

Disposition

The purpose of this hearing is to decide whether the family will receive services, the type of services (case plan), as well as the services the child(ren) will receive. Your disposition report can be pivotal in the long-term direction of the case.

- The first question you must answer is **whether or not the family should receive services** which will provide them the opportunity to reunify with their child(ren). Reasons to not offer reunification services are detailed in WIC 361.5(b) (1-15).
- If you decide that the family should be offered services the second question you must decide is **if the child(ren) should be returned home** in a family maintenance agreement **or stay in the custody** of the Department of Social Services (foster-care [relative or non-relative], group home, etc.) until the parent(s) demonstrate that the circumstances of the child(ren)'s removal has been remedied.
- The third question to answer is **if the recommended services (case plan) for the family and the child(ren) that has been submitted in the social workers report are adequate** to remedy the presenting issues that were substantiated in the jurisdictional hearing (see jurisdictional findings and orders) for the parents and that the services (case plan) for the child(ren), youth(s) will meet all of their needs. We recommend you discuss the case plan with the social worker prior to their report being submitted, as you will be able to provide your suggestions for their case plan at that time. The minor's attorney needs to be informed about your recommendations and the results of discussions you have had with the social worker as they can assist you in making your recommendations part of the initial case plan.

You will need the following information for the Report

- Total Hours*
- ICWA*
- Date of Detention*
- Total Out of Home Care*
- Number of Placements*
- Persons Contacted*

Recommendation: State whether you have or have not read the social worker's report. State if CASA agrees or disagrees with each recommendation included in that report. Do not give rationale here. Ask the court to include your recommendations in the case plan if they are not already included (Check with your case supervisor). Support your recommendations in the various sections of the report.

Assessment and Observations: Primarily deals with the child or children.

- First state CASA's date of appointment
- Give a short description of the child - physical appearance, age, interests, and anecdotes. The court looks to this section of the CASA report for your input so that they can 'meet the child' as they seldom do in person.
- Support your recommendations in this section unless they fit into the following sections.
- Include as appropriate, the youth's statement of what they need from the system to make their dreams come true.

Health: Bring to the courts attention the status and any issues in the following topic areas that apply. [Dental, CHDP, Immunizations, Counseling, Behavior Issues, Medication, and any Service providers' quotes].

Education: Complete the educational advocacy checklist, identify objectives, and create an action plan if applicable for your child(ren). Also, determine who holds the educational rights and if the court needs to name a new educational representative / educational surrogate (WIC 361). You may not have all the above fully completed for this report. Provide as much information regarding [School, Grade, Special Education Needs, IEP, Teachers' comments] as you can.

Sibling Relationships: Does the child have siblings, and are they under the court's jurisdiction? The court should also consider the nature of the relationship between the child and his or her siblings, the appropriateness of developing or maintaining the sibling relationships pursuant to Public Social Services Section 16002, and the impact of the sibling relationships on the child's placement and planning for legal permanence.

Sibling Notice: (WIC 290.1) Has a sibling(s) 10 years of age or over and is the subject of a dependency hearing or judged to be a dependent child of the juvenile court been notified of this hearing?

Sibling Relationship: raised together, shared experiences, strong bond, appropriateness of developing or maintaining the relationship for each of the siblings.

Placement: Are the siblings placed together? Should they be placed together? Why, or why not?

Visitation: Frequency of visits, nature of visits. Does the child express desire to visit or live with sibling(s)? Is ongoing contact in the children's best emotional interest? (Get therapeutic input when possible.) Does the sibling relationship impact the permanent plans for the children?

Type and Appropriateness of Placement: Briefly describe where the child is (foster care, shelter, with relatives or parents). State if you believe this placement is appropriate or if you believe it needs to be changed. Is it a concurrent placement? If you know, state again how many placements the child has had.

Visitation: What is the current visitation agreement (not included if the child is in the parent's care)? How are visits going? How does the child react to visits? Should anything be changed? **Review the case plan of the social worker to see if the visitation orders can be changed by agreement of the social worker and minor's attorney. This is the language you want as you don't want to have to get a new order from the court to protect the child during visits if that situation should come up. Your case supervisor will know what to do.**

Previous Involvement with CWS: Give a brief history. This is usually available from the CWS detention or jurisdiction reports. It may or may not be repeated in subsequent reports.

Progress Toward Completion of Services: Services are voluntary prior to disposition. Parents may or may not have availed themselves to needed services before disposition.

Important individuals to the child: (WIC 16001.9, 16500.1 & 16501.1) For children 10 years of age and over and any younger than 10 as is developmentally appropriate, help the child identify the individuals, other than siblings, who are important to the child, consistent with the child's best interests, and what actions and support need to occur to maintain those relationships and explore them as permanency options. Ensure that the child has been involved in their case plan, particularly their permanency plan, as soon as the youth enters foster care. Youth are to be involved in convening a team of adults that focuses on achieving and maintaining permanence.

Note: The requirement that the above information about important individuals be asked for by social workers and supported in the case plan begins once the child is over 10 and has been in out-of-home care for six months or longer.