

CASA of NWA: 201 Training Refresher

Learning Objectives:

- Review
- Report
- Relatives
- Reunification
- Resilience

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CASA of NWA: 201 Training Refresher

DISCLAIMER

Review: Returning to Court



Report: Court Report Refresher

CASA COURT REPORT

Child's Name: Jacob Smith, DOB: 5/16/2019
Reilly Smith, DOB: 6/01/2015
Addison Smith, DOB: 01/15/2009

Case Number: 04JV-20-489

Date of Hearing: July 21, 2021

Type of Hearing: Review

Persons Interviewed, Observed or Corresponded With:

Jacob Smith, Juvenile
Reilly Smith, Juvenile
Amanda Smith, Mother
Marcus Smith, Legal Father of Reilly and Jacob
Foster Parents for Reilly and Jacob
TFC parent for Addison
Donna Johnson, Maternal Grandmother
April Smith, Paternal Aunt
Brittini Huckaby, CPP Therapist
Butterflies and Frogs Daycare Staff
Krista Wilson, FSW

Background Information

On December 15, 2020 the department removed the juveniles from the custody of Marcus and Amanda Smith due to allegations of parental drug use and inadequate supervision.

Concerns/Assessments

Jacob Smith, 2 years old:

- Jacob is placed in a local foster home, his only placement since coming into care. Jacob is placed with his brother, Reilly.
- Jacob attends daycare and is doing well there. He receives ST and OT three times per week.
- Jacob is participating in CPP sessions with his mother once a week.
- Jacob is participating in supervised visits with his parents at the department, twice per week for four hours total.
- Jacob has had three in person visits with his sister, Addison, this review period.
- This CASA observed a parent child visit on 6/23/21. Amanda Smith was actively engaged with Jacob throughout the visit. Ms. Smith held Jacob and changed his diaper once, and brought snacks and puzzles. Marcus Smith spent approximately 30 minutes of the visit on his phone, and then worked on a puzzle with Jacob.

Reilly Smith, 6 years old:

- Reilly is placed in a local foster home, his only placement since coming into care. Reilly is placed with his brother, Jacob.
- Reilly completed kindergarten at Mary Mae Jones elementary. He loves school and will be going to the Boys and Girls Club this summer.
- Reilly is in weekly individual counseling through Ozark Guidance.
- Reilly is participating in supervised visits with his parents at the department, twice per week for four hours total.

Report: Court Report Refresher

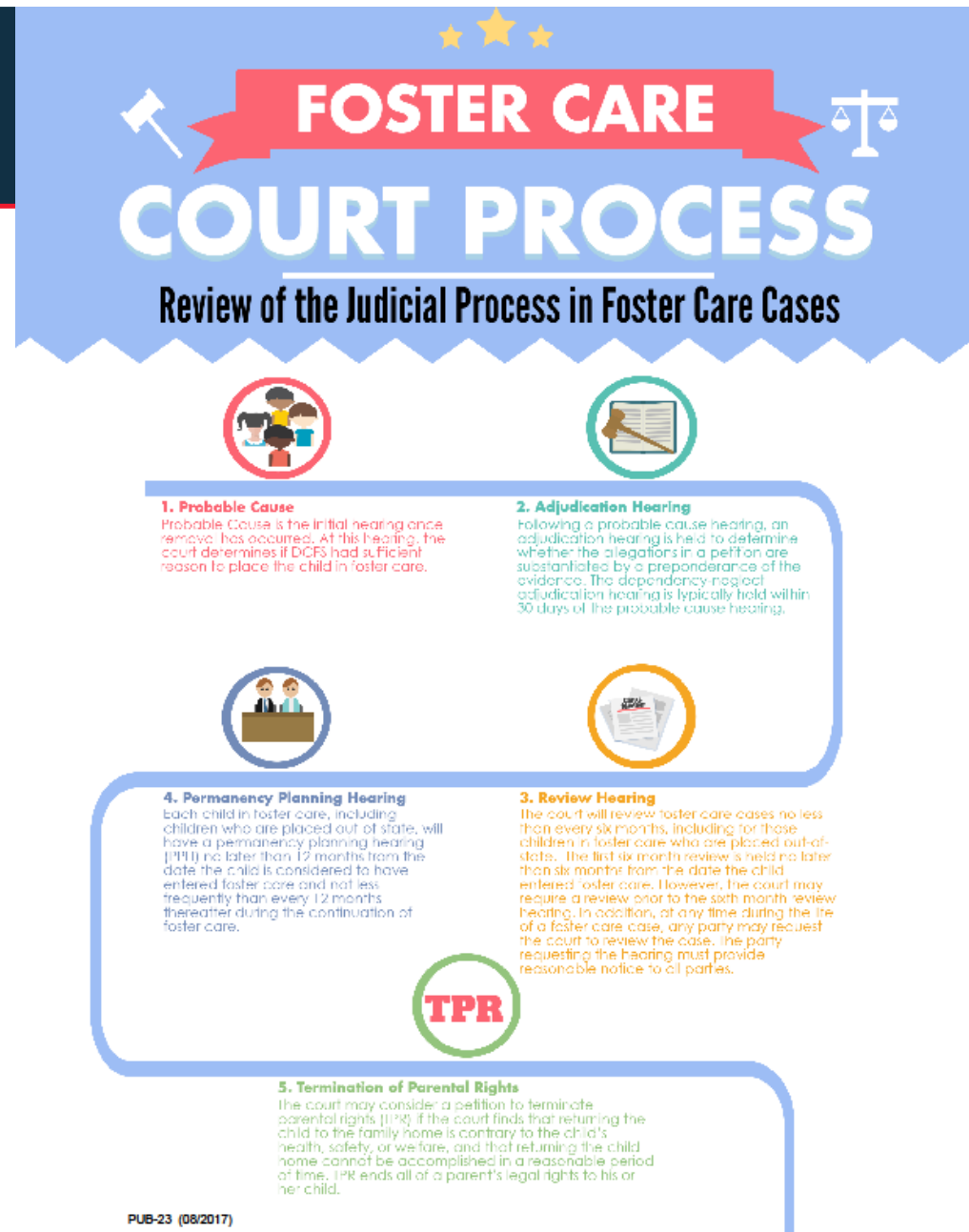
Recommendations for Each Hearing Type
Review: What needs to happen in the next 90 days?

PPH: Goal be changed to _____ and a hearing set for _____.

Goal of reunification continue and a 15 month PPH be set – need to be specific about what needs to happen for the child to be home in the next 90 days.

TPR: Parental rights be terminated, or parental rights not be terminated.

Always: Placement of child, sibling contact/visits/placement together, parent contact/visits, family contact/visits, ICPC and/or home studies be done by DHS, medical and education needs



Relatives: Pursuing Connections for Children

Concurrent Planning and Relative Preference

- Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 – reasonable efforts to reunify must be made concurrently with reasonable efforts to place a child for adoption or with a legal guardian
- ARDHS Policy and Procedure mandates concurrent planning and preference for relative caregivers for placement and adoption.
- AR Juvenile Code 9-28-105 states that for purposes of foster care or adoption, preferential consideration shall be given to an adult relative over a nonrelated caregiver if the relative caregiver meets all relevant child protection standards and it is in the best interest of the child to be placed with the relative caregiver.
- AR Juvenile Code 9-27-361 states that a CASA court report should include any information on adult relatives, including their contact information and the volunteer's recommendation about relative placement and visitation.

Identification and Notification of Relatives

- Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 – within 30 days of removal the department will provide notice to all adult relatives that a juvenile is in care.
- Arkansas Act 1311 of 2009 – same language as fostering connections act.
- Arkansas Act 1116 of 2007 – when the state takes custody they must conduct an immediate assessment to locate: a noncustodial parent, recommended relatives including a parent of a sibling to the juvenile, and fictive kin.
- AR Juvenile Code 9-27-361 states that a CASA court report should include any information on adult relatives, including their contact information and the volunteer's recommendation about relative placement and visitation.

Fictive Kin

- Arkansas Act 1116 of 2017 – the state is also required to notify fictive kin identified by the juvenile as one or more persons who play a significant and positive role in the juvenile's life.
- Arkansas Act 700 – expands the legal definition of fictive kin to include an individual who has a strong and positive tie to the parent of an infant.

Family Placement Settings over Congregate Care/Unrelated Caregivers

- Family First Prevention Act of 2018 – the department must justify use of congregate care, emphasis on family placements and settings. Juvenile's must be assessed to determine if their needs can be met by relative caregivers.

Relatives: Pursuing Connections for Children

HOW Do I Find Family?

1. Ask...
2. Mine the file
 - Affidavit
 - Psychological Evaluations
 - School and Medical Records
3. Social Media Sleuthing
 - Facebook
4. Free Internet Resources
 - Familytreenow.com
 - Obituaries

WHAT Can I Say?



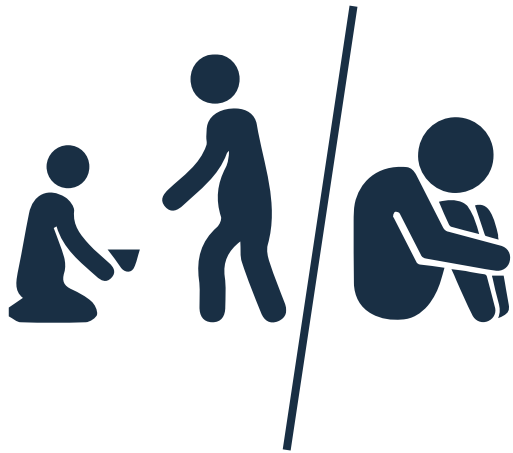
Reunification: Responsibility of the Court Team

1. What measures have been taken to prevent removal or decrease time in foster care?
2. What safety issues exist that prevent the return of the child?
3. What is the developed plan to return the child?
4. What efforts have been made to place the child with a relative?
5. What has the department, parents, and others involved in the case done to support the family's stability?
6. What still needs to be done to promote permanency?

Reunification: Health and Safety Factors

- 1) Caretaker's behavior toward child is violent or out of control.
- 2) Caretaker describes or acts towards the child in predominantly negative terms or has extremely unrealistic expectations.
- 3) Caretaker caused serious physical injury to child or made plausible threat to cause severe physical injury.
- 4) Caretaker's explanation for injury is unconvincing.
- 5) Family refuses access to child there is reason to believe that family is about to flee, or child's whereabouts cannot be ascertained.
- 6) Caretaker has not, cannot, or will not provide supervision necessary to protect child from potentially dangerous harm.
- 7) Caretaker is unwilling or unable to meet child's needs for food, clothing, shelter, and/or medical or mental health care.
- 8) Child is fearful of caretaker, other family members, or other people living in or having access to the home.
- 9) Child's physical living conditions are hazardous and immediately threatening, based on child's age and developmental status.
- 10) Child sexual abuse is suspected and circumstances suggest that child safety may be an immediate concern.
- 11) Caretaker's current substance use seriously affects his/her ability to supervise, protect, or care for the child.
- 12) Caretaker fails to protect child from serious physical or threatened harm.
- 13) Caretaker's emotional stability seriously affects current ability to supervise, protect, or care for child.
- 14) Caretaker has previously maltreated a child and severity of maltreatment or caretaker's response to previous incidents suggest child safety may be an immediate concern.

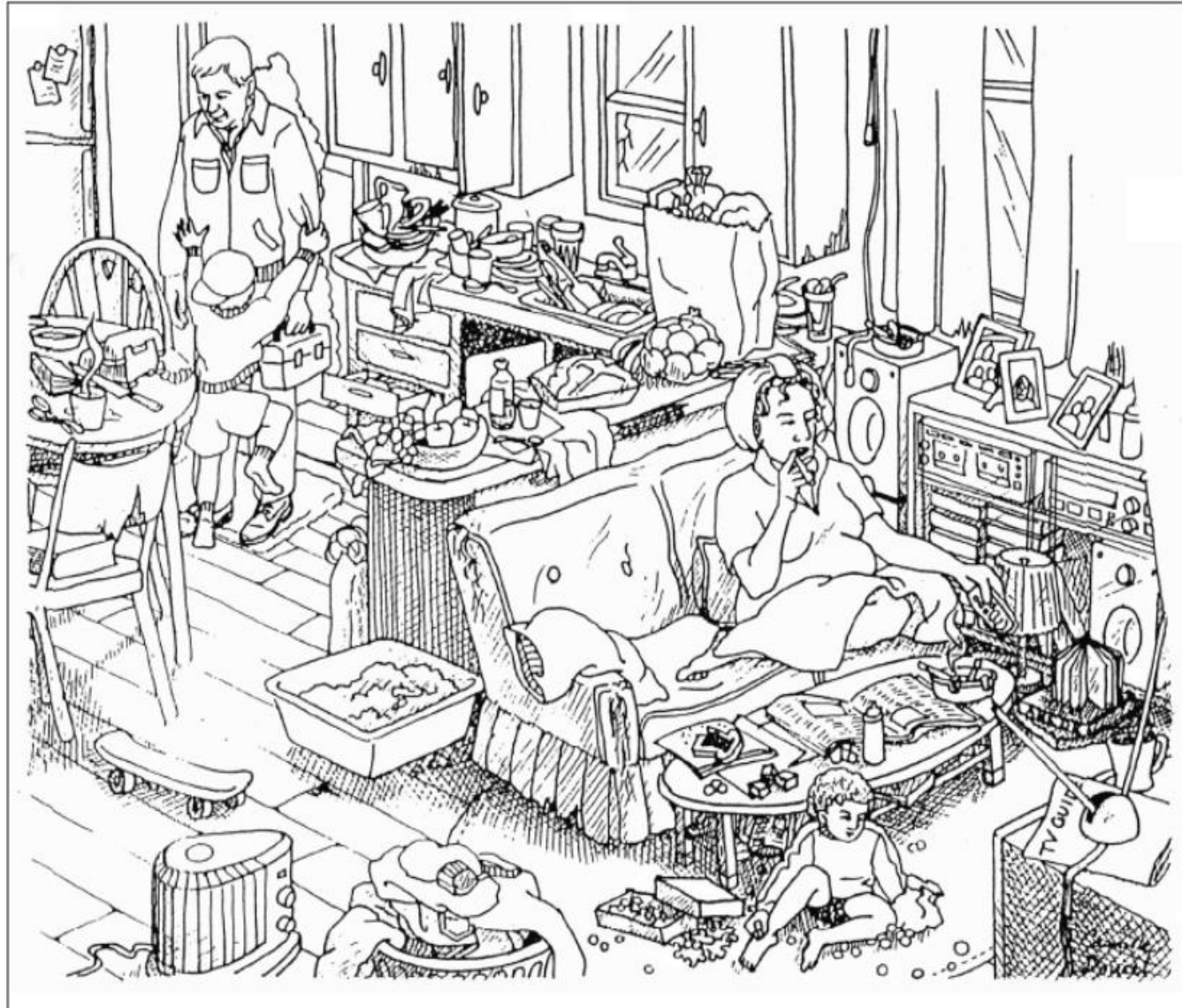
Reunification: Poverty vs. Neglect



Are the following safety issues?

- A family does not have a refrigerator
- A family lives in a rental unit with holes in the floor
- A family lives in a car
 - Is this a child safety issue?
- A family does not have a regular pediatrician
- A family does not have electricity
- A family does not have money to buy the mother's antidepressant medication
- A family does not have a crib for their infant
- A family has one parent who uses drugs

Reunification: Strengths vs. Weaknesses



Resilience:

The 7 C's: Essential Building Blocks of Resilience

- Competence: When we notice what young people are doing right and give them opportunities to develop important skills, they feel competent. We undermine competence when we don't allow young people to recover themselves after a fall.
- Confidence: Young people need confidence to be able to navigate the world, think outside the box, and recover from challenges.
- Connection: Connections with other people, schools, and communities offer young people the security that allows them to stand on their own and develop creative solutions.
- Character: Young people need a clear sense of right and wrong and a commitment to integrity.
- Contribution: Young people who contribute to the well-being of others will receive gratitude rather than condemnation. They will learn that contributing feels good, and may therefore more easily turn to others, and do so without shame.
- Coping: Young people who possess a variety of healthy coping strategies will be less likely to turn to dangerous quick-fixes when stressed.
- Control: Young people who understand privileges and respect are earned through demonstrated responsibility will learn to make wise choices and feel a sense of control.