**GUIDELINES FOR THE STATUS HEARING REPORT TO THE COURT**

**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
* Hearing Date - date scheduled for the Status Hearing
* Purpose of Hearing - should be based on the purpose of the Hearing
* Example: Status of Services, Status of Order of Protection
* 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. FINDINGS UPDATE**

* Only utilize those topics that are relevant to the issues being reviewed at the status hearing
* Delete topics not being covered
* 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
* For all, include specific examples of what happened, what you observed (behaviors/ 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 judgmental or inflammatory statements; be descriptive and factual
* Avoid use of adverbs when writing findings about parents
* Include a Findings section for each child and parent if applicable (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 brief narrative that includes the following six sections in order to provide the judge with a complete but concise update on the child:
* Child Description and Developmental Observations
* 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 brief narrative that includes information about the following categories, both positives and negatives, in order to provide the judge with a complete but concise update on 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)

**4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

* Utilize only if previous recommendations have not been addressed, services have not started, if a new recommendation is being made, etc.
* Do not include recommendations for goal changes as those are not addressed at a Status Hearing
* Written in numbered list format
* Example: 1. Johnny Smith should be referred for individual counseling to address behavior issues attributed to his placement transition
* Each recommendation is supported by evidence provided in the FINDINGS section
* Recommendations for the child(ren) are listed first, and grouped together by child
* Recommendations for the parent(s) are listed last, and grouped together by parent together

**5. 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"