



|      |                  |                |              |                 |                  |              |
|------|------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| Home | Bill Information | California Law | Publications | Other Resources | My Subscriptions | My Favorites |
|------|------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|

**SB-463 Dependent children.** (2023-2024)

SHARE THIS:  

Date Published: 10/12/2023 02:00 PM

**Senate Bill No. 463**

**CHAPTER 714**

An act to amend Sections 366.21, 366.22, and 366.25 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to juveniles.

[ Approved by Governor October 10, 2023. Filed with Secretary of State October 10, 2023. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SB 463, Wahab. Dependent children.

Existing law establishes the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, which may adjudge a child to be a dependent of the court under certain circumstances, including when the child suffered, or there is a substantial risk that the child will suffer, serious physical harm or illness as a result of the failure or inability of their parent or guardian to adequately supervise or protect the child. Existing law requires the court to make a determination, throughout various hearings in the juvenile dependency process, including at the 6-month review hearing, the 12-month permanency hearing, and subsequent permanency review hearings, as to whether the return of the child to their parent or legal guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the child. Under existing law, the failure of the parent or legal guardian to participate regularly and make substantive progress in court-ordered treatment programs is considered prima facie evidence at these hearings that return would be detrimental.

This bill would delete these provisions requiring the failure of the parent or legal guardian to participate regularly and make substantive progress in court-ordered treatment programs to be considered prima facie evidence at specified review hearings.

This bill would incorporate additional changes to Section 366.22 of the Welfare and Institutions Code proposed by AB 937 to be operative only if this bill and AB 937 are enacted and this bill is enacted last.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1.** Section 366.21 of the Welfare and Institutions Code 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 Sections 294 and 295, notice of the hearing shall be provided pursuant to Section 293.

(c) At least 10 calendar days before the hearing, the social worker shall file a supplemental report with the court regarding the services provided or offered to the parent or legal guardian to enable them to assume custody and the efforts made to achieve

legal permanence for the child if efforts to reunify fail, including, but not limited to, efforts to maintain relationships between a child who is 10 years of age or older and has been in out-of-home placement for six months or longer and individuals who are important to the child, consistent with the child's best interests; the progress made; and, where relevant, the prognosis for return of the child to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian; and shall make their recommendation for disposition. If the child is a member of a sibling group described in subparagraph (C) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, the report and recommendation may also take into account those factors described in subdivision (e) relating to the child's sibling group. If the recommendation is not to return the child to a parent or legal guardian, the report shall specify why the return of the child would be detrimental to the child. The social worker shall provide the parent or legal guardian, counsel for the child, and any court-appointed child advocate with a copy of the report, including their recommendation for disposition, at least 10 calendar days before the hearing. The report may be served pursuant to Section 212.5. In the case of a child removed from the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian, the social worker shall, at least 10 calendar days before the hearing, provide a summary of their recommendation for disposition to any foster parents, relative caregivers, and certified foster parents who have been approved for adoption by the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency or by a county adoption agency, community care facility, or foster family agency having the physical custody of the child. The social worker shall include a copy of the Judicial Council's Caregiver Information Form (JV-290) with the summary of their recommendation to the child's foster parents, relative caregivers, or foster parents approved for adoption, in the caregiver's primary language when available, along with information on how to file the form with the court. The form and summary of the recommendation may be served electronically pursuant to Section 212.5.

(d) Prior to any hearing involving a child in the physical custody of a community care facility or a foster family agency that may result in the return of the child to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian, or in adoption or the creation of a legal guardianship, or in the case of an Indian child, in consultation with the child's tribe, tribal customary adoption, the facility or agency shall file with the court a report, or a Judicial Council's Caregiver Information Form (JV-290), containing its recommendation for disposition. Prior to the hearing involving a child in the physical custody of a foster parent, a relative caregiver, or a certified foster parent who has been approved for adoption by the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency or by a county adoption agency, the foster parent, relative caregiver, or the certified foster parent who has been approved for adoption by the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency or by a county adoption agency, may file with the court a report containing their recommendation for disposition. The court shall consider the report and recommendation filed pursuant to this subdivision prior to determining any disposition.

(e) (1) At the review hearing held 6 months after the initial dispositional hearing, but no later than 12 months after the date the child entered foster care as determined in Section 361.49, whichever occurs earlier, after considering the admissible and relevant evidence, the court shall order the return of the child to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian unless the court finds, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the child to their parent or legal guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the child. The social worker shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. At the hearing, the court shall consider the criminal history, obtained pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (f) of Section 16504.5, of the parent or legal guardian subsequent to the child's removal to the extent that the criminal record is substantially related to the welfare of the child or the parent's or guardian's ability to exercise custody and control regarding their child, provided the parent or legal guardian agreed to submit fingerprint images to obtain criminal history information as part of the case plan. The court shall also consider whether the child can be returned to the custody of their parent who is enrolled in a certified substance abuse treatment facility that allows a dependent child to reside with their parent. The fact that the parent is enrolled in a certified substance abuse treatment facility shall not be, for that reason alone, prima facie evidence of detriment. In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the social worker'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 legal guardian and the extent to which they availed themselves of services provided, taking into account the particular barriers to a minor parent or a nonminor dependent parent, or an incarcerated, institutionalized, detained, or deported parent's or legal guardian's access to those court-mandated services and ability to maintain contact with their child.

(2) Regardless of whether the child is returned to a parent or legal guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that the return would be detrimental or would not be detrimental. The court also shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366; and, when relevant, shall order any additional services reasonably believed to facilitate the return of the child to the custody of their parent or legal guardian. The court shall also inform the parent or legal guardian that if the child cannot be returned home by the 12-month permanency hearing, a proceeding pursuant to Section 366.26 may be instituted. This section does not apply in a case in which, pursuant to Section 361.5, the court has ordered that reunification services shall not be provided.

(3) If the child was under three years of age on the date of the initial removal, or is a member of a sibling group described in subparagraph (C) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the parent failed to participate regularly and make substantive progress in a 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 child, who was under three years of age on the date of initial removal or is a member of a sibling group described in subparagraph (C) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, may be returned to their parent or legal guardian within six months or that reasonable services have not been provided, the court shall continue the case to the 12-month permanency hearing.

(4) For the purpose of placing and maintaining a sibling group together in a permanent home, the court, in making its determination to schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 for some or all members of a sibling group, as described in subparagraph (C) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 361.5, shall review and consider the social worker's report and recommendations. Factors the report shall address, and the court shall consider, may include, but need not be limited to, whether the sibling group was removed from parental care as a group, the closeness and strength of the sibling bond, the ages of the siblings, the appropriateness of maintaining the sibling group together, the detriment to the child if sibling ties are not maintained, the likelihood of finding a permanent home for the sibling group, whether the sibling group is currently placed together in a preadoptive home or has a concurrent plan goal of legal permanency in the same home, the wishes of each child whose age and physical and emotional condition permits a meaningful response, and the best interests of each child in the sibling group. The court shall specify the factual basis for its finding that it is in the best interests of each child to schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days for some or all of the members of the sibling group.

(5) If the child 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 child, the court may schedule a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 within 120 days. The court shall take into account any particular barriers to a parent's ability to maintain contact with their child due to the parent's incarceration, institutionalization, detention by the United States Department of Homeland Security, or deportation. 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.

(6) If the child 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 (b) of Section 361.2.

(7) In all other cases, the court shall direct that any reunification services previously ordered shall continue to be offered to the parent or legal 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.

(8) If the child is not returned to their parent or legal guardian, the court shall determine by clear and convincing evidence whether reasonable services that were designed to aid the parent or legal guardian in overcoming the problems that led to the initial removal and the continued custody of the child have been provided or offered to the parent or legal guardian. The court shall order that those services be initiated, continued, or terminated.

(f) (1) The permanency hearing shall be held no later than 12 months after the date the child entered foster care, as that date is determined pursuant to Section 361.49. At the permanency hearing, the court shall determine the permanent plan for the child, which shall include a determination of whether the child will be returned to the child's home and, if so, when, within the time limits of subdivision (a) of Section 361.5. After considering the relevant and admissible evidence, the court shall order the return of the child to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian unless the court finds, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the child to their parent or legal guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the child. The social worker shall have the burden of establishing that detriment.

(A) At the permanency hearing, the court shall consider the criminal history, obtained pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (f) of Section 16504.5, of the parent or legal guardian subsequent to the child's removal to the extent that the criminal record is substantially related to the welfare of the child or the parent's or legal guardian's ability to exercise custody and control regarding their child, provided that the parent or legal guardian agreed to submit fingerprint images to obtain criminal history information as part of the case plan. The court shall also determine by clear and convincing evidence whether reasonable services that were designed to aid the parent or legal guardian to overcome the problems that led to the initial removal and continued custody of the child have been provided or offered to the parent or legal guardian.

(B) The court shall also consider whether the child can be returned to the custody of their parent who is enrolled in a certified substance abuse treatment facility that allows a dependent child to reside with their parent. The fact that the parent is enrolled in a certified substance abuse treatment facility shall not be, for that reason alone, prima facie evidence of detriment.

(C) In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the social worker'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 legal guardian and the extent to which they availed themselves of services provided, taking into account the particular barriers to a minor parent or a nonminor dependent parent, or an incarcerated, institutionalized, detained, or deported parent's or legal guardian's access to those court-mandated services and ability to maintain contact with their child, and shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366.

(D) For each youth 16 years of age and older, the court shall also determine whether services have been made available to assist them in making the transition from foster care to successful adulthood.

(2) Regardless of whether the child is returned to their parent or legal guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its decision. If the child is not returned to a parent or legal 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. If the child is not returned to their parent or legal guardian, the court shall consider, and state for the record, in-state and out-of-state placement options. If the child is placed out of the state, the court shall make a determination whether the out-of-state placement continues to be appropriate and in the best interests of the child.

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

(1) Continue the case for up to six months for a permanency review hearing, provided that the hearing shall occur within 18 months of the date the child was originally taken from the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian. The court shall continue the case only if it finds that there is a substantial probability that the child will be returned to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian and safely maintained in the home within the extended period of time or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or legal guardian. For purposes of this section, in order to find a substantial probability that the child will be returned to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian and safely maintained in the home within the extended period of time, the court shall be required to find all of the following:

(A) That the parent or legal guardian has consistently and regularly contacted and visited with the child.

(B) That the parent or legal guardian has made significant progress in resolving problems that led to the child's removal from the home.

(C) The parent or legal guardian has demonstrated the capacity and ability both to complete the objectives of their treatment plan and to provide for the child's safety, protection, physical and emotional well-being, and special needs.

(i) For purposes of this subdivision, the court's decision to continue the case based on a finding or substantial probability that the child will be returned to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian is a compelling reason for determining that a hearing held pursuant to Section 366.26 is not in the best interests of the child.

(ii) The court shall inform the parent or legal guardian that if the child cannot be returned home by the next permanency review hearing, a proceeding pursuant to Section 366.26 may be instituted. 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 legal guardian.

(2) Continue the case for up to six months for a permanency review hearing, provided that the hearing shall occur within 18 months of the date the child was originally taken from the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian, if the parent has been arrested and issued an immigration hold, detained by the United States Department of Homeland Security, or deported to their country of origin, and the court determines either that there is a substantial probability that the child will be returned to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian and safely maintained in the home within the extended period of time or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or legal guardian.

(3) For purposes of paragraph (2), in order to find a substantial probability that the child will be returned to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian and safely maintained in the home within the extended period of time, the court shall find all of the following:

(A) The parent or legal guardian has consistently and regularly contacted and visited with the child, taking into account any particular barriers to a parent's ability to maintain contact with their child due to the parent's arrest and receipt of an immigration hold, detention by the United States Department of Homeland Security, or deportation.

(B) The parent or legal guardian has made significant progress in resolving the problems that led to the child's removal from the home.

(C) The parent or legal guardian has demonstrated the capacity or ability both to complete the objectives of their treatment plan and to provide for the child's safety, protection, physical and emotional well-being, and special needs.

(4) Order that a hearing be held within 120 days, pursuant to Section 366.26, but only if the court does not continue the case to the permanency planning review hearing and there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable services have been provided or offered to the parents or legal guardians. On and after January 1, 2012, a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall not be ordered if the child is a nonminor dependent, unless the nonminor dependent is an Indian child and tribal customary adoption is recommended as the permanent plan.

(5) Order that the child remain in foster care, but only if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence, based upon the evidence already presented to it, including a recommendation by the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency or by a county adoption agency, that there is a compelling reason for determining that a hearing held pursuant to Section 366.26 is not in the best interests of the child because the child is not a proper subject for adoption and has no one willing to accept legal guardianship as of the hearing date. For purposes of this section, a recommendation by the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency or by a county adoption agency that adoption is not in the best interests of the child shall constitute a compelling reason for the court's determination. That recommendation shall be based on the present circumstances of the child and shall not preclude a different recommendation at a later date if the child's circumstances change. On and after January 1, 2012, the nonminor dependent's legal status as an adult is in and of itself a compelling reason not to hold a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26. The court may order that a nonminor dependent who otherwise is eligible pursuant to Section 11403 remain in a planned, permanent living arrangement.

(A) The court shall make factual findings identifying any barriers to achieving the permanent plan as of the hearing date. When the child is under 16 years of age, the court shall order a permanent plan of return home, adoption, tribal customary adoption in the case of an Indian child, legal guardianship, or placement with a fit and willing relative, as appropriate. When the child is 16 years of age or older, or is a nonminor dependent, and no other permanent plan is appropriate at the time of the hearing, the court may order another planned permanent living arrangement, as described in paragraph (2) of subdivision (i) of Section 16501.

(B) If the court orders that a child who is 10 years of age or older remain in foster care, the court shall determine whether the agency has made reasonable efforts to maintain the child's relationships with individuals other than the child's siblings who are important to the child, consistent with the child's best interests, and may make any appropriate order to ensure that those relationships are maintained.

(C) If the child is not returned to their parent or legal guardian, the court shall consider, and state for the record, in-state and out-of-state options for permanent placement. If the child is placed out of the state, the court shall make a determination whether the out-of-state placement continues to be appropriate and in the best interests of the child.

(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 or legal guardian. The court shall continue to permit the parent or legal guardian to visit the child pending the hearing unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the child. The court shall make any other appropriate orders to enable the child to maintain relationships with individuals, other than the child's siblings, who are important to the child, consistent with the child's best interests. When the court orders a termination of reunification services to the parent or legal guardian, it shall also order that the child's caregiver receive the child's birth certificate in accordance with Sections 16010.4 and 16010.5. Additionally, when the court orders a termination of reunification services to the parent or legal guardian, it shall order, when appropriate, that a child who is 16 years of age or older receive their birth certificate.

(i) (1) Whenever a court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26, including, when, in consultation with the child's tribe, tribal customary adoption is recommended, shall be held, it shall direct the agency supervising the child and the county adoption agency, or the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency, to prepare an assessment that shall include:

(A) Current search efforts for an absent parent or parents or legal guardians.

(B) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the child and their parents or legal guardians and other members of their extended family since the time of placement. Although the extended family of each child shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, "extended family" for the purpose of this subparagraph shall include, but not be limited to, the child's siblings, grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

(C) (i) An evaluation of the child's medical, developmental, scholastic, mental, and emotional status.

(ii) The evaluation pursuant to clause (i) shall include, but is not limited to, providing a copy of the complete health and education summary as required under Section 16010, including the name and contact information of the person or persons currently holding the right to make educational decisions for the child.

(iii) In instances where it is determined that disclosure pursuant to clause (ii) of the contact information of the person or persons currently holding the right to make educational decisions for the child poses a threat to the health and safety of that individual or those individuals, that contact information shall be redacted or withheld from the evaluation.

(D) A preliminary assessment of the eligibility and commitment of any identified prospective adoptive parent or legal guardian, including the prospective tribal customary adoptive parent, 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 child's needs, and the understanding of the legal and financial rights and responsibilities of adoption and guardianship. If a proposed guardian is a relative of the minor, the assessment shall also consider, but need not be limited to, all of the factors specified in subdivision (a) of Section 361.3 and in Section 361.4.

(E) The relationship of the child to any identified prospective adoptive parent or legal guardian, the duration and character of the relationship, the degree of attachment of the child to the prospective relative guardian or adoptive parent, the relative's or adoptive parent's strong commitment to caring permanently for the child, the motivation for seeking adoption or guardianship, a statement from the child concerning placement and the adoption or guardianship, and whether the child, if over 12 years of age, has been consulted about the proposed relative guardianship arrangements, unless the child's age or physical, emotional, or other condition precludes their meaningful response, and if so, a description of the condition.

(F) A description of efforts to be made to identify a prospective adoptive parent or legal guardian, including, but not limited to, child-specific recruitment and listing on an adoption exchange within the state or out of the state.

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

(H) In the case of an Indian child, in addition to subparagraphs (A) to (G), inclusive, an assessment of the likelihood that the child will be adopted, when, in consultation with the child's tribe, a tribal customary adoption, as defined in Section 366.24, is recommended. If tribal customary adoption is recommended, the assessment shall include an analysis of both of the following:

(i) Whether tribal customary adoption would or would not be detrimental to the Indian child and the reasons for reaching that conclusion.

(ii) Whether the Indian child cannot or should not be returned to the home of the Indian parent or Indian custodian and the reasons for reaching that conclusion.

(2) (A) A relative caregiver's preference for legal guardianship over adoption, if it is due to circumstances that do not include an unwillingness to accept legal or financial responsibility for the child, shall not constitute the sole basis for recommending removal of the child from the relative caregiver for purposes of adoptive placement.

(B) Regardless of their immigration status, a relative caregiver shall be given information regarding the permanency options of guardianship and adoption, including the long-term benefits and consequences of each option, prior to establishing legal guardianship or pursuing adoption. If the proposed permanent plan is guardianship with an approved relative caregiver for a minor eligible for aid under the Kin-GAP Program, as provided for in Article 4.7 (commencing with Section 11385) of Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9, the relative caregiver shall be informed about the terms and conditions of the negotiated agreement pursuant to Section 11387 and shall agree to its execution prior to the hearing held pursuant to Section 366.26. A copy of the executed negotiated agreement shall be attached to the assessment.

(j) If, at any hearing held pursuant to Section 366.26, a guardianship is established for the minor with an approved relative caregiver, and juvenile court dependency is subsequently dismissed, the minor shall be eligible for aid under the Kin-GAP Program, as provided for in Article 4.5 (commencing with Section 11360) or Article 4.7 (commencing with Section 11385), as applicable, of Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9.

(k) As used in this section, "relative" means an adult who is related to the minor by blood, adoption, or affinity within the fifth degree of kinship, including stepparents, stepsiblings, and all relatives whose status is preceded by the words "great," "great-great," or "grand," or the spouse of any of those persons even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution. If the proposed permanent plan is guardianship with an approved relative caregiver for a minor eligible for aid under the Kin-GAP Program, as provided for in Article 4.7 (commencing with Section 11385) of Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9, "relative" as used in this section has the same meaning as "relative" as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 11391.

(l) For purposes of this section, evidence of any of the following circumstances shall not, in and of itself, be deemed a failure to provide or offer reasonable services:

(1) The child has been placed with a foster family that is eligible to adopt a child, or has been placed in a preadoptive home.

(2) The case plan includes services to make and finalize a permanent placement for the child if efforts to reunify fail.

(3) Services to make and finalize a permanent placement for the child, if efforts to reunify fail, are provided concurrently with services to reunify the family.

**SEC. 2.** Section 366.22 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

**366.22.** (a) (1) When a case has been continued pursuant to paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (g) of Section 366.21, the permanency review hearing shall occur within 18 months after the date the child was originally removed from the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian. After considering the admissible and relevant evidence, the court shall order the return of the child to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian unless the court finds, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the child to their parent or legal guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the child. The social worker shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. At the permanency review hearing, the court shall consider the criminal history, obtained pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (f) of Section 16504.5, of the parent or legal guardian subsequent to the child's removal, to the extent that the criminal record is substantially related to the welfare of the child or the parent's or legal guardian's ability to exercise custody and control regarding their child, provided that the parent or legal guardian agreed to submit fingerprint images to obtain criminal history information as part of the case plan. The court shall also consider whether the child can be returned to the custody of their parent who is enrolled in a certified substance abuse treatment facility that allows a dependent child to reside with their parent. The fact that the parent is enrolled in a certified substance abuse treatment facility shall not be, for that reason alone, prima facie evidence of detriment. In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the social worker'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 legal guardian and the extent to which they availed themselves of services provided, taking into account the particular barriers of a minor parent or a nonminor dependent parent, or an incarcerated or institutionalized parent's or legal guardian's access to those court-mandated services and ability to maintain contact with their child; and shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366.

(2) Whether or not the child is returned to their parent or legal guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its decision. If the child is not returned to a parent or legal guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that return would be detrimental. If the child is not returned to their parent or legal guardian, the court shall consider, and state for the record, in-state and out-of-state options for the child's permanent placement. If the child is placed out of the state, the court shall make a determination whether the out-of-state placement continues to be appropriate and in the best interests of the child.

(3) Unless the conditions in subdivision (b) are met and the child is not returned to a parent or legal guardian at the permanency review hearing, the court shall order that a hearing be held pursuant to Section 366.26 in order to determine whether adoption, or, in the case of an Indian child, in consultation with the child's tribe, tribal customary adoption, guardianship, or continued placement in foster care is the most appropriate plan for the child. On and after January 1, 2012, a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall not be ordered if the child is a nonminor dependent, unless the nonminor dependent is an Indian child, and tribal customary adoption is recommended as the permanent plan. However, if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence, based on the evidence already presented to it, including a recommendation by the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency or by a county adoption agency, that there is a compelling reason, as described in paragraph (5) of subdivision (g) of Section 366.21, for determining that a hearing held under Section 366.26 is not in the best interests of the child because the child is not a proper subject for adoption and has no one willing to accept legal guardianship as of the hearing date, the court may, only under these circumstances, order that the child remain in foster care with a permanent plan of return home, adoption, tribal customary adoption in the case of an Indian child, legal guardianship, or placement with a fit and willing relative, as appropriate. If the child is 16 years of age or older or is a nonminor dependent, and no other permanent plan is appropriate at the time of the hearing, the court may order another planned permanent living arrangement, as described in paragraph (2) of subdivision (i) of Section 16501. The court shall make factual findings identifying any barriers to achieving the permanent plan as of the hearing date. On and after January 1, 2012, the nonminor dependent's legal status as an adult is in and of itself a compelling reason not to hold a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26. The court may order that a nonminor dependent who otherwise is eligible pursuant to Section 11403 remain in a planned, permanent living arrangement. If the court orders that a child who is 10 years of age or older remain in foster care, the court shall determine whether the agency has made reasonable efforts to maintain the child's relationships with individuals other than the child's siblings who are important to the child, consistent with the child's best interests, and may make any appropriate order to ensure that those relationships are maintained. The hearing shall be held no later than 120 days from the date of the permanency review hearing. The court shall also order termination of reunification services to the parent or legal guardian. The court shall continue to permit the parent or legal guardian to visit the child unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the child. The court shall determine by clear and convincing evidence whether reasonable services have been offered or provided to the parent or legal guardian. For purposes of this subdivision, evidence of any of the following circumstances shall not, in and of themselves, be deemed a failure to provide or offer reasonable services:

(A) The child has been placed with a foster family that is eligible to adopt a child, or has been placed in a preadoptive home.

(B) The case plan includes services to make and finalize a permanent placement for the child if efforts to reunify fail.

(C) Services to make and finalize a permanent placement for the child, if efforts to reunify fail, are provided concurrently with services to reunify the family.

(b) If the child is not returned to a parent or legal guardian at the permanency review hearing and the court determines by clear and convincing evidence that the best interests of the child would be met by the provision of additional reunification services to a parent or legal guardian who is making significant and consistent progress in a court-ordered residential substance abuse treatment program, a parent who was either a minor parent or a nonminor dependent parent at the time of the initial hearing making significant and consistent progress in establishing a safe home for the child's return, or a parent recently discharged from incarceration, institutionalization, or the custody of the United States Department of Homeland Security and making significant and consistent progress in establishing a safe home for the child's return, the court may continue the case for up to six months for a subsequent permanency review hearing, provided that the hearing shall occur within 24 months of the date the child was originally taken from the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian. The court shall continue the case only if it finds that there is a substantial probability that the child will be returned to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian and safely maintained in the home within the extended period of time or that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or legal guardian. For the purposes of this section, in order to find a substantial probability that the child will be returned to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian and safely maintained in the home within the extended period of time, the court shall be required to find all of the following:

(1) That the parent or legal guardian has consistently and regularly contacted and visited with the child.

(2) That the parent or legal guardian has made significant and consistent progress in the prior 18 months in resolving problems that led to the child's removal from the home.

(3) (A) The parent or legal guardian has demonstrated the capacity and ability both to complete the objectives of their substance abuse treatment plan as evidenced by reports from a substance abuse provider as applicable, or complete a treatment plan postdischarge from incarceration, institutionalization, or detention, or following deportation to their country of origin and their return to the United States, and to provide for the child's safety, protection, physical and emotional well-being, and special needs.

(B) For purposes of this subdivision, the court's decision to continue the case based on a finding of substantial probability that the child will be returned to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian is a compelling reason for determining that a hearing held pursuant to Section 366.26 is not in the best interests of the child.

(C) The court shall inform the parent or legal guardian that if the child cannot be returned home by the subsequent permanency review hearing, a proceeding pursuant to Section 366.26 may be instituted. 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 legal guardian.

(c) (1) Whenever a court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26, including when a tribal customary adoption is recommended, shall be held, it shall direct the agency supervising the child and the county adoption agency, or the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency, to prepare an assessment that shall include:

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

(B) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the child and their parents and other members of their extended family since the time of placement. Although the extended family of each child shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, "extended family" for the purposes of this subparagraph shall include, but not be limited to, the child's siblings, grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

(C) (i) An evaluation of the child's medical, developmental, scholastic, mental, and emotional status.

(ii) The evaluation pursuant to clause (i) shall include, but is not limited to, providing a copy of the complete health and education summary as required under Section 16010, including the name and contact information of the person or persons currently holding the right to make educational decisions for the child.

(iii) In instances where it is determined that disclosure pursuant to clause (ii) of the contact information of the person or persons currently holding the right to make educational decisions for the child poses a threat to the health and safety of that individual or those individuals, that contact information shall be redacted or withheld from the evaluation.

(D) A preliminary assessment of the eligibility and commitment of any identified prospective adoptive parent or legal 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 child's needs, and the understanding of the legal and financial rights and



responsibilities of adoption and guardianship. If a proposed legal guardian is a relative of the minor, the assessment shall also consider, but need not be limited to, all of the factors specified in subdivision (a) of Section 361.3 and Section 361.4.

(E) The relationship of the child to any identified prospective adoptive parent or legal guardian, the duration and character of the relationship, the degree of attachment of the child to the prospective relative guardian or adoptive parent, the relative's or adoptive parent's strong commitment to caring permanently for the child, the motivation for seeking adoption or legal guardianship, a statement from the child concerning placement and the adoption or legal guardianship, and whether the child, if over 12 years of age, has been consulted about the proposed relative guardianship arrangements, unless the child's age or physical, emotional, or other condition precludes their meaningful response, and if so, a description of the condition.

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

(G) In the case of an Indian child, in addition to subparagraphs (A) to (F), inclusive, an assessment of the likelihood that the child will be adopted, when, in consultation with the child's tribe, a tribal customary adoption, as defined in Section 366.24, is recommended. If tribal customary adoption is recommended, the assessment shall include an analysis of both of the following:

(i) Whether tribal customary adoption would or would not be detrimental to the Indian child and the reasons for reaching that conclusion.

(ii) Whether the Indian child cannot or should not be returned to the home of the Indian parent or Indian custodian and the reasons for reaching that conclusion.

(2) (A) A relative caregiver's preference for legal guardianship over adoption, if it is due to circumstances that do not include an unwillingness to accept legal or financial responsibility for the child, shall not constitute the sole basis for recommending removal of the child from the relative caregiver for purposes of adoptive placement.

(B) Regardless of their immigration status, a relative caregiver shall be given information regarding the permanency options of guardianship and adoption, including the long-term benefits and consequences of each option, prior to establishing legal guardianship or pursuing adoption. If the proposed permanent plan is guardianship with an approved relative caregiver for a minor eligible for aid under the Kin-GAP Program, as provided for in Article 4.7 (commencing with Section 11385) of Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9, the relative caregiver shall be informed about the terms and conditions of the negotiated agreement pursuant to Section 11387 and shall agree to its execution prior to the hearing held pursuant to Section 366.26. A copy of the executed negotiated agreement shall be attached to the assessment.

(d) This section shall become operative January 1, 1999. If at any hearing held pursuant to Section 366.26, a legal guardianship is established for the minor with an approved relative caregiver, and juvenile court dependency is subsequently dismissed, the minor shall be eligible for aid under the Kin-GAP Program, as provided for in Article 4.5 (commencing with Section 11360) or Article 4.7 (commencing with Section 11385), as applicable, of Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9.

(e) As used in this section, "relative" means an adult who is related to the child by blood, adoption, or affinity within the fifth degree of kinship, including stepparents, stepsiblings, and all relatives whose status is preceded by the words "great," "great-great," or "grand," or the spouse of any of those persons even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution. If the proposed permanent plan is guardianship with an approved relative caregiver for a minor eligible for aid under the Kin-GAP Program, as provided for in Article 4.7 (commencing with Section 11385) of Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9, "relative" as used in this section has the same meaning as "relative" as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 11391.

**SEC. 2.5.** Section 366.22 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

**366.22.** (a) (1) When a case has been continued pursuant to paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (g) of Section 366.21, the permanency review hearing shall occur within 18 months after the date the child was originally removed from the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian. After considering the admissible and relevant evidence, the court shall order the return of the child to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian unless the court finds, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the child to their parent or legal guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the child. The social worker shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. At the permanency review hearing, the court shall consider the criminal history, obtained pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (f) of Section 16504.5, of the parent or legal guardian subsequent to the child's removal, to the extent that the criminal record is substantially related to the welfare of the child or the parent's or legal guardian's ability to exercise custody and control regarding their child, provided that the parent or legal guardian agreed to submit fingerprint images to obtain criminal history information as part of the case plan. The court shall also consider whether the child can be returned to the custody of their parent who is enrolled in a certified substance abuse treatment facility that allows a dependent child to reside with their parent. The fact that the parent is enrolled in a certified substance abuse treatment facility shall not be, for that reason alone, prima facie evidence of detriment. In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the social worker'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 legal guardian and the extent to which they availed themselves of services provided, taking into account the particular barriers of a minor parent or a nonminor dependent parent, or an incarcerated or institutionalized parent's or legal guardian's access to those court-mandated services and ability to maintain contact with their child; and shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366.

(2) Whether or not the child is returned to their parent or legal guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its decision. If the child is not returned to a parent or legal guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that return would be detrimental. If the child is not returned to their parent or legal guardian, the court shall consider, and state for the record, in-state and out-of-state options for the child's permanent placement. If the child is placed out of the state, the court shall make a determination whether the out-of-state placement continues to be appropriate and in the best interests of the child.

(3) Unless the conditions in subdivision (b) are met and the child is not returned to a parent or legal guardian at the permanency review hearing, the court shall order that a hearing be held pursuant to Section 366.26 in order to determine whether adoption, or, in the case of an Indian child, in consultation with the child's tribe, tribal customary adoption, guardianship, or continued placement in foster care is the most appropriate plan for the child. On and after January 1, 2012, a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall not be ordered if the child is a nonminor dependent, unless the nonminor dependent is an Indian child, and tribal customary adoption is recommended as the permanent plan. However, if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence, based on the evidence already presented to it, including a recommendation by the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency or by a county adoption agency, that there is a compelling reason, as described in paragraph (5) of subdivision (g) of Section 366.21, for determining that a hearing held under Section 366.26 is not in the best interests of the child because the child is not a proper subject for adoption and has no one willing to accept legal guardianship as of the hearing date, the court may, only under these circumstances, order that the child remain in foster care with a permanent plan of return home, adoption, tribal customary adoption in the case of an Indian child, legal guardianship, or placement with a fit and willing relative, as appropriate. If the child is 16 years of age or older or is a nonminor dependent, and no other permanent plan is appropriate at the time of the hearing, the court may order another planned permanent living arrangement, as described in paragraph (2) of subdivision (i) of Section 16501. The court shall make factual findings identifying any barriers to achieving the permanent plan as of the hearing date. On and after January 1, 2012, the nonminor dependent's legal status as an adult is in and of itself a compelling reason not to hold a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26. The court may order that a nonminor dependent who otherwise is eligible pursuant to Section 11403 remain in a planned, permanent living arrangement. If the court orders that a child who is 10 years of age or older remain in foster care, the court shall determine whether the agency has made reasonable efforts to maintain the child's relationships with individuals other than the child's siblings who are important to the child, consistent with the child's best interests, and may make any appropriate order to ensure that those relationships are maintained. The hearing shall be held no later than 120 days from the date of the permanency review hearing. The court shall also order termination of reunification services to the parent or legal guardian. The court shall continue to permit the parent or legal guardian to visit the child unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the child. The court shall determine by clear and convincing evidence whether reasonable services have been offered or provided to the parent or legal guardian. For purposes of this subdivision, evidence of any of the following circumstances shall not, in and of themselves, be deemed a failure to provide or offer reasonable services:

(A) The child has been placed with a foster family that is eligible to adopt a child, or has been placed in a preadoptive home.

(B) The case plan includes services to make and finalize a permanent placement for the child if efforts to reunify fail.

(C) Services to make and finalize a permanent placement for the child, if efforts to reunify fail, are provided concurrently with services to reunify the family.

(b) (1) If the child is not returned to a parent or legal guardian at the permanency review hearing and the court determines by clear and convincing evidence that the best interests of the child would be met by the provision of additional reunification services to a parent or legal guardian who is making significant and consistent progress in a court-ordered residential substance abuse treatment program, a parent who was either a minor parent or a nonminor dependent parent at the time of the initial hearing making significant and consistent progress in establishing a safe home for the child's return, or a parent recently discharged from incarceration, institutionalization, or the custody of the United States Department of Homeland Security and making significant and consistent progress in establishing a safe home for the child's return, the court may continue the case for up to six months for a subsequent permanency review hearing, provided that the hearing shall occur within 24 months of the date the child was originally taken from the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian.

(2) (A) Except as provided in paragraph (1) and subject to subparagraph (B), if the child is not returned to a parent or legal guardian at the permanency review hearing and the court finds that reasonable services have not been provided, or, in the

case of an Indian child, active efforts as defined in subdivision (f) of Section 224.1 have not been made, the court shall extend reunification services for an additional six months.

(B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence based on competent evidence from a mental health professional that extending the time period for reunification services would be detrimental to the child, the court is not required to extend reunification services for an additional six months. The court shall state, either on the record or in writing, the reasons for its finding. Neither the passage of time nor the child's relationship with the caregiver shall be grounds, in and of themselves, for the denial of further reunification services.

(3) The court shall continue the case only if it finds that there is a substantial probability that the child will be returned to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian and safely maintained in the home within the extended period of time, that reasonable services have not been provided to the parent or legal guardian, or, in the case of an Indian child, that active efforts as defined in subdivision (f) of Section 224.1 have not been made. For the purposes of this section, in order to find a substantial probability that the child will be returned to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian and safely maintained in the home within the extended period of time, the court shall be required to find all of the following:

(A) That the parent or legal guardian has consistently and regularly contacted and visited with the child.

(B) That the parent or legal guardian has made significant and consistent progress in the prior 18 months in resolving problems that led to the child's removal from the home.

(C) (i) The parent or legal guardian has demonstrated the capacity and ability both to complete the objectives of their substance abuse treatment plan as evidenced by reports from a substance abuse provider as applicable, or complete a treatment plan postdischarge from incarceration, institutionalization, or detention, or following deportation to their country of origin and their return to the United States, and to provide for the child's safety, protection, physical and emotional well-being, and special needs.

(ii) For purposes of this subdivision, the court's decision to continue the case based on a finding or substantial probability that the child will be returned to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian is a compelling reason for determining that a hearing held pursuant to Section 366.26 is not in the best interests of the child.

(iii) The court shall inform the parent or legal guardian that if the child cannot be returned home by the subsequent permanency review hearing, a proceeding pursuant to Section 366.26 may be instituted. 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 legal guardian.

(c) (1) Whenever a court orders that a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26, including when a tribal customary adoption is recommended, shall be held, it shall direct the agency supervising the child and the county adoption agency, or the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency, to prepare an assessment that shall include:

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

(B) A review of the amount of and nature of any contact between the child and their parents and other members of their extended family since the time of placement. Although the extended family of each child shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, "extended family" for the purposes of this subparagraph shall include, but not be limited to, the child's siblings, grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

(C) (i) An evaluation of the child's medical, developmental, scholastic, mental, and emotional status.

(ii) The evaluation pursuant to clause (i) shall include, but is not limited to, providing a copy of the complete health and education summary as required under Section 16010, including the name and contact information of the person or persons currently holding the right to make educational decisions for the child.

(iii) In instances where it is determined that disclosure pursuant to clause (ii) of the contact information of the person or persons currently holding the right to make educational decisions for the child poses a threat to the health and safety of that individual or those individuals, that contact information shall be redacted or withheld from the evaluation.

(D) A preliminary assessment of the eligibility and commitment of any identified prospective adoptive parent or legal 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 child's needs, and the understanding of the legal and financial rights and responsibilities of adoption and guardianship. If a proposed legal guardian is a relative of the minor, the assessment shall also consider, but need not be limited to, all of the factors specified in subdivision (a) of Section 361.3 and Section 361.4.

(E) The relationship of the child to any identified prospective adoptive parent or legal guardian, the duration and character of the relationship, the degree of attachment of the child to the prospective relative guardian or adoptive parent, the relative's or adoptive parent's strong commitment to caring permanently for the child, the motivation for seeking adoption or legal guardianship, a statement from the child concerning placement and the adoption or legal guardianship, and whether the child, if over 12 years of age, has been consulted about the proposed relative guardianship arrangements, unless the child's age or physical, emotional, or other condition precludes their meaningful response, and if so, a description of the condition.

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

(G) In the case of an Indian child, in addition to subparagraphs (A) to (F), inclusive, an assessment of the likelihood that the child will be adopted, when, in consultation with the child's tribe, a tribal customary adoption, as defined in Section 366.24, is recommended. If tribal customary adoption is recommended, the assessment shall include an analysis of both of the following:

(i) Whether tribal customary adoption would or would not be detrimental to the Indian child and the reasons for reaching that conclusion.

(ii) Whether the Indian child cannot or should not be returned to the home of the Indian parent or Indian custodian and the reasons for reaching that conclusion.

(2) (A) A relative caregiver's preference for legal guardianship over adoption, if it is due to circumstances that do not include an unwillingness to accept legal or financial responsibility for the child, shall not constitute the sole basis for recommending removal of the child from the relative caregiver for purposes of adoptive placement.

(B) Regardless of their immigration status, a relative caregiver shall be given information regarding the permanency options of guardianship and adoption, including the long-term benefits and consequences of each option, prior to establishing legal guardianship or pursuing adoption. If the proposed permanent plan is guardianship with an approved relative caregiver for a minor eligible for aid under the Kin-GAP Program, as provided for in Article 4.7 (commencing with Section 11385) of Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9, the relative caregiver shall be informed about the terms and conditions of the negotiated agreement pursuant to Section 11387 and shall agree to its execution prior to the hearing held pursuant to Section 366.26. A copy of the executed negotiated agreement shall be attached to the assessment.

(d) This section shall become operative January 1, 1999. If at any hearing held pursuant to Section 366.26, a legal guardianship is established for the minor with an approved relative caregiver, and juvenile court dependency is subsequently dismissed, the minor shall be eligible for aid under the Kin-GAP Program, as provided for in Article 4.5 (commencing with Section 11360) or Article 4.7 (commencing with Section 11385), as applicable, of Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9.

(e) As used in this section, "relative" means an adult who is related to the child by blood, adoption, or affinity within the fifth degree of kinship, including stepparents, stepsiblings, and all relatives whose status is preceded by the words "great," "great-great," or "grand," or the spouse of any of those persons even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution. If the proposed permanent plan is guardianship with an approved relative caregiver for a minor eligible for aid under the Kin-GAP Program, as provided for in Article 4.7 (commencing with Section 11385) of Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9, "relative" as used in this section has the same meaning as "relative" as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 11391.

**SEC. 3.** Section 366.25 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

**366.25.** (a) (1) When a case has been continued pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 366.22, the subsequent permanency review hearing shall occur within 24 months after the date the child was originally removed from the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian. After considering the relevant and admissible evidence, the court shall order the return of the child to the physical custody of their parent or legal guardian unless the court finds, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the child to their parent or legal guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the child. The social worker shall have the burden of establishing that detriment. At the subsequent permanency review hearing, the court shall consider the criminal history, obtained pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (f) of Section 16504.5, of the parent or legal guardian subsequent to the child's removal to the extent that the criminal record is substantially related to the welfare of the child or parent's or legal guardian's ability to exercise custody and control regarding their child provided that the parent or legal guardian agreed to submit fingerprint images to obtain criminal history information as part of the case plan. The court shall also consider whether the child can be returned to the custody of a parent who is enrolled in a certified substance abuse treatment facility that allows a dependent child to reside with their parent. The fact that the parent is enrolled in a certified substance abuse treatment facility shall not be, for that reason alone, prima facie evidence of detriment. In making its determination, the court shall review and consider the social worker'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 legal guardian and the extent to which they availed themselves of services provided; and shall make appropriate findings pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 366.

(2) Whether or not the child is returned to their parent or legal guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its decision. If the child is not returned to a parent or legal guardian, the court shall specify the factual basis for its conclusion that return would be detrimental. If the child is not returned to their parent or legal guardian, the court shall consider and state for the record, in-state and out-of-state options for the child's permanent placement. If the child is placed out of the state, the court shall make a determination whether the out-of-state placement continues to be appropriate and in the best interests of the child.

(3) If the child is not returned to a parent or legal guardian at the subsequent permanency review hearing, the court shall order that a hearing be held pursuant to Section 366.26 in order to determine whether adoption, or, in the case of an Indian child, tribal customary adoption, guardianship, or, in the case of a child 16 years of age or older when no other permanent plan is appropriate, another planned permanent living arrangement is the most appropriate plan for the child. On and after January 1, 2012, a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26 shall not be ordered if the child is a nonminor dependent, unless the nonminor dependent is an Indian child and tribal customary adoption is recommended as the permanent plan. However, if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence, based on the evidence already presented to it, including a recommendation by the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency or by a county adoption agency, that there is a compelling reason, as described in paragraph (5) of subdivision (g) of Section 366.21, for determining that a hearing held under Section 366.26 is not in the best interest of the child because the child is not a proper subject for adoption or, in the case of an Indian child, tribal customary adoption, and has no one willing to accept legal guardianship as of the hearing date, then the court may, only under these circumstances, order that the child remain in foster care with a permanent plan of return home, adoption, tribal customary adoption in the case of an Indian child, legal guardianship, or placement with a fit and willing relative, as appropriate. If the child is 16 years of age or older or is a nonminor dependent, and no other permanent plan is appropriate at the time of the hearing, the court may order another planned permanent living arrangement, as described in paragraph (2) of subdivision (i) of Section 16501. The court shall make factual findings identifying any barriers to achieving the permanent plan as of the hearing date. On and after January 1, 2012, the nonminor dependent's legal status as an adult is in and of itself a compelling reason not to hold a hearing pursuant to Section 366.26. The court may order that a nonminor dependent who otherwise is eligible pursuant to Section 11403 remain in a planned, permanent living arrangement. If the court orders that a child who is 10 years of age or older remain in foster care, the court shall determine whether the agency has made reasonable efforts to maintain the child's relationships with individuals other than the child's siblings who are important to the child, consistent with the child's best interests, and may make any appropriate order to ensure that those relationships are maintained. The hearing shall be held no later than 120 days from the date of the subsequent permanency review hearing. The court shall also order termination of reunification services to the parent or legal guardian. The court shall continue to permit the parent or legal guardian to visit the child unless it finds that visitation would be detrimental to the child. The court shall determine whether reasonable services have been offered or provided to the parent or legal guardian. For purposes of this paragraph, evidence of any of the following circumstances shall not, in and of themselves, be deemed a failure to provide or offer reasonable services:

- (A) The child has been placed with a foster family that is eligible to adopt a child, or has been placed in a preadoptive home.
- (B) The case plan includes services to make and finalize a permanent placement for the child if efforts to reunify fail.
- (C) Services to make and finalize a permanent placement for the child, if efforts to reunify fail, are provided concurrently with services to reunify the family.

(b) (1) 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 county adoption agency, or the State Department of Social Services when it is acting as an adoption agency, to prepare an assessment that shall include:

- (A) Current search efforts for an absent parent or parents.
- (B) A review of the amount of, and nature of, any contact between the child and their parents and other members of their extended family since the time of placement. Although the extended family of each child shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, "extended family" for the purposes of this paragraph shall include, but not be limited to, the child's siblings, grandparents, aunts, and uncles.
- (C) An evaluation of the child's medical, developmental, scholastic, mental, and emotional status.
- (D) A preliminary assessment of the eligibility and commitment of any identified prospective adoptive parent or legal guardian, including a prospective tribal customary adoptive parent, 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 child's needs, and the understanding of the legal and financial rights and responsibilities of adoption and guardianship. If a proposed legal guardian is a relative of the minor, the assessment shall also consider, but need not be limited to, all of the factors specified in subdivision (a) of Section 361.3 and in Section 361.4.

(E) The relationship of the child to any identified prospective adoptive parent or legal guardian, including a prospective tribal customary adoptive parent, the duration and character of the relationship, the degree of attachment of the child to the prospective relative guardian or adoptive parent, the relative's or adoptive parent's strong commitment to caring permanently for the child, the motivation for seeking adoption or legal guardianship, a statement from the child concerning placement and the adoption or legal guardianship, and whether the child, if over 12 years of age, has been consulted about the proposed relative guardianship arrangements, unless the child's age or physical, emotional, or other condition precludes their meaningful response, and if so, a description of the condition.

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

(G) In the case of an Indian child, in addition to subparagraphs (A) to (F), inclusive, an assessment of the likelihood that the child will be adopted, when, in consultation with the child's tribe, a tribal customary adoption, as defined in Section 366.24, is recommended. If tribal customary adoption is recommended, the assessment shall include an analysis of both of the following:

(i) Whether tribal customary adoption would or would not be detrimental to the Indian child and the reasons for reaching that conclusion.

(ii) Whether the Indian child cannot or should not be returned to the home of the Indian parent or Indian custodian and the reasons for reaching that conclusion.

(2) (A) A relative caregiver's preference for legal guardianship over adoption, if it is due to circumstances that do not include an unwillingness to accept legal or financial responsibility for the child, shall not constitute the sole basis for recommending removal of the child from the relative caregiver for purposes of adoptive placement.

(B) Regardless of their immigration status, a relative caregiver shall be given information regarding the permanency options of guardianship and adoption, including the long-term benefits and consequences of each option, prior to establishing legal guardianship or pursuing adoption. If the proposed permanent plan is guardianship with an approved relative caregiver for a minor eligible for aid under the Kin-GAP Program, as provided for in Article 4.7 (commencing with Section 11385) of Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9, the relative caregiver shall be informed about the terms and conditions of the negotiated agreement pursuant to Section 11387 and shall agree to its execution prior to the hearing held pursuant to Section 366.26. A copy of the executed negotiated agreement shall be attached to the assessment.

(c) If, at any hearing held pursuant to Section 366.26, a guardianship is established for the minor with an approved relative caregiver, and juvenile court dependency is subsequently dismissed, the minor shall be eligible for aid under the Kin-GAP Program, as provided for in Article 4.5 (commencing with Section 11360) or Article 4.7 (commencing with Section 11385), as applicable, of Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9.

(d) As used in this section, "relative" means an adult who is related to the minor by blood, adoption, or affinity within the fifth degree of kinship, including stepparents, stepsiblings, and all relatives whose status is preceded by the words "great," "great-great," or "grand," or the spouse of any of those persons even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution. If the proposed permanent plan is guardianship with an approved relative caregiver for a minor eligible for aid under the Kin-GAP Program, as provided in Article 4.7 (commencing with Section 11385) of Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9, "relative" as used in this section has the same meaning as "relative" as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 11391.

**SEC. 4.** Section 2.5 of this bill incorporates amendments to Section 366.22 of the Welfare and Institutions Code proposed by both this bill and Assembly Bill 937. That section shall only become operative if (1) both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2024, (2) each bill amends Section 366.22 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, and (3) this bill is enacted after Assembly Bill 937, in which case Section 2 of this bill shall not become operative.