**DISPOSITIONAL REVIEW HEARING REPORT WRITING GUIDELINES**

**CASA KANE COUNTY**

**1. HEADING**

* Case Number(s)
* Format: 20 JA-34
* Format: 20 JA-35 / 20 JA-69
* Format: 20 JA-35/36/37
* Temporary Custody Date (also known as Shelter Care Hearing Date)
* Adjudication Date
* Hearing Date - date scheduled for the Dispositional Review Hearing
* Purpose of Hearing - should be Disposition
* Month/Day/Year format is consistent - MM/DD/YYYY - such as 02/14/2016

**2. IN THE MATTER OF**

* All children are listed, using their full names
* Format: Children listed in birth order from oldest to youngest
* Format: First Name Last Name
* Correct date of birth for each child is listed - using MM/DD/YYYY format
* Correct age of each child, as of the date of the hearing, has been calculated to years
* Calculate in months for children under two years of age

**3. INTERVIEWED**

* List in alphabetical order by last name
* List person's name and relationship to child
* For the parent(s), caseworker(s), and other professionals (e.g., teachers, therapists)
* Format: First Name Last Name
* Example: Jason Harris Legal Father of Ben Harris
* For foster parents, including relatives who are foster parents
* Format: First Name Last Initial
* Example: Carol H. Maternal Aunt, Foster Mother of Ben Harris
* People interviewed more than once are listed just once
* Do not include visits to children
* Do not include meetings with the Advocate Supervisor

**4. REPORTS and MATERIALS REVIEWED**

* List date (MM/DD/YYYY) and title of each report
* Example: 01/25/2020 Police Report, 01/30/2020 Individual Education Plan
* List in chronological order
* List the name of the person associated with the report or material
* If the case involves multiple children and a report is associated with only one child, include the name of the child who was the subject of the report
* If no reports or materials were reviewed, entered "No reports or materials reviewed at this time." under this section's heading

**5. DATES OF CHILD VISITS**

* List child’s name:
* Format: First Name Last Name
* Accurately list dates for child visits:
* Format: MM/DD/YYYY
* If multiple children in the case:
* List children by birth order from oldest to youngest
* List visits by child
* If visit dates are same for all children involved, only list the visit dates once.
* If visits were in-person and virtual, list them grouped together by type per child
* If a child visit is not completed, provide good-cause explanation such as minor refuses visit, minor on run, minor was ill.

**6. ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act)**

* State that the case does or does not have Indian Child Welfare Act Involvement
* If there is involvement, detail who identified Native American heritage, when that information was provided, and all known follow- up completed by DCFS/SAO.

**7. CASE HISTORY**

* As brief as possible, includes all facts relating to why the case came into care
* Written in paragraph format
* Written in past tense
* When a date is used in a sentence, used the full date
* Example: January 29, 2016, instead of 01/29/2016

**8. FOSTER PLACEMENT HISTORY**

* For each child, list Name, Foster Placement, Type, and Dates of Placement
* For Relative, include relationship of placement to the parents/family
* Example: Ben Harris Carol H. Relative-Maternal Aunt 10/20/2019 to Present
* If multiple children in the case, list placements by child, by birth order from oldest to youngest, with a double space between children.
* List placements in reverse chronological order (current placement first)
* When to When format for current placement
* Example: 01/29/2016 to Present

**9. FINDINGS**

* Findings describe events, observations, and other information
* Written in paragraph format
* When a date is used in a sentence, the full date is used.
* Example: January 29, 2016 instead of 01/29/2016
* Include a Findings section for each child and parent (not for foster parent[s] of grandparents[s])
* Heading for each child and parent is in bold text
* Start with children, oldest child first
* Each child’s section is a narrative that includes the following six sections in order to provide the judge with a complete but concise picture of the child:
* Child Description and Developmental Observations – include interests and hobbies
* Placement/Living Situation
* Daycare/School
* Medical and Health
* Services (referrals made, started, attended/not attended)
* Visitation (include separate paragraphs for parental and sibling visitations)
* Titles for parents include:
* Mother, Legal Father, Putative Father
* Each parent’s section is a narrative that includes information about the following categories, both positives and negatives, in order to provide the judge with a complete but concise picture of the parent:
* Living situation, including who is in the home
* Employment
* Medical/Mental health diagnosis
* Services (referrals made, started, attended, not attended)
* Visitation (including obstacles to visits, i.e., transportation)
* For all, include specific examples of what happened, what you observed (behaviors and interactions), and what others said on your visits/during phone calls
* For all, cite the source for the information (e.g., "On April 4, 2016, CASA/GAL interviewed Mary Flinn, Ben Harris' teacher middle school. Mrs. Flinn reported that...)
* When referring to people, include the relationship (e.g., Maternal Aunt, Paternal Grandmother) for the first use, then refer to them as First Name Last Initial for foster parents, and Mr./Ms. Last Name for others throughout the balance.
* Example: Anne F., Foster Mother; then Anne F. throughout
* Example: Kathy Price, Mother; then Ms. Price throughout
* Example: Bob Johnson, Caseworker; then Mr. Johnson throughout
* Maintain confidentiality by not listing full names of foster parent[s], including relatives who are foster parents
* Avoid using names for other children and/or foster children of foster parents
* Avoid judgmental or inflammatory statements; was descriptive and factual
* Avoid use of adverbs when writing findings about parents

**10. MEDIATION REVIEW**

* CASA/GAL identifies the following issues that may be appropriate for Mediation:
* Issue One
* Issue Two
* OR: There are no identified issues for Mediation at this time.

**11. RECOMMENDATIONS**

* Written in numbered list format
* Recommendations should follow the following format when appropriate and applicable:
1. Minor continue to be made a ward of the court.
2. Custody and guardianship should continue to be granted to \_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. The court should consider the permanency goal of \_\_\_\_\_\_ for the minor.
4. The Client Service Plan and services are (are not) appropriate.
5. Parent / child visitation should be supervised (unsupervised).
6. Other recommendations to be focused on.
* Each additional recommendation is focused on previous recommendations that have not been addressed, services that have not started, and/or new recommendations being made.
* Additional recommendations are supported by evidence provided in the FINDINGS section.
* Additional recommendations do not include services that have started and should continue:
* Example: If a parent has been attending counseling and should continue, this would be covered in the findings section but NOT in the recommendations.
* Recommendations for the child(ren) are listed first, followed by recommendations for parents - in the same order as listed in the FINDINGS section
* Recommendations for each child should be grouped together

**12. WRITING AND MECHANICS**

* Times New Roman 12-point font
* Left-justified margin
* Case Number(s) and page number in the footer of every page
* Double spaced between headings and paragraphs
* Use upper and lowercase throughout, except for section headings which are all upper case
* Use third person when referring to what the CASA/GAL observed or asked - "CASA/GAL observed . . ." or "It is CASA/GAL's understanding that . . ."
* Used full date in the body of the report; February 2, 2018 not 02/02/2108
* Avoided use of long quotes
* Proofreading has been done as evidenced by
* Accurate spelling throughout with careful attention to accurate spelling of people's names
* Accurate use of homophones - such as “there” and “their” and “right” and “write”
* Accurate use of capitalization
* Accurate use of punctuation
* Accurate use of the apostrophe
* Accurate use of "in regard to" - not "in regards to"
* No missing words
* No abbreviations (e.g., Illinois not IL)
* No contractions (e.g., did not instead of didn't)
* No use of "I" or "we" or "our"