##### **CASA OF FRANKLIN COUNTY**

##### **COURT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**AGREEMENT**

Some Tips!

* Write objectively
* Include dates and times where appropriate.
* Be concise, but thorough
* Call your staff attorney with any questions

Remember, no substantive changes will be made to a volunteer’s court report unless the staff attorney discusses the changes with the volunteer based on the following agreement.

*You agree that you will complete and submit a court report* ***two weeks*** *before the court hearing. You understand that if you fail to meet this deadline, the assigned staff attorney may make substantive changes and file the court report as required by Rule 48 of the Ohio Supreme Court Rules of Superintendence, before communicating the changes to you.*

##### Remember to always check with your staff attorney for the date of the next hearing!

##### **CASA OF FRANKLIN COUNTY**

#####   **COURT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**IN RE:** **CASE NUMBER:**

**DATE OF HEARING:**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **Legal Recommendation:**

Use this section to recommend a change in court orders or to recommend that there be no change to the current court orders. For example, “TCC to FCCS,” “TOC to Maternal Grandparents,” “Legal Custody to Paternal Aunt,” etc. Think of this section as your “thesis statement” and the remaining body of work as the support for your recommendation.

1. **Case Plan Recommendation:**

This section should be completed only if you recommend additional services be added to the case plan. *Be sure to check with the case worker to see what services are already in place.*

1. **Other Recommendations:**

Do you believe that the Court needs to make any orders in addition to those already in the case plan, but not considered standard case plan elements? For example, no contact order between Father and the child(ren).

**CHILD’S WISHES:**

Any child age three (3) or older should be asked her/his/their wishes. Make note of the child’s demeanor and body language while expressing wishes. If other people are present when you ask the child’s wishes, identify the person present and explain why you were unable to discuss the child’s wishes outside of the presence of others.

***Specifically ask the child:***

Where does the child want to live?

What does the child want regarding visits/other form of contact with parents?

***Do not specifically ask, but record if the child shares information***

If applicable, has the child stated whether she/he/they want to visit/other form of contact with siblings or other relatives?

Has the child expressed any other significant (to the child) wishes?

Have the child’s wishes changed over time? If so, how?

If the child is too young or otherwise verbally express his/her/their wishes, explain that here.

**INTERVIEW WITH CHILD:**

In this section include all dates (not times) you met with the child, including location and other persons present.

**PLACEMENT HISTORY:** Include each placement change over the history of the case so that the court can see a snapshot of the child’s placement stability. If you do not have exact dates, use month and year.

**Date Placement**

**Date Placement**

**PERSONS CONTACTED:**

Do not include caregiver names. For professionals, include name and title, and organization. Do not include CASA staff.

RECORDS REVIEWED:

Should always include the Complaint, Admission Sheet, Case Plans (if available), SAR Reports (if available).

May also include records obtained by the GAL such as: medical records, psychological reports, educational records, parent’s leases, certificates of completion of services, employment verification, ACS screens, etc.

**LEGAL HISTORY:** This section is completed by the staff attorney

**BASIC NEEDS OF CHILD**

How are the children’s basic needs currently being met?

Are parents currently able to meet the basic needs of the child?

**CHILD/PARENT RELATIONSHIP**

Describe what has been observed *by CASA* during visits. If you have not observed visits, explain why (for example, I attended on this date and parent did not appear, etc.).

Include any reports about the parent child relationship including the source. For example, the child/parent/grandparent/counselor reports \_\_\_\_ about his/her/their parent.

**PARENTING PRACTICES**

What parenting practices are a concern in this case, if any?

What case plan objectives address parenting practices?

What parenting education services have been offered to the parent(s)? Have the parent(s) engaged in parenting education services?

How have the parent(s) parenting practices, including attitudes, changed? Include information from parents, observations of parenting time as well as information from collaterals.

Has the parent had an opportunity to demonstrate learned parenting practices? Include context of length and location of visits.

**SCHOOL**

Describe how the child is doing in school. Include references to school records you’ve reviewed and/or information you’ve gained by talking to the child, caregiver, teacher, guidance counselor, etc.

**HOUSING**

Describe the parent(s)’ housing in this section. If there are concerns about caregiver or foster parent housing, discuss that in the “basic needs” section.

**EMPLOYMENT/LEGAL SOURCE OF INCOME**

State how parents are meeting the financial needs, including the income source. Public benefits are a legal source of income. In the case of Public Assistance, discuss whether it is sustainable.

**\*\*\*For the next four sections, if the subject heading does is not an issue in your case, please remove it.\*\*\*** If it is an issue, describe what facts alleged or other information indicate that it is an issue, describe case plan objectives that address the issues. Then describe whether the case plan objective has been met AND whether the underlying concern has been ameliorated.

**PARENTS’ MENTAL HEALTH**

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

**CHILD/(REN)’S MENTAL/PHYSICAL HEALTH**

**SAFETY/RISK FACTORS *(THIS SECTION SHOULD NOT BE REMOVED OR SUMMARIZED. PLEASE ANSWER EACH OF THE NINE (9) QUESTIONS. PLEASE LEAVE THE QUESTIONS IN THE REPORT)***

The purpose of this section is to assess the current safety/risk associated with the child returning to/remaining in the parent’s home. Children should return home as soon as it is safe. Respond to each of the following questions:

1. What issues caused the case to be opened or caused the child to be removed (if removed from parents)?
2. What family/household circumstances accompany the reasons for case opening/child removal?

(This section provides the setting of the issues that lead to the case opening. For example, if the case opened for Domestic Violence, this section might state whether the parents are still in a relationship, whether the domestic violence perpetrator is financially supporting the family, etc.)

1. How does the child function day-to-day?
2. How does the parent discipline the child? (If the child is not in the home, how has the parent redirected behavior during observed visits? If there were no observed visits, what methods of discipline did the parent describe when you interviewed him/her/them?)
3. What are overall parenting practices? (You have already described this at length in the “Parenting Practices” section above. Summarize it in a sentence or two here, focusing on practices that positively or negatively impact the child(ren)’s safety).
4. How does the parent manage his/her/their own life? (Describe whether the parent is able to meet their own needs and responsibilities currently?)

Based on the information contained in questions 1 through 6:

1. Has there been enough change in threats/risk/circumstances that the child can be safely returned to the parent’s home/can remain in the parent’s home?
2. Has there been enough change in protective capacities that the child can be safely returned to the parent’s home/can remain in the parent’s home?
3. Describe factors that affect the child’s vulnerability.

Keep in mind that parents do not have to complete treatment nor do all safety threats need to disappear before reunification can occur. If the parent’s protective capacities and child’s ability to self-protect or self-report offset a potential risk, the child may be returned to parental care. Consider whether additional safety measures/safety plan can be put into place that alleviate threats/risk while the parents complete the case plan. Note: a parental promise to change behavior is not a safety plan. A child’s willingness/ability to report a safety concern after it occurs is not a safety plan. Consider the child’s plans and ability to prevent or avoid safety risks.

**CONCLUSION:**

Your conclusion does not need to be very long and should simply reiterate your recommendation because the majority of your reasoning should be placed under the applicable headings.

Respectfully submitted,

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CASA/GAL