



RESOURCE MATERIALS

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GAL Volunteer Worksheet for Permanency Hearing...

RE:	DOB:	File #:
Is it likely for the juvenile to be returned home immediately or within the next six months, and if not, why is it not in the juvenile's best interest to return home?		
Should legal guardianship with a relative or some other suitable person be established, and if so, what rights and responsibilities should remain with the parents?		
Should adoption be pursued, and if so, are there any barriers to the juvenile's adoption?		
Should the juvenile remain in the current placement or be placed in another permanent living arrangement? Why?		
If there has already been one or more permanency planning hearings, has Department of Children and Families made reasonable efforts since the last hearing to implement the permanent plan for the juvenile?		
Is there any other information the court should have in order to make this decision?		
Has the juvenile been in placement outside the home for 15 of the most recent 22 months?		
Is there any reason that the filing of a petition for termination of parental rights is not in the best interest of the child?		

Adapted from a form created by Barbara King, District Administrator, NC Guardian ad Litem Program.

GAL Volunteer Court Report Format: Preparing a Permanency Hearing Report to the Court

Cover Sheet

- ✓ Complete all information on standard court report cover sheet.
 - Hearing title is “Permanency Planning Hearing.”

The Facts

- ✓ Prepare a chronology of efforts to reunify child with parent or place the child with relatives.
 - Describe parent’s participation/failure to comply with court orders.
 - History of family and reunification viability.
- ✓ List all contacts/witnesses and any record obtained or examined and all visits with the child.

Permanent Plan for the Child (Needs of the Child)

- ✓ Describe each child’s needs in terms of what has happened, age of the child, aspects of time element required by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (which requires that all children in DCF caseload have a permanent plan within twelve months of entering the system).
 - Describe why a permanent plan for this child is necessary.
 - If applicable, cite alternative placement options; however, if there are no viable relative placements, then the course of action is to seek termination of parental rights to free the child for adoption. State what the child wants (if age appropriate).

Issues for the Court’s Attention

- ✓ Address concerns about the child’s sense of time and need for permanence.

Recommendations

- ✓ Same as standard court report with a stress on recommendation about best permanent plan for the child.

Adapted from a form created by Jean Hawley, District Administrator, NC Guardian ad Litem Program.

GAL Volunteer Court Report Format: Preparing a Termination of Parental Rights Report to the Court

Cover Sheet

- ✓ Complete all information on standard court report cover sheet.
- ✓ In child's placement history, use dates of placement to bring attention to the length of time the child has resided in any specific placement.

The Facts

- ✓ List place and date of all visits with children, before describing the status of each child separately.
- ✓ List all contacts/witnesses and any record obtained or examined.
- ✓ Summarize the case from the filing of the petition to the present time, delineating court activity, dates, compliance issues, etc. Use bold lettering for findings of abuse, neglect, or dependency.
- ✓ Highlight specific facts that support the grounds.
- ✓ Justify the TPR action or why it should be denied.
- ✓ Elaborate on facts that support the best interest of the child.

The Needs of the Child

- ✓ Explain what termination will provide for the child. Address issues of permanence, age of child, literature on attachment/separation issues, concern about delays, etc.
- ✓ Explain to the court any current unmet needs of the child.

Available Resources

- ✓ Is there a plan for adoption? What resources can that family offer that address the unmet needs of the child?
- ✓ Describe community resources available to address the child's needs.

Issues for the Court's Attention

- ✓ The primary issues in a TPR are:
 - Do the grounds that are alleged in the petition exist?
 - Is it in the child's best interest for the TPR to be granted?
- ✓ The court can also address issues of unmet needs, visitation and/or a goodbye visit, and services to be provided to the child.

Recommendations

- ✓ Grant or deny TPR.
- ✓ Custody with _____.
- ✓ Department of Children and Families proceed with adoption placement.
- ✓ Recommendations about ongoing services and/or unmet needs.
- ✓ Next court date within ninety days with same judge.

Adapted from a form created by Jean Hawley, District Administrator, NC Guardian ad Litem Program.

Investigation Plan....

Date of Next Court Hearing:		
Type/Purpose of Hearing:		
Court Report Is Due:		
Questions I Would Like Answered	Possible Sources of Information	Priority #
A)		
B)		
C)		
D)		
E)		
F)		
G)		
H)		
I)		
J)		

