

Oklahoma Intercollegiate Legislature
2nd Session of the 56th Legislature (2025)

House Bill No. OU-503

Cash (OU)

AS INTRODUCED

An act relating to the trial reunification period; providing short title; providing for definitions; amending 10A O.S. § 1-4-806; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Section 1. This act shall be known as the “Six Month Trial” Act of 2025.

Section 2. DEFINITIONS The following terms are to be defined as follows for the purposes of this act:

1. “Trial Reunification Period” refers to the allotted amount of time for a child to return to their biological or previously removed home under the jurisdiction of the court and subject to the review of (a) DHS worker(s).
2. “DHS” is the Department of Human Services that offers a wide variety of social services to citizens of Oklahoma.

Section 3. AMENDATORY 10A O.S. § 1-4-806 is amended to read as follows:

A. The court may order trial reunification by returning the child to the care of the parent or legal guardian from whom the child was removed and setting a date for review in within six (6) months. ~~At any time during trial reunification, when reunification appears successful, the court may return legal custody to the parent or legal guardian and relieve the Department of Human Services of legal custody.~~ If the court determines trial reunification should be extended, the court shall set a new date for review. ~~A child shall spend no longer than a total of twelve (12) months in trial reunification.~~ Prior to trial reunification, the Department shall conduct a criminal background check of any adult in the home who is not a parent, legal guardian, or custodian. The background check shall include inquiries into Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation and Federal Bureau of Investigation records for a national criminal history record check pursuant to the provisions of Section 150.9 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

During trial reunification, the Department shall:

1. Continue to have legal custody of the child, thereby permitting the Department to visit the child in the home of the parent, at school, in a child care facility, or any other setting the Department deems necessary and appropriate;

2. Continue to provide appropriate services to both the parent, if eligible, and the child during trial reunification;
 3. Terminate trial reunification and remove the child to foster care, without court order or authorization, when necessary to protect the child's health, safety, or welfare; and 4. Advise the court and parties within three (3) judicial days of the termination of trial reunification when terminated by the Department without a court order.
- B. 1. When trial reunification is terminated, whether by the Department or court order, the Department shall prepare a report for the court which describes the circumstances of the child during trial reunification period and recommends court orders, if any, deemed appropriate to provide for the safety and stability of the child.
2. In the event trial reunification is terminated by the Department by removing the child to foster care without prior court order or authorization, the court shall conduct a hearing within fifteen (15) days of receiving notice of the termination of trial reunification by the Department and shall determine whether continuation of the child in the child's home or with the child's caretaker is contrary to the welfare of the child and whether reasonable efforts were made to prevent the removal of the child from trial reunification.
- C. 1. If the court determines that supervision should continue after twelve (12) months of trial reunification, the court may award legal custody of the child to the parent or legal guardian with whom the child has been reunited and order the Department to provide supervision in accordance with the rules promulgated by the Department.
2. The duration of the extended supervision shall not exceed six (6) months except in circumstances the court deems appropriate and necessary to protect the health, safety or welfare of the child.

Section 4. This act shall become effective one (1) year after passage and approval.