

WSR - 5A REVIEW—Key

FAMILY ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Make a copy of “Family Assessment Update” template and put on desktop or in a file. Complete template by addressing each bulleted area below. Copy/cut and paste template into 1st blue box on 5A. No need to “save” but keep original template to use for other WSR’s. Use N/A if it does not apply.

REASON FOR DHS INVOLVEMENT

- **Initial reason:** What initially brought the case before the Court. Be brief and concise, using two sentences maximum. No specific incidents, be general, i.e., DV, substance abuse, youth in conflict, physical abuse, etc. Do not cut/paste question #1 of Social History.
- **Current reason:** Why DHS is currently involved. Address safety/risk factors as barriers to reunification or case closure. Be brief and concise, using two sentences maximum.
- **Removal date:** When DHS last took custody of each child. If protective supervision, write N/A.
- **Permanency goal:** What the current goal is of each child, date set and target date.
- **Placement (current, days out of home, # of placements):** For each child, include type of current placement (FH, GH, RCCF, Kin); date of placement; total number of days placed out of the home since last removal date (include Kin placement even if Kin has custody) using calculator website: <http://www.timeanddate.com/date/durationresult.html?m1=1&d1=11&y1=2012&m2=12&d2=6&y2=2012&ti=on>); and total number of placements since last removal date.

CHILD: Use full name, age, and in parenthesis the name by which child will be referred, i.e. Susan Smith, age 14, (Susie). Address each child separately, youngest to oldest.

- **Placement Stability:** Address current placement/residence. Discuss why this child is safe in the current placement and what is being done to mitigate any safety and risks to the child. Discuss: how provider meets the child’s needs; why current placement is necessary or needs to be changed; what is the risk of moving (or not moving) a child and the impact on their behaviors.
- **Current Services:** List all services and providers currently in place for the child, i.e., individual therapy at Empowerment. Include any other DHS support (financial, etc.).
- **Well-being (physical, emotional, social, education):** Address if child’s medical, dental and medication needs are being met. Include status of the child’s education (grade level, grades, attendance, disciplinary issues). Describe child’s behaviors or changes in behaviors (positive and negative) as related to their emotional and social well-being. Address therapeutic engagement and progress, and any recommendations for change in services (adding or closing). Address progress/barriers towards Treatment Plan, if applicable.
- **Permanency (progress/barriers):** Address progress/barriers towards Permanency Goal. Address networks and support plans that will sustain safety and permanency for the child. For each child over 14, include status of emancipation and independent living skills.

MOTHER/ FATHER/SPECIAL RESPONDENT/INTERVENOR - Use full name and in parenthesis, relationship to child, i.e., John Smith (father of Susie Smith). If any parties have the same last name, be sure to include a way to distinguish between them. Use a separate section for each parent, special respondent or intervenor.

- **Current Services:** List all services and providers currently in place for the parent/caregiver. Include any other DHS support (financial, etc.).
- **Well-being (physical, emotional, social, parental protective capacity):** Discuss if parent/caregiver has any well-being issues that impact the safety of the child and if they are being addressed. Address existence of current strengths/protective factors to decrease likelihood of child abuse/neglect or youth in conflict (assets, resources, capacities within family, individual, community). Describe parent/caregiver's behaviors or changes in behaviors (positive and negative) as related to their emotional and social well-being. Address therapeutic engagement and progress, and any recommendations for change in services (adding or closing). Address progress/barriers towards Treatment Plan, if applicable.
- **Permanency (progress/barriers):** Address networks and support plans that will sustain safety and permanency for the child.
- **Visitation:** State current visitation status, i.e., supervised/unsupervised, type of contact, frequency/duration, location, special consideration/restrictions. Address visit strengths/progress, i.e., greeting between parent/child, arrivals/departures (on time, early, late), positive parent/child interactions, parent preparation for visits (food, activities, supplies), and parental strengths as observed by visitation supervisor. Address visit concerns, i.e., arrivals/departures (tardy or missed), negative parent/child interactions, negative parent or child behaviors during visits, lack of parental preparation for visits, developmental concerns/areas of development observed by the visitation supervisor. Address missed visits and reasons for missed visits. Address sibling visits, if children are placed separately.
- **Family Engagement Meetings:** Discuss any staffings, TDM's or FCM's held, discuss the individual's participation and perspectives, the results and next scheduled date of meeting.

FAMILY SEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT:

- **Initial/Subsequent Diligent Searches for Absent Parents:** Address information on initial and subsequent diligent searches on absent parents. Indicate all who have been located or if there is no new information.
- **Efforts to Find Caregivers/Supports:** Address "letters of notification" sent to potential relatives, names/locations (i.e., state) of parents and relatives/kin-like who are potential placement options or supports, and any responses received. Discuss continuing efforts to find relatives (i.e., spoke to uncle and additional relative names being researched are...).
- **Efforts to Assess Placements:** Address results of kinship family assessments or why no assessments were done (i.e., placement ruled out due to relative's health, criminal history, etc., or no further assessments needed due to child in stable kin placement). Address coordination of efforts to facilitate placement with relatives or kin-like providers. Address efforts in promoting contact with supportive relatives or kin-like individuals who may not be placement options at this time.

ICWA - ICWA initial and ongoing inquiries will help remind everyone that this is ongoing by law, even if the parent states they are not aware of any heritage.

- **Initial/Subsequent Inquiries:** List date of inquiry, name of parent/family member, and response. If parent claims no Native American heritage, must still follow up periodically to ask if they have any updated information and document.
- **Efforts to Find/Contact Tribes:** If the parent/family member is a registered member of a tribe, detail that information including efforts to contact the tribe directly. All future contacts with the tribe are to be documented including dates of contact as part of Active Efforts. If parent/family member indicates there may be Native American heritage, detail the efforts made to obtain information needed to inquire from the Tribe to include completing the ICWA-2 affidavit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Make a copy of “Recommendations” template and put on desktop or in a file. Complete template by addressing each bulleted area below. Copy/cut and paste template into 2nd blue box on 5A. No need to “save” but keep original template to use for other WSR’s. Use N/A if it does not apply.

It is respectfully recommended that the court find that reasonable efforts have been made since the last court date as well as the following additional requests: Please use this phrase and then choose from the language below for custody and reasonable efforts requests.

- **Requested Custody Order:** Choose from the following options depending on whether you want custody to continue as it was prior to the hearing or you are asking the Court to make a change in custody. SELECT AS APPLICABLE. The first 2 selections are when there is a request to change the current custody order(s); the second 2 are when there are no requested changes in custody orders.
 - Custody of (name of child/children) vest with parent/kin (name of caregiver) with EPCDHS exercising protective supervision, **OR**
 - Custody of (name of child/children) vest with EPCDHS with discretion to return custody to the parent, **OR**
 - Custody of (name of child/children) remains with parent/kin (name of caregiver) with EPCDHS exercising protective supervision, **OR**
 - Custody of (name of child/children) remains with EPCDHS with discretion to return custody to the parent.
- **Additional Orders:** Additional orders can include changes to visitation, such as discretion to move to unsupervised contact or going back to supervised; requesting a parent appear at the visit or call to confirm attendance 1 hour in advance; comply with services; discretion to change placement or return to a parent; the court grant permanent custody/allocation of parental responsibilities to someone; the court terminate parental rights; DHS involvement be vacated.

Respectfully submitted this ____ day of _____, 20__ by caseworker,

(Type your name)

(NOTE THAT NO ORDER IN THE CASE WILL CONTINUE TO BE ENFORCEABLE AFTER THE D&N IS CLOSED UNLESS IT IS GRANTED IN THIS CASE AND THEN A CERTIFIED COPY OF THAT ORDER IS FILED IN A NEW OR EXISTING DOMESTIC RELATIONS CASE OR JUVENILE SUPPORT CASE.)

REMEMBER TO UPDATE THE CHILD'S STATUS, CUSTODY AND PERMANENCY GOAL IN THE FSP FAMILY INFORMATION SECTION.

PRIOR TO COURT ADOPTION OF A PERMANENCY PLAN:

Permanency Goal Date set: If a D&N has been opened, enter the date of the original verbal order granting the Department custody or protective supervision of the children. If the case is voluntary, enter the date the initial referral was received by the Department.

Permanency Goal Target date: Set out one year of initial verbal order. In order to remain in compliance with Volume VII, treatment plans need to be in TRAILS within 60 days of the referral date.

AFTER COURT ADOPTION OF A PERMANENCY PLAN:

Permanency Goal Date set: Use the date the Court adopted the current permanency plan.

Permanency Goal Target date: Use the end date of the primary or concurrent goal whichever occurs last.

Tips for writing your report for the court:

- Remember you are writing for judges and attorneys who do not know the case as you do.
- Headings for ALL paragraphs will be in capital letters and need to be in the order presented here so that the Court can easily find each section within the report.
- Do not include the foster parents' names in the report (just address them generically, such as foster mother, foster parents, etc) and DO NOT disclose reporter information.
- **NEVER** include in the report that the worker consulted the OCA as this violates the attorney/client privilege.
- Do not use acronyms (i.e., DBT, EMDR) and write out the abbreviation. Acronyms which are generally understood such as, UA and GAL are still appropriate to use.
- REMEMBER TO CHECK FOR SPELLING AND GRAMMATICAL ERRORS to include the upside-down question marks that will appear when you cut and paste a Word document into Trails.
 - The report needs to accurately reflect the Department's position **AND** include useful information to support your conclusion.
 - Write the report in an active voice versus a passive voice. ["The caseworker determined . . ." vs. "It is the determination of the caseworker . . ."]
 - Only provide information since the last court hearing.
 - Delete all instructions (appear in *italics*) and sections which are not relevant to your report, i.e., Father's treatment status when his parental rights have been terminated.
 - Ensure that this court report updates the court as to compliance with court orders for all parties since the last court date.
 - It is helpful to summarize treatment/visitation appointment compliance information. For example: "Mother has made 10 out of 20 visitation sessions with her children since the

last court date. Of the 10 she has missed, she was No Call to 5 sessions and called to cancel 5 other sessions 10 minutes prior to the scheduled time.”

- Remember to click on every radio button on the 5A. Address safety concerns and plan under the Services area of the 5A.
- **Follow the document submission timelines to ensure this document is filed with the court pursuant to the Case Management Order (CMO) issued by Judge Miller.**

Trails Upside Down Question Mark Fix

There's a workaround that will prevent the upside down question marks (¿) from appearing when pasting text from Word into Trails that contains quotes (single or double-quotes). The upside down question marks are inserted because of a feature in Word called "smartquotes". Trails does not support this feature and therefore anytime a quote is pasted from Word (either a single quote or a double-quote), Trails would not recognize it and will instead replace it with the upside down question mark.

To prevent this from happening, you need to disable the "smartquote" feature in Word by completing the following steps:

For older versions of Microsoft Word:

1. Open Microsoft Word
2. Click the Tools menu
3. Click the Autocorrect Options item
4. Select the tab called "Auto Format as you Type" and uncheck the box called "Straight quotes with smart quotes"
5. Select the tab called "Autoformat" and uncheck the same item "Straight quotes with smart quotes"
6. Close out of Word

If you are using Microsoft Word 2007/2010:

1. Open Microsoft Word
2. Click on the office button in the top left corner of your window.
3. Click on Word Options at the bottom.
4. Click on Proofing.
5. Click the Autocorrect Options item
6. Select the tab called "Auto Format as you Type" and uncheck the box called "Straight quotes with smart quotes"
7. Select the tab called "Autoformat" and uncheck the same item "Straight quotes with smart quotes"
8. Close out of Word

Next time you then paste information from Word into Trails that contains quotes – you will not get the upside down question marks.