian, the court shall determine whether reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian which were designed to aid the parent or guardian in overcoming the problems which led to the initial removal and the continued custody of the minor. The court shall order that those services be initiated, continued, or terminated.

(f) At the review hearing held 12 months after the initial dispositional hearing, the court shall order the return of the minor to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian unless the court finds, to the best of its knowledge and by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the minor to his or her parent or guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the minor. The probation officer shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. The failure of the parent or guardian to participate regularly in court-ordered treatment programs shall be prima facie evidence that return would be detrimental. In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the probation officer's report and recommendations and the report and recommendations of any child advocate appointed pursuant to Section 356.5; shall consider the efforts or progress, or both, demonstrated by the parent or guardian and the extent to which he or she availed himself or herself of services provided; and shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366. Whether or not the minor is returned to his or her parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual



basis for its decision. If the minor is not returned to a parent or guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental. The court also shall make a finding pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366.

(g) If the time period in which court-ordered services were provided has met or exceeded the time period set forth in paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, as appropriate, and a minor is not returned to the custody of a parent or guardian at the hearing held pursuant to subdivision (f), the court shall do one of the following:

(1) Continue the case for up to six months for another review hearing, provided that the hearing shall occur within 18 months of the date the minor was originally taken from the physical custody of his or her parent or 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 guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or guardian. The court shall inform the parent or guardian that if the minor cannot be returned home by the next review hearing, a permanent plan shall be developed at that hearing. The court shall not order that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 be held unless there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parent or guardian.

(2) Order that the minor remain in long-term foster care, if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence, based upon the evidence already presented to it, that the minor is not a proper subject for adoption and has no one willing to accept legal guardianship.

(3) Order that a hearing be held within 120 days, pursuant to Section 366.26, if there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parents. Evidence that the minor has been placed with a foster family that is eligible to adopt a minor, or has been placed in a preadoptive home, in and of itself, shall not be deemed a failure to provide or after reasonable services.

(h) In any case in which the court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall be held, it shall also order the termination of reunification services to the parent. The court shall continue to permit the parent to visit the minor pending the hearing unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the minor.

(i) Whenever a court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 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 which are not served by a county adoption agency, to prepare an assessment which shall include:

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



(2) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the minor and his or her parents since the time of placement.

(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.

(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.

(j) This section shall apply to minors made dependents of the court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989.

(k) This section shall become operative January 1, 1999.

SEC. 5. Section 366.26 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, as amended by Section 6 of Chapter 540 of the Statutes of 1995, is amended to read:

366.26. (a) This section applies to minors who are adjudged dependent children of the juvenile court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989. The procedures specified herein are the exclusive procedures for conducting these hearings; Part 2 (commencing with Section 3020) of Division 8 of the Family Code is not applicable to these proceedings. For minors who are adjudged dependent children of the juvenile court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989, this section and Sections 8604, 8605, 8606, and 8700 of the Family Code and Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 7660) of Part 3 of Division 12 of the Family Code specify the exclusive procedures for permanently terminating parental rights with regard to, or establishing legal guardianship of, the minor while the minor is a dependent child of the juvenile court.

(b) At the hearing, which shall be held in juvenile court for all minors who are dependents of the juvenile court, the court, in order to provide stable, permanent homes for these minors, shall review the report as specified in Section 361.5, 366.21, or 366.22, shall indicate that the court has read and considered it, shall receive other evidence that the parties present, including, but not limited to, the parent's or



guardian's failure to cooperate, except for good cause, in the provision of services specified in the child welfare services case plan, and then shall do one of the following:

(1) Permanently sever the rights of the parent or parents and order that the child be placed for adoption and, upon the filing of a petition for adoption in the juvenile court, order that a hearing be set. The court shall proceed with the adoption after the appellate rights of the natural parents have been exhausted.

(2) Without permanently terminating parental rights, identify adoption as the permanent placement goal and order that efforts be made to locate an appropriate adoptive family for the minor within a period not to exceed 90 days.

(3) Without permanently terminating parental rights, appoint a legal guardian for the minor and issue letters of guardianship.

(4) Order that the minor be placed in long-term foster care, subject to the regular review of the juvenile court.

In choosing among the above alternatives the court shall proceed pursuant to subdivision (c).

(c) At the hearing the court shall proceed pursuant to one of the following procedures:

(1) The court shall terminate parental rights only if it determines by clear and convincing evidence that it is likely that the minor will be adopted based upon the assessment made pursuant to subdivision (i) of Section 366.21 or subdivision (b) of Section 366.22. If the court so determines, the findings pursuant to subdivision (b) or paragraph 1 of subdivision (e) of Section 361.5 that reunification services shall not be offered, or the findings pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 366.21 that the whereabouts of a parent have been unknown for six months or that the parent has failed to visit or contact the child for six months or that the parent has been convicted of a felony indicating parental unfitness, or pursuant to Section 366.21 or 366.22 that a minor cannot or should not be returned to his or her parent or guardian, shall then constitute a sufficient basis for termination of parental rights unless the court finds that termination would be detrimental to the minor due to one of the following circumstances:

(A) The parents or guardians have maintained regular visitation and contact with the minor and the minor would benefit from continuing the relationship.

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

(C) The child is placed in a residential treatment facility, adoption is unlikely or undesirable, and continuation of parental rights will not prevent finding the child a permanent family placement if the parents cannot resume custody when residential care is no longer needed.

(D) The minor is living with a relative or foster parent who is unable or unwilling to adopt the minor because of exceptional



circumstances, which do not include an unwillingness to accept legal responsibility for the minor, but who is willing and capable of providing the minor with a stable and permanent environment and the removal of the minor from the physical custody of his or her relative or foster parent would be detrimental to the emotional well-being of the minor.

(2) The court shall not terminate parental rights if at each and every hearing at which the court was required to consider reasonable efforts or services, the court has found that reasonable efforts were not made or that reasonable services were not offered or provided.

(3) If the court finds that termination of parental rights would not be detrimental to the minor pursuant to paragraph (1) and that the minor has a probability for adoption but is difficult to place for adoption and there are no prospective adoptive homes available to the minor, the court may identify adoption as the permanent placement goal and without terminating parental rights, order that efforts be made to locate an appropriate adoptive family for the minor for a period not to exceed 90 days. During this 90-day period, the public agency responsible for seeking adoptive parents, for each child shall, to the extent possible, contact other private and public adoption agencies regarding the availability of the child for adoption. During the 90-day period, the public agency shall conduct the search for adoptive parents in the same manner as prescribed for children in Sections 8708 and 8709 of the Family Code. At the expiration of this period, another hearing shall be held and the court shall proceed pursuant to paragraph (1), (3), or (4) of subdivision (b). For purposes of this section, a minor may only be found to be difficult to place for adoption if there are no prospective adoptive homes available to the minor because of the minor's membership in a sibling group, or the presence of a diagnosed medical, physical, or mental handicap, or the minor is aged seven years or more, and evidence presented to the court in the assessment made pursuant to subdivision (i) of Section 366.21 or subdivision (b) of Section 366.22 indicates that the presence and severity of one or more of these factors renders the minor difficult to place.

(4) If the court finds that adoption of the minor or termination of parental rights is not in the interests of the minor, or that one of the conditions in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), or (D) of paragraph (1) or in paragraph (2) applies, the court shall either order that the present caretakers or other appropriate persons shall become legal guardians of the minor or order that the minor remain in long-term foster care. Legal guardianship shall be considered before long-term foster care, if it is in the best interests of the child and if a suitable guardian can be found. When the minor is living with a relative or a foster parent who is willing and capable of providing a stable and permanent environment, but not willing to become a legal guardian, the minor shall not be removed from the home if the court finds the



removal would be seriously detrimental to the emotional well-being of the minor because the minor has substantial psychological ties to the relative caretaker or foster parents. The court shall also make an order for visitation with the parents or guardians unless the court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the visitation would be detrimental to the physical or emotional well-being of the minor.

(5) If the court finds that the child should not be placed for adoption, that legal guardianship shall not be established, and that there are no suitable foster parents except exclusive-use homes available to provide the minor with a stable and permanent environment, the court may order the care, custody, and control of the minor transferred from the county welfare department or probation department to a licensed foster family agency. The court shall consider the written recommendation of the county welfare director or chief probation officer regarding the suitability of such a transfer. The transfer shall be subject to further court orders.

The licensed foster family agency shall place the minor in a suitable licensed or exclusive-use home which has been certified by the agency as meeting licensing standards. The licensed foster family agency shall be responsible for supporting the minor and for providing appropriate services to the minor, including those services ordered by the court. Responsibility for the support of the minor shall not, in and of itself, create liability on the part of the foster family agency to third persons injured by the minor. Those minors whose care, custody, and control are transferred to a foster family agency shall not be eligible for foster care maintenance payments or child welfare services, except for emergency response services pursuant to Section 16504.

(d) The proceeding for the appointment of a guardian for a minor who is a dependent of the juvenile court shall be in the juvenile court. If the court finds pursuant to this section that legal guardianship is the appropriate permanency plan, it shall appoint the legal guardian and issue letters of guardianship. The assessment prepared pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 361.5, subdivision (i) of Section 366.21, and subdivision (b) of Section 366.22 shall be read and considered by the court prior to the appointment, and this shall be reflected in the minutes of the court. The person preparing the assessment may be called and examined by any party to the proceeding.

(e) The proceeding for the adoption of a minor who is a dependent of the juvenile court shall be in the juvenile court if the court finds pursuant to this section that adoption is the appropriate permanency plan and the petition for adoption is filed in the juvenile court. Upon the filing of a petition for adoption pursuant to Section 8714 of the Family Code, the juvenile court shall order that an adoption hearing be set. The court shall proceed with the adoption after the appellate rights of the natural parents have been exhausted. The full report required by Section 8715 of the Family Code shall be



read and considered by the court prior to the adoption and this shall be reflected in the minutes of the court. The person preparing the report may be called and examined by any party to the proceeding. It is the intent of the Legislature, pursuant to this subdivision, to give potential adoptive parents the option of filing in the juvenile court the petition for the adoption of a minor who is a dependent of the juvenile court. Nothing in this section is intended to prevent the filing of such a petition for adoption in any other court as permitted by law, instead of in the juvenile court.

(f) At the beginning of any proceeding pursuant to this section, if the minor or the parents are not being represented by previously retained or appointed counsel, the court shall proceed as follows:

(1) The court shall consider whether the interests of the minor require the appointment of counsel. If the court finds that the interests of the minor do require this protection, the court shall appoint counsel to represent the minor. If the court finds that the interests of the minor require the representation of counsel, counsel shall be appointed whether or not the minor is able to afford counsel. The minor shall not be present in court unless the minor so requests or the court so orders.

(2) 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 his or her parent. The public defender or private counsel may be appointed as counsel for the parent.

(3) Private counsel appointed under this section shall receive a reasonable sum for compensation and expenses, the amount of which shall be determined by the court. The amount shall be paid by the real parties in interest, other than the minor, in any proportions the court deems just. However, if the court finds that any of the real parties in interest are unable to afford counsel, the amount shall be paid out of the general fund of the county.

(g) The court may continue the proceeding for not to exceed 30 days as necessary to appoint counsel, and to enable counsel to become acquainted with the case.

(h) At all termination proceedings, the court shall consider the wishes of the child and shall act in the best interests of the child.

The testimony of the minor may be taken in chambers and outside the presence of the minor's parent or parents if the minor's parent or parents are represented by counsel, the counsel is present, and any of the following circumstances exist:

(1) The court determines that testimony in chambers is necessary to ensure truthful testimony.

(2) The minor is likely to be intimidated by a formal courtroom setting.



(3) The minor is afraid to testify in front of his or her parent or parents.

After testimony in chambers, the parent or parents of the minor may elect to have the court reporter read back the testimony or have the testimony summarized by counsel for the parent or parents.

The testimony of a minor also may be taken in chambers and outside the presence of the guardian or guardians of a minor under the circumstances specified in this subdivision.

(i) Any order of the court permanently terminating parental rights under this section shall be conclusive and binding upon the minor person, upon the parent or parents and upon all other persons who have been served with a citation by publication or otherwise as provided in this chapter. After making such an order, the court shall have no power to set aside, change, or modify it, but nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the right to appeal the order.

(j) If the court, by order or 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 or a licensed adoption agency for adoptive placement by the agency. However, no petition for adoption may be granted until the appellate rights of the natural parents have been exhausted. The State Department of Social Services or licensed adoption agency shall be responsible for the custody and supervision of the minor and shall be entitled to the exclusive care and control of the minor at all times until a petition for adoption is granted. With the consent of the agency, the court may appoint a guardian of the minor, who shall serve until the minor is adopted.

(k) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the application of any person who, as a relative caretaker or foster parent, has cared for a dependent child for whom the court has approved a permanent plan for adoption, or who has been freed for adoption, shall be given preference with respect to that child over all other applications for adoptive placement if the agency making the placement determines that the child has substantial emotional ties to the relative caretaker or foster parent and removal from the relative caretaker or foster parent would be seriously detrimental to the child's emotional well-being.

As used in this subdivision, "preference" means that the application shall be processed and, if satisfactory, the family study shall be completed before the processing of the application of any other person for the adoptive placement of the child.

(l) (1) An order by the court that a hearing pursuant to this section be held is not appealable at any time unless all of the following applies:

(A) A petition for extraordinary writ review was filed in a timely manner.



(B) The petition substantively addressed the specific issues to be challenged and supported that challenge by an adequate record.

(C) The petition for extraordinary writ review was summarily denied or otherwise not decided on the merits.

(2) Failure to file a petition for extraordinary writ review within the period specified by rule, to substantively address the specific issues challenged, or to support that challenge by an adequate record shall preclude subsequent review by appeal of the findings and orders made pursuant to this section.

(3) The Judicial Council shall adopt rules of court, effective January 1, 1995, to ensure all of the following:

(A) A trial court, after issuance of an order directing a hearing pursuant to this section be held, shall advise all parties of the requirement of filing a petition for extraordinary writ review as set forth in this subdivision in order to preserve any right to appeal in these issues. This notice shall be made orally to a party if they are present at the time of the making of the order or by first-class mail by the clerk of the court to the last known address of a party not present at the time of the making of the order.

(B) The prompt transmittal of the records from the trial court to the appellate court.

(C) That adequate time requirements for counsel and court personnel exist to implement the objective of this subdivision.

(D) That the parent or guardian, or their trial counsel or other counsel, is charged with the responsibility of filing a petition for extraordinary writ relief pursuant to this subdivision.

(4) The intent of this subdivision is to do both of the following:

(A) Make every reasonable attempt to achieve a substantive and meritorious review by the appellate court within the time specified in Sections 366.21 and 366.22 for holding a hearing pursuant to this section.

(B) Encourage the appellate court to determine all writ petitions filed pursuant to this subdivision on their merits.

(5) This subdivision shall only apply to cases in which an order to set a hearing pursuant to this section is issued on or after January 1, 1995.

(m) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 1999, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, which is enacted on or before January 1, 1999, deletes or extends that date.

SEC. 5.5. Section 366.26 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, as amended by Section 6 of Chapter 540 of the Statutes of 1995, is amended to read:

366.26. (a) This section applies to minors who are adjudged dependent children of the juvenile court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989. The procedures specified herein are the exclusive procedures for conducting these hearings; Part 2 (commencing with Section 3020) of Division 8 of the Family



Code is not applicable to these proceedings. For minors who are adjudged dependent children of the juvenile court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989, this section and Sections 8604, 8605, 8606, and 8700 of the Family Code and Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 7660) of Part 3 of Division 12 of the Family Code specify the exclusive procedures for permanently terminating parental rights with regard to, or establishing legal guardianship of, the minor while the minor is a dependent child of the juvenile court.

(b) At the hearing, which shall be held in juvenile court for all minors who are dependents of the juvenile court, the court, in order to provide stable, permanent homes for these minors, shall review the report as specified in Section 361.5, 366.21, or 366.22, shall indicate that the court has read and considered it, shall receive other evidence that the parties present, including, but not limited to, the parent's or guardian's failure to cooperate, except for good cause, in the provision of services specified in the child welfare services case plan, and then shall do one of the following:

(1) Permanently terminate the rights of the parent or parents and order that the minor be placed for adoption and, upon the filing of a petition for adoption in the juvenile court, order that a hearing be set. The court shall proceed with the adoption after the appellate rights of the natural parents have been exhausted.

(2) Without permanently terminating parental rights, identify adoption as the permanent placement goal and order that efforts be made to locate an appropriate adoptive family for the minor within a period not to exceed 90 days.

(3) Without permanently terminating parental rights, appoint a legal guardian for the minor and issue letters of guardianship.

(4) Order that the minor be placed in long-term foster care, subject to the regular review of the juvenile court.

In choosing among the above alternatives the court shall proceed pursuant to subdivision (c).

(c) At the hearing the court shall proceed pursuant to one of the following procedures:

(1) The court shall terminate parental rights only if it determines by clear and convincing evidence that it is likely that the minor will be adopted based upon the assessment made pursuant to subdivision (i) of Section 366.21 or subdivision (b) of Section 366.22. If the court so determines, the findings pursuant to subdivision (b) or paragraph (1) of subdivision (e) of Section 361.5 that reunification services shall not be offered, or the findings pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 366.21 that the whereabouts of a parent have been unknown for six months or that the parent has failed to visit or contact the minor for six months or that the parent has been convicted of a felony indicating parental unfitness, or pursuant to Section 366.21 or 366.22 that a minor cannot or should not be returned to his or her parent or



guardian, shall then constitute a sufficient basis for termination of parental rights unless the court finds that termination would be detrimental to the minor due to one of the following circumstances:

(A) The parents or guardians have maintained regular visitation and contact with the minor and the minor would benefit from continuing the relationship.

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

(C) The minor is placed in a residential treatment facility, adoption is unlikely or undesirable, and continuation of parental rights will not prevent finding the child a permanent family placement if the parents cannot resume custody when residential care is no longer needed.

(D) The minor is living with a relative or foster parent who is unable or unwilling to adopt the minor because of exceptional circumstances, which 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 environment and the removal of the minor from the physical custody of his or her relative or foster parent would be detrimental to the emotional well-being of the minor. This subparagraph does not apply to any minor, who is living with a nonrelative and who is either (i) under six years of age or (ii) a member of a sibling group where at least one minor is under six years of age and the siblings are, or should be, permanently placed together.

(2) The court shall not terminate parental rights if at each and every hearing at which the court was required to consider reasonable efforts or services, the court has found that reasonable efforts were not made or that reasonable services were not offered or provided.

(3) If the court finds that termination of parental rights would not be detrimental to the minor pursuant to paragraph (1) and that the minor has a probability for adoption but is difficult to place for adoption and there are no prospective adoptive homes available to the minor, the court may identify adoption as the permanent placement goal and without terminating parental rights, order that efforts be made to locate an appropriate adoptive family for the minor for a period not to exceed 90 days. During this 90-day period, the public agency responsible for seeking adoptive parents, for each minor shall, to the extent possible, contact other private and public adoption agencies regarding the availability of the minor for adoption. During the 90-day period, the public agency shall conduct the search for adoptive parents in the same manner as prescribed for children in Sections 8708 and 8709 of the Family Code. At the expiration of this period, another hearing shall be held and the court shall proceed pursuant to paragraph (1), (3), or (4) of subdivision (b). For purposes of this section, a minor may only be found to be difficult to place for adoption if there are no prospective adoptive



homes available to the minor because of the minor's membership in a sibling group, or the presence of a diagnosed medical, physical, or mental handicap, or the minor is aged seven years or more, and evidence presented to the court in the assessment made pursuant to subdivision (i) of Section 366.21 or subdivision (b) of Section 366.22 indicates that the presence and severity of one or more of these factors renders the minor difficult to place.

(4) If the court finds that adoption of the minor or termination of parental rights is not in the interests of the minor, or that one of the conditions in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), or (D) of paragraph (1) or in paragraph (2) applies, the court shall either order that the present caretakers or other appropriate persons shall become legal guardians of the minor or order that the minor remain in long-term foster care. Legal guardianship shall be considered before long-term foster care, if it is in the best interests of the minor and if a suitable guardian can be found. When the minor is living with a relative or a foster parent who is willing and capable of providing a stable and permanent environment, but not willing to become a legal guardian, the minor shall not be removed from the home if the court finds the removal would be seriously detrimental to the emotional well-being of the minor because the minor has substantial psychological ties to the relative caretaker or foster parents. The court shall also make an order for visitation with the parents or guardians unless the court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the visitation would be detrimental to the physical or emotional well-being of the minor.

(5) If the court finds that the minor should not be placed for adoption, that legal guardianship shall not be established, and that there are no suitable foster parents except exclusive-use homes available to provide the minor with a stable and permanent environment, the court may order the care, custody, and control of the minor transferred from the county welfare department or probation department to a licensed foster family agency. The court shall consider the written recommendation of the county welfare director or chief probation officer regarding the suitability of such a transfer. The transfer shall be subject to further court orders.

The licensed foster family agency shall place the minor in a suitable licensed or exclusive-use home which has been certified by the agency as meeting licensing standards. The licensed foster family agency shall be responsible for supporting the minor and for providing appropriate services to the minor, including those services ordered by the court. Responsibility for the support of the minor shall not, in and of itself, create liability on the part of the foster family agency to third persons injured by the minor. Those minors whose care, custody, and control are transferred to a foster family agency shall not be eligible for foster care maintenance payments or child welfare services, except for emergency response services pursuant to Section 16504.



(d) The proceeding for the appointment of a guardian for a minor who is a dependent of the juvenile court shall be in the juvenile court. If the court finds pursuant to this section that legal guardianship is the appropriate permanency plan, it shall appoint the legal guardian and issue letters of guardianship. The assessment prepared pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 361.5, subdivision (i) of Section 366.21, and subdivision (b) of Section 366.22 shall be read and considered by the court prior to the appointment, and this shall be reflected in the minutes of the court. The person preparing the assessment may be called and examined by any party to the proceeding.

(e) The proceeding for the adoption of a minor who is a dependent of the juvenile court shall be in the juvenile court if the court finds pursuant to this section that adoption is the appropriate permanency plan and the petition for adoption is filed in the juvenile court. Upon the filing of a petition for adoption pursuant to Section 8714 of the Family Code, the juvenile court shall order that an adoption hearing be set. The court shall proceed with the adoption after the appellate rights of the natural parents have been exhausted. The full report required by Section 8715 of the Family Code shall be read and considered by the court prior to the adoption and this shall be reflected in the minutes of the court. The person preparing the report may be called and examined by any party to the proceeding. It is the intent of the Legislature, pursuant to this subdivision, to give potential adoptive parents the option of filing in the juvenile court the petition for the adoption of a minor who is a dependent of the juvenile court. Nothing in this section is intended to prevent the filing of such a petition for adoption in any other court as permitted by law, instead of in the juvenile court.

(f) At the beginning of any proceeding pursuant to this section, if the minor or the parents are not being represented by previously retained or appointed counsel, the court shall proceed as follows:

(1) The court shall consider whether the interests of the minor require the appointment of counsel. If the court finds that the interests of the minor do require this protection, the court shall appoint counsel to represent the minor. If the court finds that the interests of the minor require the representation of counsel, counsel shall be appointed whether or not the minor is able to afford counsel. The minor shall not be present in court unless the minor so requests or the court so orders.

(2) 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 his or her parent. The public defender or private counsel may be appointed as counsel for the parent.

(3) Private counsel appointed under this section shall receive a reasonable sum for compensation and expenses, the amount of which



shall be determined by the court. The amount shall be paid by the real parties in interest, other than the minor, in any proportions the court deems just. However, if the court finds that any of the real parties in interest are unable to afford counsel, the amount shall be paid out of the general fund of the county.

(g) The court may continue the proceeding for not to exceed 30 days as necessary to appoint counsel, and to enable counsel to become acquainted with the case.

(h) At all termination proceedings, the court shall consider the wishes of the minor and shall act in the best interests of the minor.

The testimony of the minor may be taken in chambers and outside the presence of the minor's parent or parents if the minor's parent or parents are represented by counsel, the counsel is present, and any of the following circumstances exist:

(1) The court determines that testimony in chambers is necessary to ensure truthful testimony.

(2) The minor is likely to be intimidated by a formal courtroom setting.

(3) The minor is afraid to testify in front of his or her parent or parents.

After testimony in chambers, the parent or parents of the minor may elect to have the court reporter read back the testimony or have the testimony summarized by counsel for the parent or parents.

The testimony of a minor also may be taken in chambers and outside the presence of the guardian or guardians of a minor under the circumstances specified in this subdivision.

(i) Any order of the court permanently terminating parental rights under this section shall be conclusive and binding upon the minor person, upon the parent or parents and upon all other persons who have been served with citation by publication or otherwise as provided in this chapter. After making such an order, the court shall have no power to set aside, change, or modify it, but nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the right to appeal the order.

(j) If the court, by order or 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 or a licensed adoption agency for adoptive placement by the agency. However, no petition for adoption may be granted until the appellate rights of the natural parents have been exhausted. The State Department of Social Services or licensed adoption agency shall be responsible for the custody and supervision of the minor and shall be entitled to the exclusive care and control of the minor at all times until a petition for adoption is granted. With the consent of the agency, the court may appoint a guardian of the minor, who shall serve until the minor is adopted.



(k) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the application of any person who, as a relative caretaker or foster parent, has cared for a dependent child for whom the court has approved a permanent plan for adoption, or who has been freed for adoption, shall be given preference with respect to that minor over all other applications for adoptive placement if the agency making the placement determines that the minor has substantial emotional ties to the relative caretaker or foster parent and removal from the relative caretaker or foster parent would be seriously detrimental to the minor's emotional well-being.

As used in this subdivision, "preference" means that the application shall be processed and, if satisfactory, the family study shall be completed before the processing of the application of any other person for the adoptive placement of the minor.

(l) (1) An order by the court that a hearing pursuant to this section be held is not appealable at any time unless all of the following applies:

(A) A petition for extraordinary writ review was filed in a timely manner.

(B) The petition substantively addressed the specific issues to be challenged and supported that challenge by an adequate record.

(C) The petition for extraordinary writ review was summarily denied or otherwise not decided on the merits.

(2) Failure to file a petition for extraordinary writ review within the period specified by rule, to substantively address the specific issues challenged, or to support that challenge by an adequate record shall preclude subsequent review by appeal of the findings and orders made pursuant to this section.

(3) The Judicial Council shall adopt rules of court, effective January 1, 1995, to ensure all of the following:

(A) A trial court, after issuance of an order directing a hearing pursuant to this section be held, shall advise all parties of the requirement of filing a petition for extraordinary writ review as set forth in this subdivision in order to preserve any right to appeal in these issues. This notice shall be made orally to a party if they are present at the time of the making of the order or by first-class mail by the clerk of the court to the last known address of a party not present at the time of the making of the order.

(B) The prompt transmittal of the records from the trial court to the appellate court.

(C) That adequate time requirements for counsel and court personnel exist to implement the objective of this subdivision.

(D) That the parent or guardian, or their trial counsel or other counsel, is charged with the responsibility of filing a petition for extraordinary writ relief pursuant to this subdivision.

(4) The intent of this subdivision is to do both of the following:



(A) Make every reasonable attempt to achieve a substantive and meritorious review by the appellate court within the time specified in Sections 366.21 and 366.22 for holding a hearing pursuant to this section.

(B) Encourage the appellate court to determine all writ petitions filed pursuant to this subdivision on their merits.

(5) This subdivision shall only apply to cases in which an order to set a hearing pursuant to this section is issued on or after January 1, 1995.

(m) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 1999, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, which is enacted on or before January 1, 1999, deletes or extends that date.

SEC. 6. Section 366.26 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, as added by Section 7 of Chapter 540 of the Statutes of 1995, is amended to read:

366.26. (a) This section applies to minors who are adjudged dependent children of the juvenile court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989. The procedures specified herein are the exclusive procedures for conducting these hearings; Part 2 (commencing with Section 3020) of Division 8 of the Family Code is not applicable to these proceedings. For minors who are adjudged dependent children of the juvenile court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989, this section and Sections 8604, 8605, 8606, and 8700 of the Family Code and Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 7660) of Part 3 of Division 12 of the Family Code specify the exclusive procedures for permanently terminating parental rights with regard to, or establishing legal guardianship of, the minor while the minor is a dependent child of the juvenile court.

(b) At the hearing, which shall be held in juvenile court for all minors who are dependents of the juvenile court, the court, in order to provide stable, permanent homes for these minors, shall review the report as specified in Section 361.5, 366.21, or 366.22, shall indicate that the court has read and considered it, shall receive other evidence that the parties present, including, but not limited to, the parent's or guardian's failure to sign the child welfare services case plan or failure to cooperate in the provision of services specified in the child welfare services case plan, and then shall do one of the following:

(1) Permanently sever the rights of the parent or parents and order that the child be placed for adoption and, upon the filing of a petition for adoption in the juvenile court, order that a hearing be set. The court shall proceed with the adoption after the appellate rights of the natural parents have been exhausted.

(2) Without permanently terminating parental rights, identify adoption as the permanent placement goal and order that efforts be made to locate an appropriate adoptive family for the minor for a period not to exceed 90 days.



(3) Without permanently terminating parental rights, appoint a legal guardian for the minor and issue letters of guardianship.

(4) Order that the minor be placed in long-term foster care, subject to the regular review of the juvenile court.

In choosing among the above alternatives the court shall proceed pursuant to subdivision (c).

(c) At the hearing the court shall proceed pursuant to one of the following procedures:

(1) The court shall terminate parental rights only if it determines by clear and convincing evidence that it is likely that the minor will be adopted. If the court so determines, the findings pursuant to subdivision (b) or paragraph 1 of subdivision (e) of Section 361.5 that reunification services shall not be offered, or the findings pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 366.21 that the whereabouts of a parent have been unknown for six months or that the parent has failed to visit or contact the child for six months or that the parent has been convicted of a felony indicating parental unfitness, or, pursuant to Section 366.21 or 366.22, that a minor cannot or should not be returned to his or her parent or guardian, shall then constitute a sufficient basis for termination of parental rights unless the court finds that termination would be detrimental to the minor due to one of the following circumstances:

(A) The parents or guardians have maintained regular visitation and contact with the minor and the minor would benefit from continuing the relationship.

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

(C) The child is placed in a residential treatment facility, adoption is unlikely or undesirable, and continuation of parental rights will not prevent finding the child a permanent family placement if the parents cannot resume custody when residential care is no longer needed.

(D) The minor is living with a relative or foster parent who is unable or unwilling to adopt the minor because of exceptional circumstances, which do not include an unwillingness to accept legal responsibility for the minor, but who is willing and capable of providing the minor with a stable and permanent environment and the removal of the minor from the physical custody of his or her relative or foster parent would be detrimental to the emotional well-being of the minor.

(2) The court shall not terminate parental rights if at each and every hearing at which the court was required to consider reasonable efforts or services, the court has found that reasonable efforts were not made or that reasonable services were not offered or provided.

(3) If the court finds that termination of parental rights would not be detrimental to the minor pursuant to paragraph (1) and that the minor has a probability for adoption but is difficult to place for



adoption and there is no identified or available prospective adoptive parent, the court may identify adoption as the permanent placement goal and without terminating parental rights, order that efforts be made to locate an appropriate adoptive family for the minor for a period not to exceed 90 days. During this 90-day period, the public agency responsible for seeking adoptive parents, for each child shall, to the extent possible, contact other private and public adoption agencies regarding the availability of the child for adoption. During the 90-day period, the public agency shall conduct the search for adoptive parents in the same manner as prescribed for children in Sections 8708 and 8709 of the Family Code. At the expiration of this period, another hearing shall be held and the court shall proceed pursuant to paragraph (1), (3), or (4) of subdivision (b). For purposes of this section, a minor may only be found to be difficult to place for adoption if there is no identified or available prospective adoptive parent for the minor because of the minor's membership in a sibling group, or the presence of a diagnosed medical, physical, or mental handicap, or the minor is the age of seven years or more.

(4) If the court finds that adoption of the minor or termination of parental rights is not in the interests of the minor, or that one of the conditions in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), or (D) of paragraph (1) or in paragraph (2) applies, the court shall either order that the present caretakers or other appropriate persons shall become legal guardians of the minor or order that the minor remain in long-term foster care. Legal guardianship shall be considered before long-term foster care, if it is in the best interests of the child and if a suitable guardian can be found. When the minor is living with a relative or a foster parent who is willing and capable of providing a stable and permanent environment, but not willing to become a legal guardian, the minor shall not be removed from the home if the court finds the removal would be seriously detrimental to the emotional well-being of the minor because the minor has substantial psychological ties to the relative caretaker or foster parents. The court shall also make an order for visitation with the parents or guardians unless the court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the visitation would be detrimental to the physical or emotional well-being of the minor.

(5) If the court finds that the child should not be placed for adoption, that legal guardianship shall not be established, and that there are no suitable foster parents except exclusive-use homes available to provide the minor with a stable and permanent environment, the court may order the care, custody, and control of the minor transferred from the county welfare department or probation department to a licensed foster family agency. The court shall consider the written recommendation of the county welfare director or chief probation officer regarding the suitability of such a transfer. The transfer shall be subject to further court orders.



The licensed foster family agency shall place the minor in a suitable licensed or exclusive-use home which has been certified by the agency as meeting licensing standards. The licensed foster family agency shall be responsible for supporting the minor and for providing appropriate services to the minor, including those services ordered by the court. Responsibility for the support of the minor shall not, in and of itself, create liability on the part of the foster family agency to third persons injured by the minor. Those minors whose care, custody, and control are transferred to a foster family agency shall not be eligible for foster care maintenance payments or child welfare services, except for emergency response services pursuant to Section 16504.

(d) The proceeding for the appointment of a guardian for a minor who is a dependent of the juvenile court shall be in the juvenile court. If the court finds pursuant to this section that legal guardianship is the appropriate permanency plan, it shall appoint the legal guardian and issue letters of guardianship. The assessment prepared pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 361.5, subdivision (i) of Section 366.21, and subdivision (b) of Section 366.22 shall be read and considered by the court prior to the appointment, and this shall be reflected in the minutes of the court. The person preparing the assessment may be called and examined by any party to the proceeding.

(e) The proceeding for the adoption of a minor who is a dependent of the juvenile court shall be in the juvenile court if the court finds pursuant to this section that adoption is the appropriate permanency plan and the petition for adoption is filed in the juvenile court. Upon the filing of a petition for adoption, the juvenile court shall order that an adoption hearing be set. The court shall proceed with the adoption after the appellate rights of the natural parents have been exhausted. The full report required by Section 8715 of the Family Code shall be read and considered by the court prior to the adoption and this shall be reflected in the minutes of the court. The person preparing the report may be called and examined by any party to the proceeding. It is the intent of the Legislature, pursuant to this subdivision, to give potential adoptive parents the option of filing in the juvenile court the petition for the adoption of a minor who is a dependent of the juvenile court. Nothing in this section is intended to prevent the filing of such a petition for adoption in any other court as permitted by law, instead of in the juvenile court.

(f) At the beginning of any proceeding pursuant to this section, if the minor or the parents are not being represented by previously retained or appointed counsel, the court shall proceed as follows:

(1) The court shall consider whether the interests of the minor require the appointment of counsel. If the court finds that the interests of the minor do require this protection, the court shall appoint counsel to represent the minor. If the court finds that the interests of the minor require the representation of counsel, counsel



shall be appointed whether or not the minor is able to afford counsel. The minor shall not be present in court unless the minor so requests or the court so orders.

(2) 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 his or her parent. The public defender or private counsel may be appointed as counsel for the parent.

(3) Private counsel appointed under this section shall receive a reasonable sum for compensation and expenses, the amount of which shall be determined by the court. The amount shall be paid by the real parties in interest, other than the minor, in any proportions the court deems just. However, if the court finds that any of the real parties in interest are unable to afford counsel, the amount shall be paid out of the general fund of the county.

(g) The court may continue the proceeding for not to exceed 30 days as necessary to appoint counsel, and to enable counsel to become acquainted with the case.

(h) At all termination proceedings, the court shall consider the wishes of the child and shall act in the best interests of the child.

The testimony of the minor may be taken in chambers and outside the presence of the minor's parent or parents if the minor's parent or parents are represented by counsel, the counsel is present, and any of the following circumstances exist:

(1) The court determines that testimony in chambers is necessary to ensure truthful testimony.

(2) The minor is likely to be intimidated by a formal courtroom setting.

(3) The minor is afraid to testify in front of his or her parent or parents.

After testimony in chambers, the parent or parents of the minor may elect to have the court reporter read back the testimony or have the testimony summarized by counsel for the parent or parents.

The testimony of a minor also may be taken in chambers and outside the presence of the guardian or guardians of a minor under the circumstances specified in this subdivision.

(i) Any order of the court permanently terminating parental rights under this section shall be conclusive and binding upon the minor person, upon the parent or parents and upon all other persons who have been served with citation by publication or otherwise as provided in this chapter. After making such an order, the court shall have no power to set aside, change, or modify it, but nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the right to appeal the order.

(j) If the court, by order or 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 or a licensed adoption agency for adoptive placement by the agency. However, no petition for adoption may be granted until the appellate rights of the natural parents have been exhausted. The State Department of Social Services or licensed adoption agency shall be responsible for the custody and supervision of the minor and shall be entitled to the exclusive care and control of the minor at all times until a petition for adoption is granted. With the consent of the agency, the court may appoint a guardian of the minor, who shall serve until the minor is adopted.

(k) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the application of any person who, as a relative caretaker or foster parent, has cared for a dependent child for whom the court has approved a permanent plan for adoption, or who has been freed for adoption, shall be given preference with respect to that child over all other applications for adoptive placement if the agency making the placement determines that the child has substantial emotional ties to the relative caretaker or foster parent and removal from the relative caretaker or foster parent would be seriously detrimental to the child's emotional well-being.

As used in this subdivision, "preference" means that the application shall be processed and, if satisfactory, the family study shall be completed before the processing of the application of any other person for the adoptive placement of the child.

(l) (1) An order by the court that a hearing pursuant to this section be held is not appealable at any time unless all of the following applies:

(A) A petition for extraordinary writ review was filed in a timely manner.

(B) The petition substantively addressed the specific issues to be challenged and supported that challenge by an adequate record.

(C) The petition for extraordinary writ review was summarily denied or otherwise not decided on the merits.

(2) Failure to file a petition for extraordinary writ review within the period specified by rule, to substantively address the specific issues challenged, or to support that challenge by an adequate record shall preclude subsequent review by appeal of the findings and orders made pursuant to this section.

(3) The Judicial Council shall adopt rules of court, effective January 1, 1995, to ensure all of the following:

(A) A trial court, after issuance of an order directing a hearing pursuant to this section be held, shall advise all parties of the requirement of filing a petition for extraordinary writ review as set forth in this subdivision in order to preserve any right to appeal in these issues. This notice shall be made orally to a party if they are present at the time of the making of the order or by first-class mail



by the clerk of the court to the last known address of a party not present at the time of the making of the order.

(B) The prompt transmittal of the records from the trial court to the appellate court.

(C) That adequate time requirements for counsel and court personnel exist to implement the objective of this subdivision.

(D) That the parent or guardian, or their trial counsel or other counsel, is charged with the responsibility of filing a petition for extraordinary writ relief pursuant to this subdivision.

(4) The intent of this subdivision is to do both of the following:

(A) Make every reasonable attempt to achieve a substantive and meritorious review by the appellate court within the time specified in Sections 366.21 and 366.22 for holding a hearing pursuant to this section.

(B) Encourage the appellate court to determine all writ petitions filed pursuant to this subdivision on their merits.

(5) This subdivision shall only apply to cases in which an order to set a hearing pursuant to this section is issued on or after January 1, 1995.

(m) This section shall be operative January 1, 1999.

SEC. 6.5. Section 366.26 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, as added by Section 7 of Chapter 540 of the Statutes of 1995, is amended to read:

366.26. (a) This section applies to minors who are adjudged dependent children of the juvenile court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989. The procedures specified herein are the exclusive procedures for conducting these hearings; Part 2 (commencing with Section 3020) of Division 8 of the Family Code is not applicable to these proceedings. For minors who are adjudged dependent children of the juvenile court pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 360 on or after January 1, 1989, this section and Sections 8604, 8605, 8606, and 8700 of the Family Code and Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 7660) of Part 3 of Division 12 of the Family Code specify the exclusive procedures for permanently terminating parental rights with regard to, or establishing legal guardianship of, the minor while the minor is a dependent child of the juvenile court.

(b) At the hearing, which shall be held in juvenile court for all minors who are dependents of the juvenile court, the court, in order to provide stable, permanent homes for these minors, shall review the report as specified in Section 361.5, 366.21, or 366.22, shall indicate that the court has read and considered it, shall receive other evidence that the parties present, including, but not limited to, the parent's or guardian's failure to sign the child welfare services case plan or failure to cooperate in the provision of services specified in the child welfare services case plan, and then shall do one of the following:



(1) Permanently terminate the rights of the parent or parents and order that the minor be placed for adoption and, upon the filing of a petition for adoption in the juvenile court, order that a hearing be set. The court shall proceed with the adoption after the appellate rights of the natural parents have been exhausted.

(2) Without permanently terminating parental rights, identify adoption as the permanent placement goal and order that efforts be made to locate an appropriate adoptive family for the minor for a period not to exceed 90 days.

(3) Without permanently terminating parental rights, appoint a legal guardian for the minor and issue letters of guardianship.

(4) Order that the minor be placed in long-term foster care, subject to the regular review of the juvenile court.

In choosing among the above alternatives the court shall proceed pursuant to subdivision (c).

(c) At the hearing the court shall proceed pursuant to one of the following procedures:

(1) The court shall terminate parental rights only if it determines by clear and convincing evidence that it is likely that the minor will be adopted. If the court so determines, the findings pursuant to subdivision (b) or paragraph 1 of subdivision (e) of Section 361.5 that reunification services shall not be offered, or the findings pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 366.21 that the whereabouts of a parent have been unknown for six months or that the parent has failed to visit or contact the child for six months or that the parent has been convicted of a felony indicating parental unfitness, or, pursuant to Section 366.21 or 366.22, that a minor cannot or should not be returned to his or her parent or guardian, shall then constitute a sufficient basis for termination of parental rights unless the court finds that termination would be detrimental to the minor due to one of the following circumstances:

(A) The parents or guardians have maintained regular visitation and contact with the minor and the minor would benefit from continuing the relationship.

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

(C) The minor is placed in a residential treatment facility, adoption is unlikely or undesirable, and continuation of parental rights will not prevent finding the minor a permanent family placement if the parents cannot resume custody when residential care is no longer needed.

(D) The minor is living with a relative or foster parent who is unable or unwilling to adopt the minor because of exceptional circumstances, which 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 environment and the removal of the minor from the physical custody



of his or her relative or foster parent would be detrimental to the emotional well-being of the minor. This subparagraph does not apply to any minor who is living with a nonrelative and who is either (i) under six years of age or (ii) a member of a sibling group where at least one minor is under six years of age and the sibling is, or should be, permanently placed together.

(2) The court shall not terminate parental rights if at each and every hearing at which the court was required to consider reasonable efforts or services, the court has found that reasonable efforts were not made or that reasonable services were not offered or provided.

(3) If the court finds that termination of parental rights would not be detrimental to the minor pursuant to paragraph (1) and that the minor has a probability for adoption but is difficult to place for adoption and there is no identified or available prospective adoptive parent, the court may identify adoption as the permanent placement goal and without terminating parental rights, order that efforts be made to locate an appropriate adoptive family for the minor for a period not to exceed 90 days. During this 90-day period, the public agency responsible for seeking adoptive parents, for each minor shall, to the extent possible, contact other private and public adoption agencies regarding the availability of the minor for adoption. During the 90-day period, the public agency shall conduct the search for adoptive parents in the same manner as prescribed for children in Sections 8708 and 8709 of the Family Code. At the expiration of this period, another hearing shall be held and the court shall proceed pursuant to paragraph (1), (3), or (4) of subdivision (b). For purposes of this section, a minor may only be found to be difficult to place for adoption if there is no identified or available prospective adoptive parent for the minor because of the minor's membership in a sibling group, or the presence of a diagnosed medical, physical, or mental handicap, or the minor is the age of seven years or more.

(4) If the court finds that adoption of the minor or termination of parental rights is not in the interests of the minor, or that one of the conditions in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), or (D) of paragraph (1) or in paragraph (2) applies, the court shall either order that the present caretakers or other appropriate persons shall become legal guardians of the minor or order that the minor remain in long-term foster care. Legal guardianship shall be considered before long-term foster care, if it is in the best interests of the minor and if a suitable guardian can be found. When the minor is living with a relative or a foster parent who is willing and capable of providing a stable and permanent environment, but not willing to become a legal guardian, the minor shall not be removed from the home if the court finds the removal would be seriously detrimental to the emotional well-being of the minor because the minor has substantial psychological ties to the relative caretaker or foster parents. The court shall also make an order for visitation with the parents or guardians unless the court



finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the visitation would be detrimental to the physical or emotional well-being of the minor.

(5) If the court finds that the minor should not be placed for adoption, that legal guardianship shall not be established, and that there are no suitable foster parents except exclusive-use homes available to provide the minor with a stable and permanent environment, the court may order the care, custody, and control of the minor transferred from the county welfare department or probation department to a licensed foster family agency. The court shall consider the written recommendation of the county welfare director or chief probation officer regarding the suitability of such a transfer. The transfer shall be subject to further court orders.

The licensed foster family agency shall place the minor in a suitable licensed or exclusive-use home which has been certified by the agency as meeting licensing standards. The licensed foster family agency shall be responsible for supporting the minor and for providing appropriate services to the minor, including those services ordered by the court. Responsibility for the support of the minor shall not, in and of itself, create liability on the part of the foster family agency to third persons injured by the minor. Those minors whose care, custody, and control are transferred to a foster family agency shall not be eligible for foster care maintenance payments or child welfare services, except for emergency response services pursuant to Section 16504.

(d) The proceeding for the appointment of a guardian for a minor who is a dependent of the juvenile court shall be in the juvenile court. If the court finds pursuant to this section that legal guardianship is the appropriate permanency plan, it shall appoint the legal guardian and issue letters of guardianship. The assessment prepared pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 361.5, subdivision (i) of Section 366.21, and subdivision (b) of Section 366.22 shall be read and considered by the court prior to the appointment, and this shall be reflected in the minutes of the court. The person preparing the assessment may be called and examined by any party to the proceeding.

(e) The proceeding for the adoption of a minor who is a dependent of the juvenile court shall be in the juvenile court if the court finds pursuant to this section that adoption is the appropriate permanency plan and the petition for adoption is filed in the juvenile court. Upon the filing of a petition for adoption, the juvenile court shall order that an adoption hearing be set. The court shall proceed with the adoption after the appellate rights of the natural parents have been exhausted. The full report required by Section 8715 of the Family Code shall be read and considered by the court prior to the adoption and this shall be reflected in the minutes of the court. The person preparing the report may be called and examined by any party to the proceeding. It is the intent of the Legislature, pursuant to this subdivision, to give potential adoptive parents the option of



filing in the juvenile court the petition for the adoption of a minor who is a dependent of the juvenile court. Nothing in this section is intended to prevent the filing of such a petition for adoption in any other court as permitted by law, instead of in the juvenile court.

(f) At the beginning of any proceeding pursuant to this section, if the minor or the parents are not being represented by previously retained or appointed counsel, the court shall proceed as follows:

(1) The court shall consider whether the interests of the minor require the appointment of counsel. If the court finds that the interests of the minor do require this protection, the court shall appoint counsel to represent the minor. If the court finds that the interests of the minor require the representation of counsel, counsel shall be appointed whether or not the minor is able to afford counsel. The minor shall not be present in court unless the minor so requests or the court so orders.

(2) 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 his or her parent. The public defender or private counsel may be appointed as counsel for the parent.

(3) Private counsel appointed under this section shall receive a reasonable sum for compensation and expenses, the amount of which shall be determined by the court. The amount shall be paid by the real parties in interest, other than the minor, in any proportions the court deems just. However, if the court finds that any of the real parties in interest are unable to afford counsel, the amount shall be paid out of the general fund of the county.

(g) The court may continue the proceeding for not to exceed 30 days as necessary to appoint counsel, and to enable counsel to become acquainted with the case.

(h) At all termination proceedings, the court shall consider the wishes of the minor and shall act in the best interests of the minor.

The testimony of the minor may be taken in chambers and outside the presence of the minor's parent or parents if the minor's parent or parents are represented by counsel, the counsel is present, and any of the following circumstances exist:

(1) The court determines that testimony in chambers is necessary to ensure truthful testimony.

(2) The minor is likely to be intimidated by a formal courtroom setting.

(3) The minor is afraid to testify in front of his or her parent or parents.

After testimony in chambers, the parent or parents of the minor may elect to have the court reporter read back the testimony or have the testimony summarized by counsel for the parent or parents.



The testimony of a minor also may be taken in chambers and outside the presence of the guardian or guardians of a minor under the circumstances specified in this subdivision.

(i) Any order of the court permanently terminating parental rights under this section shall be conclusive and binding upon the minor person, upon the parent or parents and upon all other persons who have been served with citation by publication or otherwise as provided in this chapter. After making such an order, the court shall have no power to set aside, change, or modify it, but nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the right to appeal the order.

(j) If the court, by order or 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 or a licensed adoption agency for adoptive placement by the agency. However, no petition for adoption may be granted until the appellate rights of the natural parents have been exhausted. The State Department of Social Services or licensed adoption agency shall be responsible for the custody and supervision of the minor and shall be entitled to the exclusive care and control of the minor at all times until a petition for adoption is granted. With the consent of the agency, the court may appoint a guardian of the minor, who shall serve until the minor is adopted.

(k) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the application of any person who, as a relative caretaker or foster parent, has cared for a dependent child for whom the court has approved a permanent plan for adoption, or who has been freed for adoption, shall be given preference with respect to that minor over all other applications for adoptive placement if the agency making the placement determines that the minor has substantial emotional ties to the relative caretaker or foster parent and removal from the relative caretaker or foster parent would be seriously detrimental to the minor's emotional well-being.

As used in this subdivision, "preference" means that the application shall be processed and, if satisfactory, the family study shall be completed before the processing of the application of any other person for the adoptive placement of the minor.

(l) (1) An order by the court that a hearing pursuant to this section be held is not appealable at any time unless all of the following applies:

(A) A petition for extraordinary writ review was filed in a timely manner.

(B) The petition substantively addressed the specific issues to be challenged and supported that challenge by an adequate record.

(C) The petition for extraordinary writ review was summarily denied or otherwise not decided on the merits.



(2) Failure to file a petition for extraordinary writ review within the period specified by rule, to substantively address the specific issues challenged, or to support that challenge by an adequate record shall preclude subsequent review by appeal of the findings and orders made pursuant to this section.

(3) The Judicial Council shall adopt rules of court, effective January 1, 1995, to ensure all of the following:

(A) A trial court, after issuance of an order directing a hearing pursuant to this section be held, shall advise all parties of the requirement of filing a petition for extraordinary writ review as set forth in this subdivision in order to preserve any right to appeal in these issues. This notice shall be made orally to a party if they are present at the time of the making of the order or by first-class mail by the clerk of the court to the last known address of a party not present at the time of the making of the order.

(B) The prompt transmittal of the records from the trial court to the appellate court.

(C) That adequate time requirements for counsel and court personnel exist to implement the objective of this subdivision.

(D) That the parent or guardian, or their trial counsel or other counsel, is charged with the responsibility of filing a petition for extraordinary writ relief pursuant to this subdivision.

(4) The intent of this subdivision is to do both of the following:

(A) Make every reasonable attempt to achieve a substantive and meritorious review by the appellate court within the time specified in Sections 366.21 and 366.22 for holding a hearing pursuant to this section.

(B) Encourage the appellate court to determine all writ petitions filed pursuant to this subdivision on their merits.

(5) This subdivision shall only apply to cases in which an order to set a hearing pursuant to this section is issued on or after January 1, 1995.

(m) This section shall be operative January 1, 1999.

SEC. 7. Section 16100 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

16100. (a) Any county may apply for, and the department may issue pursuant to Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 1500) of Division 2 of the Health and Safety Code to any county agency designated by the county making the application, a license to perform the home-finding and placement functions, to investigate, examine, and make reports upon petitions for adoption filed in the superior court, to act as a placement agency in the placement of children for adoption, to accept relinquishments for adoption, and to perform such other functions in connection with adoption as the department deems necessary, or to do any of them. Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize a licensed county adoption



agency, as provided in subdivision (d), to provide intercountry adoption services.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a licensed county adoption agency may purchase services described in subdivision (a) from any licensed private adoption agency which that private adoption agency is licensed to provide pursuant to Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 1500) of Division 2 of the Health and Safety Code. These services shall be purchased to facilitate adoptive placement of a specified category of children for whom the licensed county adoption agency has determined it cannot provide adequate services.

(c) In order to extend the services of county adoption agencies to the maximum number of counties practicable within the limits of funds appropriated therefor, the department may license a county adoption agency to operate in such other counties in the general area of the agency as it deems conducive to the effective and efficient administration of the adoption program.

(d) A license issued to a county agency pursuant to this section constitutes the holder thereof a “county adoption agency” and the holder shall be deemed to be an “organization” within the meaning of this code and of Division 13 (commencing with Section 8500) of the Family Code.

SEC. 8. Section 16122 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

16122. (a) It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this chapter to provide children who would otherwise remain in long-term foster care with permanent adoptive homes. It is also the intent of this Legislature to encourage private adoption agencies to continue placing these children, and in so doing, to achieve a substantial savings to the state in foster care costs.

(b) From any funds appropriated for this purpose, the state shall compensate private adoption agencies licensed pursuant to Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 1500) of Division 2 of the Health and Safety Code for costs of placing for adoption children eligible for Adoption Assistance Program benefits pursuant to Section 16120.

These agencies shall be compensated for otherwise unreimbursed costs for the placement of these children in an amount not to exceed a total of three thousand five hundred dollars (\$3,500) per child adopted. Half of the compensation shall be paid at the time the adoptive placement agreement is signed. The remainder shall be paid at the time the adoption petition is granted by the court. Requests for compensation shall conform to claims procedures established by the department. This section shall not be construed to authorize reimbursement to private agencies for intercountry adoption services.

SEC. 9. Section 16501 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:



16501. (a) As used in this chapter, “child welfare services” means public social services which are directed toward the accomplishment of any or all the following purposes: protecting and promoting the welfare of all children, including handicapped, homeless, dependent, or neglected children; preventing or remedying, or assisting in the solution of problems which may result in, the neglect, abuse, exploitation, or delinquency of children; preventing the unnecessary separation of children from their families by identifying family problems, assisting families in resolving their problems, and preventing breakup of the family where the prevention of child removal is desirable and possible; restoring to their families children who have been removed, by the provision of services to the child and the families; identifying children to be placed in suitable adoptive homes, in cases where restoration to the biological family is not possible or appropriate; and assuring adequate care of children away from their homes, in cases where the child cannot be returned home or cannot be placed for adoption.

“Child welfare services” also means services provided on behalf of children alleged to be the victims of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The child welfare services provided on behalf of each child represent a continuum of services, including emergency response services, family preservation services, family maintenance services, family reunification services, and permanent placement services. The individual child’s case plan is the guiding principle in the provision of these services. The case plan shall be developed within 30 days of the initial removal of the child or of the in-person response required under subdivision (f) of Section 16501 if the child has not been removed from his or her home, or by the date of the jurisdictional hearing pursuant to Section 356, whichever comes first.

(1) Child welfare services may include, but are not limited to, a range of service-funded activities, including case management, counseling, emergency shelter care, emergency in-home caretakers, temporary in-home caretakers, respite care, therapeutic day services, teaching and demonstrating homemakers, parenting training, substance abuse testing, and transportation. These service-funded activities shall be available to children and their families in all phases of the child welfare program in accordance with the child’s case plan and departmental regulations. Funding for services is limited to the amount appropriated in the annual Budget Act and other available county funds.

(2) Service-funded activities to be provided may be determined by each county, based upon individual child and family needs as reflected in the service plan.

(3) As used in this chapter, “emergency shelter care” means emergency shelter provided to children who have been removed pursuant to Section 300 from their parent or parents or their guardian or guardians. The department may establish, by regulation, the time



periods for which emergency shelter care shall be funded. For the purposes of this paragraph, “emergency shelter care” may include “transitional shelter care facilities” as defined in paragraph (11) of subdivision (a) of Section 1502 of the Health and Safety Code.

(b) As used in this chapter, “respite care” means temporary care for periods not to exceed 72 hours. This care may be provided to the child’s parents or guardians. This care shall not be limited by regulation to care over 24 hours. These services shall not be provided for the purpose of routine, ongoing child care.

(c) The county shall provide child welfare services as needed pursuant to an approved service plan and in accordance with regulations promulgated, in consultation with the counties, by the department. Counties may contract for service-funded activities as defined in paragraph (1) of subdivision (a). Each county shall use available private child welfare resources prior to developing new county-operated resources when the private child welfare resources are of at least equal quality and lesser or equal cost as compared with county-operated resources. Counties shall not contract for needs assessment, client eligibility determination, or any other activity as specified by regulations of the State Department of Social Services, except as specifically authorized in Section 16100.

(d) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to affect duties which are delegated to probation officers pursuant to Sections 601 and 654.

(e) Any county may utilize volunteer individuals to supplement professional child welfare services by providing ancillary support services in accordance with regulations adopted by the State Department of Social Services.

(f) As used in this chapter, emergency response services consist of a response system providing in-person response, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, as required by Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 11164) of Chapter 2 of Title 1 of Part 4 of the Penal Code for the purpose of investigation pursuant to Section 11166 of the Penal Code and to determine the necessity for providing initial intake services and crisis intervention to maintain the child safely in his or her own home or to protect the safety of the child. County welfare departments shall respond to any report of imminent danger to a child immediately and all other reports within 10 calendar days. An in-person response is not required when the county welfare department, based upon an evaluation of risk, determines that an in-person response is not appropriate. This evaluation includes collateral, contacts, a review of previous referrals, and other relevant information, as indicated.

(g) As used in this chapter, family maintenance services are activities designed to provide in-home protective services to prevent or remedy neglect, abuse, or exploitation, for the purposes of preventing separation of children from their families.



(h) As used in this chapter, family reunification services are activities designed to provide time-limited foster care services to prevent or remedy neglect, abuse, or exploitation, when the child cannot safely remain at home, and needs temporary foster care, while services are provided to reunite the family.

(i) As used in this chapter, permanent placement services are activities designed to provide an alternate permanent family structure for children who because of abuse, neglect, or exploitation cannot safely remain at home and who are unlikely to ever return home. These services shall be provided on behalf of children for whom there has been a judicial determination of a permanent plan for adoption, legal guardianship, or long-term foster care.

(j) As used in this chapter, family preservation services include those services specified in Section 16500.5 to avoid or limit out-of-home placement of children, and may include those services specified in that section to place children in the least restrictive environment possible.

(k) (1) (A) In any county electing to implement this subdivision, all county welfare department employees who have frequent and routine contact with children shall, by February 1, 1997, and all welfare department employees who are expected to have frequent and routine contact with children and who are hired on or after January 1, 1996, and all such employees whose duties change after January 1, 1996, to include frequent and routine contact with children, shall, if the employees provide services to children who are alleged victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, sign a declaration under penalty of perjury regarding any prior criminal conviction, and shall provide a set of fingerprints to the county welfare director.

(B) The county welfare director shall secure from the Department of Justice a criminal record to determine whether the employee has ever been convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation. The Department of Justice shall deliver the criminal record to the county welfare director.

(C) If it is found that the employee has been convicted of a crime, other than a minor traffic violation, the county welfare director shall determine whether there is substantial and convincing evidence to support a reasonable belief that the employee is of good character so as to justify frequent and routine contact with children.

(D) No exemption shall be granted pursuant to subparagraph (C) if the person has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor, or has been convicted of an offense specified in Section 220, 243.4, 264.1, 273d, 288, or 289 of the Penal Code, or in paragraph (1) of Section 273a of, or subdivision (a) or (b) of Section 368 of, the Penal Code, or has been convicted of an offense specified in subdivision (c) of Section 667.5 of the Penal Code. The county welfare director shall suspend such a person from any duties involving frequent and routine contact with children.



(E) Notwithstanding subparagraph (D), the county welfare director may grant an exemption if the employee or prospective employee, who was convicted of a crime against an individual specified in paragraph (1) or (7) of subdivision (c) of Section 667.5 of the Penal Code, has been rehabilitated as provided in Section 4852.03 of the Penal Code and has maintained the conduct required in Section 4852.05 of the Penal Code for at least 10 years and has the recommendation of the district attorney representing the employee's or prospective employee's county of residence, or if the employee or prospective employee has received a certificate of rehabilitation pursuant to Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 4852.01) of Title 6 of Part 3 of the Penal Code. In that case, the county welfare director may give the employee or prospective employee an opportunity to explain the conviction and shall consider that explanation in the evaluation of the criminal conviction record.

(F) If no criminal record information has been recorded, the county welfare director shall cause a statement of that fact to be included in that person's personnel file.

(2) For purposes of this subdivision, a conviction means a plea or verdict of guilty or a conviction following a plea of nolo contendere. Any action which the county welfare director is permitted to take following the establishment of a conviction may be taken when the time for appeal has elapsed, or the judgment of conviction has been affirmed on appeal or when an order granting probation is made suspending the imposition of sentence, notwithstanding a subsequent order pursuant to Sections 1203.4 and 1203.4a of the Penal Code permitting the person to withdraw his or her plea of guilty and to enter a plea of not guilty, or setting aside the verdict of guilty, or dismissing the accusation, information, or indictment. For purposes of this subdivision, the record of a conviction, or a copy thereof certified by the clerk of the court or by a judge of the court in which the conviction occurred, shall be conclusive evidence of the conviction.

SEC. 10. Sections 2.5 and 2.7 of this bill incorporate amendments to Section 361.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code proposed by both this bill and AB 2679. They shall only become operative if (1) both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 1997, (2) each bill amends Section 361.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, and (3) this bill is enacted after AB 2679, in which case Sections 1 and 2 of this bill shall not become operative.

SEC. 11. (a) Sections 3.5 and 4.5 of this bill incorporate amendments to Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code proposed by both this bill and AB 2679. They shall only become operative if (1) both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 1997, (2) each bill amends Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, (3) SB 1516 is not enacted or as enacted does not amend that section, and (4) this bill is enacted after



AB 2679, in which case Sections 3, 3.7, 3.9, 4, 4.7, and 4.9 of this bill shall not become operative.

(b) Sections 3.7 and 4.7 of this bill incorporate amendments to Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code proposed by both this bill and SB 1516. They shall only become operative if (1) both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 1997, (2) each bill amends Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, (3) AB 2679 is not enacted or as enacted does not amend that section, and (4) this bill is enacted after SB 1516, in which case Sections 3, 3.5, 3.9, 4, 4.5, and 4.9 of this bill shall not become operative.

(c) Sections 3.9 and 4.9 of this bill incorporate amendments to Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code proposed by this bill, AB 2679, and SB 1516. They shall only become operative if (1) all three bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 1997, (2) all three bills amend Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, and (3) this bill is enacted after AB 2679 and SB 1516, in which case Sections 3, 3.5, 3.7, 4, 4.5, and 4.7 of this bill shall not become operative.

SEC. 12. Sections 5.5 and 6.5 of this bill incorporate amendments to Section 366.26 of the Welfare and Institutions Code proposed by both this bill and AB 2679. They shall only become operative if (1) both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 1997, (2) each bill amends Section 366.26 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, and (3) this bill is enacted after AB 2679, in which case Sections 5 and 6 of this bill shall not become operative.

