

Investigations

Day 6 – Participant Manual



Making Investigative Findings

Case Staffing, Supervisory Review, and Recommendations

From Removal to Court Action

Transitioning Cases

Day 6:

Investigations Training Agenda

Monday	
9:00 – 9:30	Welcome Pre-Test
9:30 – 10:30	Making Investigative Findings
10:30 -10:45	Break
10:45 – 12:00	Case Staffing, Supervisory Review, and Recommendations
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch Break
1:00 – 2:15	From Removal to Court Action
2:15 - 2:30	Break
2:30 – 3:30	Transitioning Cases
3:30 – 4:00	Reflection Discussion Wrap Up and Review

Investigations

Specialty Training





Midsouth
College of Business, Health,
and Human Services
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Day 6

1



Investigations

Week 8

Pre-Test

Assessment

2



MAKING INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS

3

Making Investigative Findings



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Target Outcomes



- Understand how investigative findings and determinations are developed using gathered information, documentation, and professional judgment.
- Apply investigative information and evidence to findings, recommendations, and ongoing case action decisions.
- Assess whether gathered information sufficiently supports findings, determinations, and ongoing safety concerns.

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Understanding Why Findings Matter

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A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a light-colored t-shirt and blue jeans, is seated in a black wheelchair. He is focused on his work, typing on a laptop that sits on a light-colored wooden desk. The desk also holds a few papers and a small orange object. In the background, a modern living room is visible, featuring a grey sofa with blue cushions, a white coffee table, and a large white shelving unit filled with books and decorative items. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

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Applying Findings & Case Action Decisions

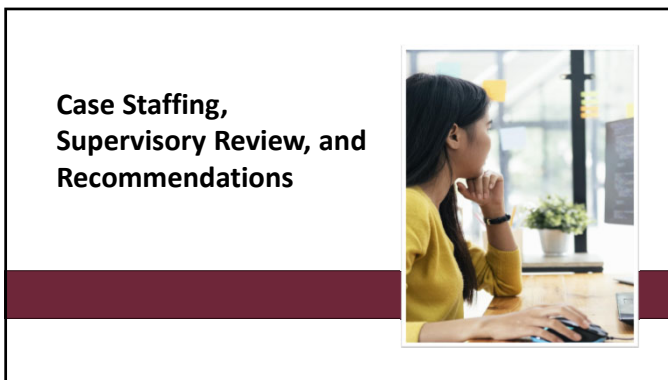


Connecting Findings, Documentation, and Ongoing Safety Considerations



CASE STAFFING, SUPERVISORY REVIEW, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Case Staffing, Supervisory Review, and Recommendations

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Target Outcomes

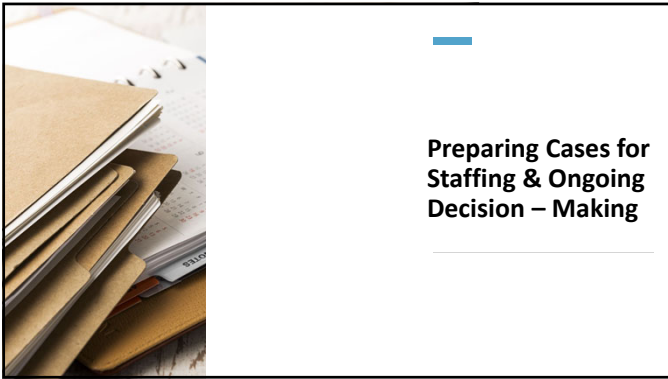


- Understand how staffing and supervisory review support ongoing case progression and decision-making.
- Apply investigative findings, ongoing concerns, and family information to staffing and recommendation discussions.
- Assess what information is important during staffing, supervisory review, and recommendation planning.

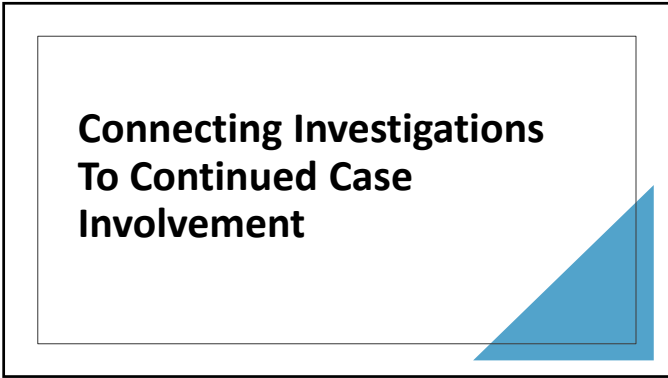
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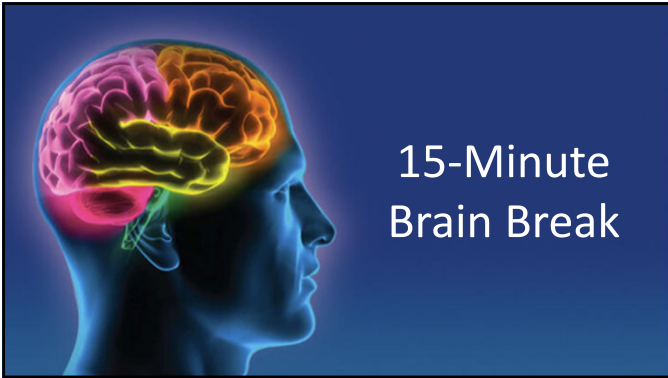
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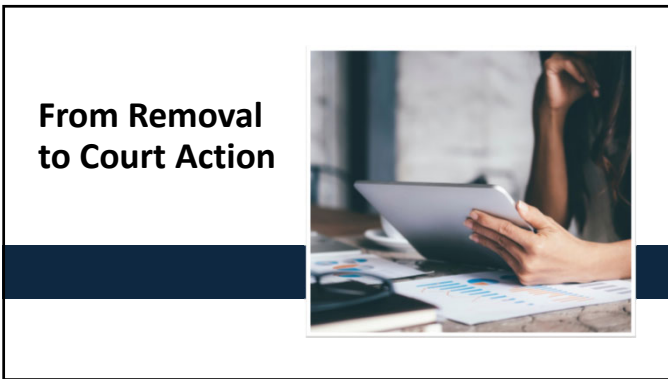
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Target Outcomes



- Understand how investigations progress into court involvement and legal action following removal.
- Apply removal-related documentation, timelines, and communication expectations to post-removal case progression.
- Assess investigator responsibilities, legal timelines, and documentation needs following protective custody action.

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Understanding Immediate Legal & Court Progression



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Organizing Information to Support Court Action

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A close-up photograph of a metal scale of justice, showing a single pan hanging from a chain.

Understanding How Cases Continue After Removal

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A vertical decorative bar with a blue and red gradient.

From Removal to Court Action

23

A photograph of a meal on a light blue wooden table. In the foreground is a bowl of salmon, avocado, and rice. In the background is a bowl of seaweed salad. Chopsticks are also visible.

Lunch Break

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Target Outcomes



- Understand how investigations transition into continued agency involvement following removal and court progression.
- Apply communication, reassessment, and coordination expectations to case transition discussions.
- Assess what information ongoing s and agency partners need following investigative progression and court involvement.

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Supporting Continuity and Communication

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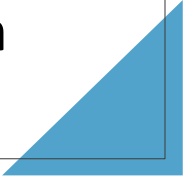


Prioritizing Information During Case Transition

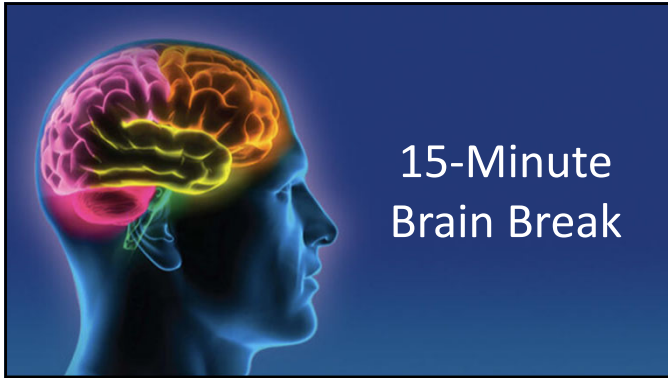
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Prioritization & Communication



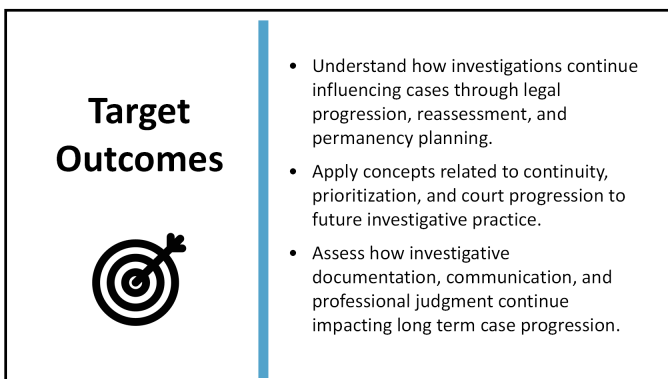
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Taking a Moment To Reflect

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Target Outcomes Evaluation

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INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS & DETERMINATIONS

ACTIVITY PACKET

Moving From Investigation to Case Action

Purpose

This activity packet follows the Day 6 Making Investigative Findings section slide by slide. Each activity is completed when the corresponding slide is facilitated so that participants move from understanding why findings matter, to applying determination standards, to making case-action decisions, and finally to connecting findings with documentation and ongoing safety considerations.

How to Use This Packet

- Complete each activity only when directed by the facilitator.
- Use the information provided in the activity and the investigative information available to you.
- Base determinations on the totality of the information gathered, not assumptions or isolated facts.
- Be prepared to explain what information and documentation support your reasoning.

Day 6 Activity Map

Day 6 Slide	Participant Packet Activity
Understanding Why Findings Matter	Activity 1 – Why Findings Matter
Findings, Exemptions & Determination Rationale	Activity 2 – Determination, Exemption & Rationale
Applying Findings & Case Action Decisions	Activity 3 – Applying Findings & Case Action Decisions
Connecting Findings, Documentation & Ongoing Safety Considerations	Activity 4 – Connecting Findings, Documentation & Ongoing Safety

ACTIVITY 1 – WHY FINDINGS MATTER

Corresponding Day 6 Slide: Understanding Why Findings Matter

Purpose

To connect investigative findings to case progression, ongoing safety considerations, court involvement, service recommendations, and continued family involvement.

Directions

As the facilitator reviews why findings matter, use the space below to connect investigative findings to what may happen next in a case. Consider how information gathered throughout an investigation supports both the finding and future case action.

1. What should investigators evaluate before determining whether a finding is supported?

- Information gathered throughout the investigation.
- Interviews and observations.
- Collateral information.
- Documentation and evidence.
- Safety concerns and risk factors.
- The totality of the information rather than isolated information.

2. Why do investigative findings matter beyond the determination itself?

Identify how findings may influence each area below.

Area	How the Finding May Affect It
Case progression	
Family involvement	
Court action	
Service recommendations	
Ongoing monitoring and reassessment	

3. What concerns may remain even after an investigative finding is made?

Activity Takeaway

Findings are not simply labels assigned at the end of an investigation. They are supported through evidence, documentation, investigative reasoning, and professional judgment, and they may influence what happens next for the child and family.

ACTIVITY 2 – DETERMINATION, EXEMPTION & RATIONALE

Corresponding Day 6 Slide: Findings, Exemptions & Determination Rationale

Purpose

To apply the preponderance-of-the-evidence standard to DCFS investigative determinations and distinguish True, Unsubstantiated, True but Exempted, Inactive, and the separate vulnerable-population risk assessment that may follow a True determination.

Determination Quick Reference

Determination / Process	What It Means for This Activity
True	The allegation is supported by a preponderance of the evidence.
Unsubstantiated	The allegation is not supported by a preponderance of the evidence.
True but Exempted	A True statutory investigative determination in which statutory exemption requirements for Central Registry placement apply.
Inactive	The investigation cannot be completed because DCFS and/or Arkansas State Police is unable to locate or identify the alleged offender or alleged victim, and a True or Unsubstantiated determination cannot be established without interviewing that person.
Vulnerable-population risk assessment	A separate process that occurs after a True determination to assess whether the offender may pose a risk to a vulnerable population; it is not an investigative determination.

Group Review

1. Identify what information would support a True determination and what information would prevent the allegation from meeting the preponderance-of-the-evidence standard.
2. Discuss circumstances that may support a True but Exempted determination. Keep the exemption process separate from an Unsubstantiated determination.
3. Discuss when an Inactive determination would apply and why it should not be used as another way of saying the allegation was Unsubstantiated.
4. After a True determination, identify the factors that may be considered in a vulnerable-population risk assessment.

Vulnerable-Population Risk Factors to Consider

- Severity of the child maltreatment.
- Nature and severity of any injury or other adverse impact caused by the maltreatment.
- The offender's access to vulnerable populations.
- Any previous substantiated child maltreatment findings against the offender.
- Any subsequent reports of child maltreatment alleged against the offender.
- The offender's criminal history.

Your Group's Notes

What information is most important when supporting a determination rationale?

Why do True but Exempted determinations require supervisory review?

ACTIVITY 3 – APPLYING FINDINGS & CASE ACTION DECISIONS

Corresponding Day 6 Slide: Applying Findings & Case Action Decisions

Purpose

To apply determination standards to investigative scenarios, evaluate ongoing safety concerns, and connect investigative findings to documentation, recommended services, case action, and additional information that may still be needed.

Directions

For each scenario provided by the facilitator, work as a table group. Do not rely on assumptions, personal opinions, or isolated information. Use the totality of the information available and document the reasoning that supports your decision.

Scenario 1 Analysis

Applicable investigative finding:

☐ True ☐ Unsubstantiated ☐ True but Exempted ☐ Inactive

What information supports the finding?

What concerns continue following the investigation?

What documentation supports the determination?

What case action, services, or ongoing involvement may be appropriate?

What additional information may still be needed?

Scenario 2 Analysis

Applicable investigative finding:

☐ True ☐ Unsubstantiated ☐ True but Exempted ☐ Inactive

What information supports the finding?

What concerns continue following the investigation?

What documentation supports the determination?

What case action, services, or ongoing involvement may be appropriate?

What additional information may still be needed?

Scenario 3 Analysis

Applicable investigative finding:

☐ True ☐ Unsubstantiated ☐ True but Exempted ☐ Inactive

What information supports the finding?

What concerns continue following the investigation?

What documentation supports the determination?

What case action, services, or ongoing involvement may be appropriate?

What additional information may still be needed?

Group Preparation

Be prepared to explain your determination, the evidence and documentation that support it, and what concerns remain following the investigation.

ACTIVITY 4 – CONNECTING FINDINGS, DOCUMENTATION & ONGOING SAFETY

Corresponding Day 6 Slide: Connecting Findings, Documentation & Ongoing Safety Considerations

Purpose

To connect investigative findings, documentation, professional judgment, and ongoing safety considerations to future case action and continued involvement.

Group Share

Using the determinations and scenario work you completed in Activity 3, prepare to share:

- The determination selected.
- The information supporting the finding.
- The ongoing safety concerns identified.
- The recommended case actions or services.

Discussion Notes

How did documentation and evidence support the finding?

What information strengthened or weakened the determination?

Why is reassessment important following investigative findings?

What concerns remained following the investigation?

Final Reflection

Investigative findings are among the most important outcomes of the investigative process because they directly influence child safety decisions and future case action. Based on today's work, identify one way the totality of information changed or strengthened your reasoning.

Key Takeaway

Investigative findings must be supported, documented, reviewed carefully, and connected to the totality of information gathered throughout the investigation. Findings become part of the larger case story and influence what happens next for children and families.

CASE STAFFING & SUPERVISORY REVIEW ACTIVITY PACKET

Preparing Cases for Staffing, Recommendations & Ongoing Case Progression

Purpose

This activity packet is designed to help participants:

- Prepare investigative cases for staffing and supervisory review.
- Identify information important for staffing discussions.
- Analyze ongoing safety concerns and family needs.
- Develop service and case action recommendations.
- Practice professional communication during staffing and case review.
- Understand how investigations transition into ongoing agency involvement.

Participants will:

- Review investigative summaries.
 - Analyze strengths, concerns, and ongoing safety issues.
 - Prepare staffing recommendations.
 - Discuss service needs and continued involvement.
 - Practice organizing and presenting investigative information.
-

Directions

As you review each scenario:

1. Identify:
 - Investigative findings.
 - Ongoing safety concerns.
 - Family strengths and supports.
 - Information important for staffing discussions.
2. Discuss:
 - Recommended case action.
 - Service recommendations.
 - Ongoing reassessment needs.
 - What information supervisors or ongoing workers should understand.

3. Prepare to explain:

- Why did your group select particular recommendations.
- What concerns continue following the investigation.
- What information should be prioritized during staffing.

Remember staffing and supervisory review are collaborative processes designed to:

- Support child safety.
- Promote informed decision-making.
- Identify family needs and strengths.
- Guide continued agency involvement.

SECTION 1 – PREPARING FOR STAFFING

Scenario 1 – Investigative Summary

Current Case Status

The investigation included:

- Concerns regarding supervision and caregiver functioning.
- Frankie reports ongoing caregiving responsibilities.
- Corroborating collateral information from Georgia.
- Escalation of concerns following unsuccessful safety planning.
- Removal initiated due to continued safety concerns.

Current case concerns include:

- Caregiver stress and supervision concerns.
- Parentification concerns involving Frankie.
- Emotional functioning within the home.
- Need for continued reassessment and service involvement.

Group Discussion Questions

What information should be prioritized during staffing?

What ongoing safety concerns should be discussed?

What strengths or protective factors exist?

What concerns require continued reassessment?

What ongoing information would the Specialist need to understand about this case?

SECTION 2 – SERVICE RECOMMENDATION ANALYSIS

Scenario 2 – Family Needs & Services

Additional Information

- Charlotte expresses willingness to participate in services.
 - Georgia remains involved and willing to assist with support.
 - Frankie demonstrates signs of emotional stress.
 - Children currently placed out of home.
 - Ongoing concerns remain regarding caregiver functioning and supervision.
-

Group Discussion Questions

What services or support may benefit this family?

What concerns should remain a priority moving forward?

What family strengths may support reunification or case progress?

What information would be important during ongoing case reassessment?

What recommendations would your group make during staffing?

SECTION 3 – SUPERVISORY REVIEW DISCUSSION

Scenario 3 – Supervisor Questions

During Staffing, the Supervisor Asks:

- “What concerns most impact child safety in this case?”
- “What information most strongly supported removal?”
- “What concerns remain unresolved?”
- “What protective factors exist?”
- “What ongoing monitoring or reassessment is needed?”
- “What recommendations should be prioritized moving forward?”

Group Discussion Questions

How would your group respond to the supervisor’s questions?

What information is most important to communicate clearly during staffing?

Why is organization and clarity important during staffing discussions?

What additional information may still need follow-up?

SECTION 4 – STAFFING & RECOMMENDATION ACTIVITY

Directions

As a table group:

1. Review the investigative information provided
2. Prepare:
 - A staffing summary.
 - Ongoing safety concerns.
 - Service recommendations.
 - Continued reassessment needs.
3. Be prepared to discuss:
 - Recommended case action.
 - Family strengths and concerns.
 - Ongoing child safety considerations.
 - What information should be prioritized moving forward.

Group Staffing Notes

Most Significant Safety Concerns

Family Strengths / Protective Factors

Recommended Services / Supports

Ongoing Reassessment Needs

Important Information for Ongoing Workers

SECTION 5 – REFLECTION & PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Reflection Questions

Why is staffing an important part of child welfare practice?

Why is professional communication important during staffing?

Why should ongoing safety concerns continue to be reassessed?

How do staffing discussions influence future case progression?

Why is it important to identify both concerns and family strengths?

KEY TAKEAWAY

Staffing and supervisory review help:

- Support child safety.
- Guide ongoing decision-making.
- Identify family strengths and needs.
- Promote informed recommendations and case action.
- Prepare cases for continued involvement and reassessment.

Investigations do not end with findings alone. Investigators must also help prepare cases for:

- Continued agency involvement.
- Ongoing services.
- Reassessment.
- Staffing and supervisory review.
- Long-term child safety planning.

COURT PROGRESSION TIMELINE NOTES PAGE

From Removal to Court Action

PURPOSE

This notes page is designed to help participants:

- Understand how investigations progress into court involvement following removal.
- Identify investigator responsibilities after protective custody action.
- Track dependency-neglect court timelines.
- Understand affidavit and OCC coordination requirements.
- Recognize how investigations continue progressing after removal.

Participants will use this page to:

- Follow the legal progression of the Flowers' case.
 - Track important court timelines and investigator responsibilities.
 - Document legal and procedural requirements.
 - Understand how investigations connect to court involvement and permanency planning.
-

DIRECTIONS

As we discuss post-removal progression:

- Record important timelines.
- Identify investigator responsibilities.
- Document court-related requirements.
- Note communication and documentation expectations.
- Track how the investigation progresses into legal and permanency processes.

FLOWERS CASE – LEGAL & COURT PROGRESSION

Timeline Step	What Occurred	Investigator Responsibilities	Notes
Hotline Report Received	Concerns regarding supervision and caregiver functioning reported	Initiate investigation and assess immediate safety	
Safety Concerns Escalated	Safety plan unsuccessful and caregiver attempted to flee with children	Reassess safety and consult supervisor	
Protective Custody Action Initiated	Children removed due to immediate safety concerns	Ensure child safety and coordinate placement	
OCC Notified Immediately	OCC contacted regarding removal and court action	Communicate investigative concerns and legal needs	
TDM Conducted	TDM completed prior to affidavit filing	Participate in staffing and safety discussions	
Affidavit Preparation Began	Affidavit drafted supporting removal and probable cause	Organize chronology, interviews, and safety concerns	
Emergency/Ex Parte Hearing	Initial emergency court hearing occurred	Ensure documentation supports court action	
Probable Cause Hearing Scheduled	Hearing required within 5 working days	Continue communication and documentation updates	

Timeline Step	What Occurred	Investigator Responsibilities	Notes
Adjudication/Disposition Progression	Court determines findings and ongoing case direction	Continue reassessment and coordination	
Ongoing Review & Permanency Progression	Continued court oversight and reassessment	Coordinate with ongoing workers and legal staff	

IMPORTANT COURT & LEGAL TIMELINES

72-Hour Hold (Protective Custody)

When protective custody occurs:

- OCC must be notified immediately.
- TDM must occur on all removals or considered removals.
- An affidavit is required.
- OCC must petition the court if the child will remain in custody beyond 72 hours.
- Emergency hearings may occur ex parte.

Investigator Responsibilities:

- Coordinate with supervisors and OCC.
 - Organize documentation and chronology.
 - Complete affidavit timely.
 - Continue reassessment and information-sharing.
-

PROBABLE CAUSE HEARING

Timeline:

Within 5 working days following emergency custody action.

Purpose:

To determine whether probable cause existed for removal and continued custody.

Investigators May Need To:

- Clarify investigative information.
- Provide updated documentation.
- Communicate ongoing concerns.
- Coordinate with OCC and supervisors.

ADJUDICATION / DISPOSITION

Timeline:

Typically, within 30 days.

Purpose:

Court determines whether dependency-neglect findings are supported and what continued actions are necessary.

Court May Consider:

- Child safety concerns.
 - Family functioning.
 - Placement considerations.
 - Ongoing service needs.
 - Permanency considerations.
-

REVIEW HEARINGS

Timeline:

No later than every 6 months (often sooner).

Purpose:

To reassess:

- Child safety.
- Placement stability.
- Family progress.
- Service participation.
- Permanency progression.

PERMANENCY PLANNING

Timeline:

No later than 12 months (often sooner depending on case progression).

Focus:

Determining long-term permanency goals and ongoing case direction.

TPR (TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS)

Important Information:

If reunification is not appropriate, the case may progress toward:

- TPR petition.
- TPR hearing.
- Permanency planning.

Timeline Notes:

- TPR petitions are often filed within 30 days of goal change.
 - TPR hearings generally within 90 days of petition filing.
-

TYPES OF JUVENILE COURT CASES

- Dependency / Dependency-Neglect
- Family in Need of Services (FINS)
- Delinquency

IMPORTANT LEGAL & INVESTIGATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Affidavits May Be Required For:

- Emergency custody.
 - Change of custody.
 - 30-day petitions.
 - Order of Less than Custody.
 - Order of Investigation.
 - Protection orders.
-

ORDER OF LESS THAN CUSTODY

Used when DCFS does not seek custody but:

- Child safety concerns still require court involvement.

Requirements:

- OCC files petition.
 - Affidavit required.
 - Supervisor notification required.
-

SAMANTHA'S LAW (ACT 168)

In dependency-neglect hearings, juveniles of sufficient age and capacity may voice preferences regarding:

- Family time
- Placement
- Custodial arrangements

INVESTIGATIONS CONTINUE AFTER REMOVAL

Removal does not end the case process.

Following removal, investigations may continue involving:

- Updated documentation.
- Court communication.
- Ongoing reassessment.
- Placement coordination.
- Continued safety concerns.
- Service progression.
- Permanency planning.

NOTES SECTION

Important Court Timelines

Investigator Responsibilities Following Removal

Important OCC / Court Communication Expectations

Questions / Important Takeaways

KEY TAKEAWAY

Protective custody actions begin additional legal and court-related processes requiring:

- Timely communication.
- Organized documentation.
- Coordination with OCC and supervisors.
- Continued reassessment.
- Ongoing investigator involvement.

Investigations continue progressing after removal as cases move through:

- Court involvement.
- Legal review.
- Ongoing reassessment.
- Permanency planning.
- Continued child safety decision-making.