



Hamilton County Juvenile Court

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AMENDED Additional Dependency Procedures

Under the leadership of Administrative Judge John Williams, the Hamilton County Juvenile Court took proactive steps to maintain essential functions of the Court and assist in preventing the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease during this State of Emergency. In developing the Court's Plan for Operation, the Court has consulted and collaborated with key stakeholders, which include, but are not limited to: Prosecutor's Office; Public Defender's Office; Hamilton County Department of Job & Family Services; ProKids; the Supreme Court of Ohio; Hamilton County Public Health; Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center; social service agencies; treatment providers and other local/state agencies. The Court prioritized the safety and well-being of the families and children we serve, our workforce and the public appearing in our Court.

Request for Annual Reasonable Efforts/Permanency Findings

Parties are encouraged to submit an agreed entry, by and through counsel, stipulating to relevant facts, including any exhibits, filings or other relevant attachments, and indicating that there are no other facts or evidence to be adduced. The Court will accept the agreed entry and make a reasonable efforts/permanency finding where appropriate, journalizing an entry incorporating the agreed entry into the Court record.

If the Court declines to endorse the agreed entry for any reason, the Court will journalize an entry indicating the reason and send that entry to parties immediately. In this circumstance, parties may remedy the issue and resubmit the agreed entry, or parties may contact the Court to request a hearing.

The Court is willing to accept a partial agreement in an effort to streamline cases and narrow the issues in dispute. If a partial agreement can be secured but not all parties are stipulating to facts and an agreement, the moving party may request a reasonable efforts/permanency hearing through the Court. Additionally, after making reasonable attempts to reach an agreement and finding an agreed entry is not possible, parties may request a reasonable efforts/permanency hearing through the Court.

The reasonable efforts/permanency hearings will be scheduled in 30 minute increments. The Prosecutor's Office will contact Sharon Gundrum to schedule these hearings, after consulting with parties regarding their availability. A Motion and Affidavit will then be filed requesting

notice and service for the hearing date/time provided by the Court. The Court will send notice per the written request for service and instruct attorneys and parties on how to participate remotely.

At this time, the Court is able to schedule these 30 minute hearings on April 15 and April 27. The Court is willing to identify additional dates as needed upon request of the Prosecutor's Office. The hearings will be scheduled every 30 minutes on the following schedule:

8:30 – 10:00
10:00 – 10:30: Break
10:30 – 12:00
12:00 – 1:00: Lunch
1:00 – 2:30
2:30 – 3:00: Break
3:00 – 4:00

The Court is willing to conduct hearings on April 9th for reasonable efforts/permanency requests for permanent custody cases where parties waive any sufficient service/notice requirements. If an agreed entry is not obtained for a permanent custody case, the Prosecutor's office may contact Sharon Gundrum to request a hearing, after consulting parties regarding their availability. Sharon will schedule a 15 minute hearing on April 9, 2020, and provide the date and time to the Prosecutor's Office. The Prosecutor's Office will provide notice to parties. The hearings will be scheduled every 15 minutes on the following schedule:

8:30 – 10:00
10:00 – 10:15: Break
10:15 – 12:00
12:00 – 1:00: Lunch
1:00 – 2:30
2:30 – 2:45: Break
2:45 – 4:00

Additional Case Processing During the COVID-19 Crisis

The Court will schedule remote hearings for other non-emergent cases where parties are able to reach stipulations of facts and agreements on adjudications/dispositions and other motions, excluding a Motion for Permanent Custody. These cases may include cases where a parent is in default of an answer and/or cases in which no testimony or very limited testimony will be

required. The Court is willing to accept a partial agreement in an effort to streamline cases and narrow the issues in dispute.

After all parties have been served with the Motion and/or complaint **and** after obtaining stipulations of facts and agreements on the same, parties will contact Sharon Gundrum to request a remote hearing date and time. The requesting party will file a written request for service and the Court will send notice per the written request as well as instruct attorneys and parties on how to participate remotely.

The Court will work to identify dates for these hearings and ensure Magistrates are available for the selected hearing dates and times.

Emergent/Time Sensitive Filings

Parties may file documents through the Court's fax, email or drop box procedures outlined in the updated operational plan disseminated on April 5, 2020. Emergency case plans qualify as an eligible document for these alternative methods. Non-Emergency case plans and SARs do not qualify as an eligible document for alternative filing methods.

The Court is more than willing to accept non-emergency case plans and SARs, but this would need to take place through an in-person filing similar to the procedures that were in place prior to the COVID-19 Crisis. The Court will make a space available on the first floor in the Custody and Companionship clinic for the filing of these documents. This process will provide for contact free filing. Please contact Sharon Gundrum at 946.9375 if you wish to request this service.