

CHAPTER 14: The Court Report

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PLEASE READ THE MATERIAL PRIOR TO ATTENDING THE SESSION.

Homework for Session:

Read chapter 14; answer and submit chapter 14 review questions.

Class Objectives:

- Be able to organize information on a case.
- Develop appropriate recommendations.
- Understand how to write a court report.

Unit 1

Organizing Information 14-2

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Resource Materials

- . Education Worksheet to Prepare for Court Report 14-30
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CHAPTER 14: The Court Report

Unit 1: Organizing Information

As a CASA volunteer, you will gather information from many different sources during the course of your investigation and monitoring of a case. People and their stories run together. Facts can become cloudy, especially if the case is not scheduled for court for some time. It is vital that you keep accurate and thorough notes about the date and content of each case contact, whether it is a planned interview, an impromptu visit to a school, a phone call, or a review of a record.

Note Taking

Review the list below of important factors to include in note taking. In the large group, we'll answer the following questions:

- . What would you add?
- . Why do you need each piece of information?

Important Factors to Include in Note Taking:

- . Person interviewed
- . Date/time
- . Place (parent's home, job, etc.)
- . Observations
- . Feelings expressed
- . Facts
- . Summary of what happened
- . Plan of action by the other person
- . Plan of action by you
- . Decisions

Ultimately, the information you gather will be used to formulate recommendations about what is in the child's best interest. Your written court report and oral presentation are the vehicles by which these recommendations are presented to the court. Clear, fact-based reports and recommendations will enhance the court's ability to make good decisions about the child you serve or whose best interests you represent.

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Your Case Binder or Folder

Writing your court report will be easier if you have kept things organized from the beginning. Every case is unique, and the organization required for one case will likely be different from that of another case. As well, your own personal style will weigh heavily on how you keep your information. ProKids recommends keeping important current records and notes in a large binder, and using the tab headings listed below.

Cover Page: On the first page of your binder list the names, phone numbers, and addresses of all regular contacts. This will allow for easy access to all the information you need on a regular basis.

Court Appointment Letter: Keep your court appointment letter in your file for school visits, records requests, etc. *You can find a copy of an appointment letter in [Chapter 3 on Page 17](#).*

Case Notes: A chronological record of all conversations relating to the case. Highlight names with a yellow marker, list dates, and summarize what was said.

Court Orders: These list the Magistrate's orders and the next court date and are distributed to all parties at the end of each court hearing. Review them periodically, especially as you prepare to write your next report.

HCJFS (Hamilton County Job & Family Services): Case Plans, SAR (Semiannual Administrative Review) Reports, Staffing Records, etc.

Other Placement Case Plans: Case plans and correspondence from foster care network or residential placements.

Educational / Psychological Reports: Educational evaluations and any reports from the therapist.

Correspondence: Letters written to request services, records, information, etc.

Juvenile Court Appointment / Releases of Information (ROI): The Juvenile Court Appointment gives you authorization to obtain records regarding the children you are assigned. You should keep several copies at all times. This is also a good place to keep blank ROI or ones already signed by the parents for their information.

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ProKids Court Reports: Copies of your previous court reports.

Delinquency Court Records: Any reports, court orders or decisions regarding delinquency charges, conditions of probation, etc.

School Records: Keep only the most recent ones in your file.

Contact Information: Keep a listing of all important phone numbers, email addresses and physical addresses of the children, foster parents, therapists, school officials, biological parents and anyone else or agency of importance. To lighten the load, store the child's history, older records, and older reports in expandable files in a secure and confidential place in your home.

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Unit 2: Writing Court Reports & Making Effective Recommendations

A CASA volunteer court report is the culmination of your work as a CASA volunteer. It is the vehicle through which you present the information you have gathered about a child's situation and your recommendations about what services will meet the child's needs. The court relies on the information in the CASA volunteer court reports as they make their decisions. The court report becomes part of the official court record.

Child-focused and fact-based written reports are submitted to the court for all hearings except emergency custody hearings, adjudicatory proceedings, or contested hearings. If you have questions regarding whether a report is due for your next hearing ask your supervisor. CASA volunteer court reports are shared with all parties (HCJFS, and their attorneys, parents and their attorneys) and other individuals who are authorized by law to receive them. Be mindful of all the individuals who will read your report when you are writing it. Fact-based reports are usually best received by all parties.

The Structure of a CASA Court Report

We will review how a court report is structured, how to determine which court report structure is appropriate, and how to determine what recommendations you might make.

Court Report Structures

(Explanations of How To Use Templates)

Court Report Templates

(Actual Form To Use For Court Report)

Are located at www.prokids.org

CASA Login: casa

Password: voice

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Tips & Timing for Court Reports

When should I start my court report? At least 2 months prior to actual court date:

- Review Rule 48 to be sure you are compliant
- Need to review previous court orders, court reports, etc.
- Determine what information needs to be gathered; i.e. who to talk to, what reports to request from therapists, schools, psychologists, etc.

What do I do next? At about 6 weeks prior to actual court date:

- Look over all information gathered
- Determine what is missing
- Re-interview or re-request information

I have information and have talked to people, what's next? Between 4 and 6 weeks:

- Gather all information and data
- Organize into report format
- Determine any gaps -- check with CASA Manager to be sure gaps are covered
- Re-request necessary information
- Write court report

Court is fast approaching, what should I do next? At 2 weeks prior to actual court date:

- Send court report to your CASA Manager
- Make any adjustments necessary based on feedback from CASA Manager

My final court report is ready, now what? At 10 days prior to actual court date:

- Make sure court report is submitted to CASA Manager so that it can be filed 10 days prior to the actual court date
- Relax!

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ProKids' Rule 48 Checklist

(Please review regularly and when preparing court reports)

With my CASA Manager, I have made reasonable efforts to become informed about the facts of the case and to contact all parties. In order to provide the court with relevant information and an informed recommendation as to the child's best interest, my CASA Manager and I have done the following at a minimum, unless impracticable or inadvisable because of the age of the child or the specific circumstances of a particular case:

- Met with and interviewed the child and observed the child with each parent, foster parent, guardian or physical custodian and conducted at least one interview with the child where none of these individuals is present;
- Visited the child at his or her residence in accordance with any standards established by the court in which the guardian ad litem is appointed;
- Ascertained the wishes of the child;
- Met with and interviewed the parties, foster parents and other significant individuals who may have relevant knowledge regarding the issues of the case;
- Reviewed pleadings and other relevant court documents in the case in which the guardian ad litem is appointed;
- Reviewed criminal, civil, educational and administrative records pertaining to the child and, if appropriate, to the child's family or to other parties in the case;
- Interviewed school personnel, medical and mental health providers, child protective services workers and relevant court personnel and obtained copies of relevant records;
- Recommended that the court order psychological evaluations, mental health and/or substance abuse assessments, or other evaluations or tests of the parties as the guardian ad litem deems necessary or helpful to the court; and
- Performed any other investigation necessary to make an informed recommendation regarding the best interest of the child.

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im•prac•ti•ca•ble from dictionary.com

–adjective

1. not practicable; incapable of being put into practice with the available means: an impracticable plan.
2. unsuitable for practical use or purposes, as a device or material.
3. (of ground, places, etc.) impassable.
4. (of persons) hard to deal with because of stubbornness, stupidity, etc.

im•prac•ti•ca•ble from Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary

Function: adjective

- 1 : IMPASSABLE <an impracticable road>
- 2 : not practicable : incapable of being performed or accomplished by the means employed or at command <an impracticable proposal>

in•ad•vis•a•ble from dictionary.com

–adjective

not advisable; inexpedient; unwise.

in•ad•vis•a•ble from Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary

Function: adjective

: not advisable : not wise or prudent <inadvisable haste>

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Court Report: Step-by-Step

Choose the right format: use the format that is right for the oldest child on your case:

- **General Format** If your child is 5 or under
- **School Aged Format** If your child is between 6 and 14
- **Launch Format** If your child is 14 or over

History Section: Items that must be included:

- Child's name, date of birth, age should be verified in case documents (court entries, orders)
- Child's legal status from case documents (court entries, orders). {Temporary Custody, Planned Permanent Living Arrangement, Permanent Custody, Protective Orders, Legal Custody}
- How long the case has been open
- Brief summary of the key reasons the child came into the system
- Where child is currently living

Recommendations Section: Items that must be addressed:

- Placement: 1 or 2 lines on what placement is recommended
- Education: 1 or 2 lines on what needs to be done educationally for the child
- Therapy/Medical: 1 or 2 lines on medical needs or therapeutic needs to be addressed
- Parents' Services: 1 or 2 lines on what needs to be completed
- Visitation: 1 or 2 lines on what is appropriate visitation at this point
- (14 +) Employment/Job Skills: 1 or 2 lines on what child should be doing
- (14 +) Independent Living: 1 or 2 lines on what child needs to do
- (14 +) Supportive Adult: 1 or 2 lines on adult identified as ongoing support

Bases Section: Support of Recommendations

- Placement: Support why you are recommending a certain placement. Use observations, factual information.
- Education: Support why you are recommending testing, different school, whatever. Use information gathered from teachers, caretakers, therapists, observations, etc. For school aged, include days missed in school year, and, if appropriate, credits earned toward graduation.

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- Therapy/Medical: Support why you are recommending therapy or medical intervention or why therapy should continue, stop, etc. Use information from observations, therapists, schools, caretakers, etc.
- Parents' Services: Support why you are recommending certain services. Use information and observations gathered from various sources, therapists, service providers, etc.
- Visitation: Support why you are recommending status quo, changes, etc. Use information gathered from observations, from other sources, therapists, service providers, etc.
- (14 +) Employment/Job Skills: Support any recommendations with how the child is doing; i.e. working? Obtaining training? Etc.
- (14 +) Independent Living: Support any recommendations with how the child is doing in independent living. Use information from observations, other services providers, etc.
- (14 +) Supportive Adult: Indicate whether a supportive adult is identified and how it is going.

Contacts Section: List all the contacts you have made:

- Child: List all dates of face-to-face and other contacts you have had with child.
- List names and titles of all other contacts you have made (no dates necessary). These would include school personnel, therapists, social workers, services providers, etc.
- Special Note: Do not put names of foster parents in contacts: just put "foster parents"

Reports, School Information, etc. that you want Magistrate to have:

- Do not submit reports with court report
- Bring reports and copies of those to court to be submitted as evidence.

General Information:

- Put in bold and underline: Child's name, biological parents' names, relatives' names. We do this to insure that this information will be redacted by court if anyone requests this report.
- Make sure that foster parents' names are not included anywhere in report.

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Court Report Structures & Templates

1. General (0-5)

* Structure 14-12

* Template 14-15

2. School Age (through Age 14)

* Structure 14-17

* Template 14-20

3. Launch (Age 14 Plus)

* Structure 14-22

* Template 14-25

(General 0—5 Structure)

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
JUVENILE DIVISION
HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO

IN RE: **CASE NAME IN BOLD
and UNDERLINED**

CASE NO: *(from court order or complaint)*

**REVIEW REPORT OF GUARDIAN AD LITEM
AND COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE**

MAGISTRATE: *(from court order)*

DATE: *(use court date and date written
mm/dd/yyyy)*

HISTORY: (A brief history of the case. Should include child's name and date of birth which should be **IN BOLD AND UNDERLINED**. Should also include legal status (Temporary Custody (TC), Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA), Permanent Custody (PC)). Also include the number of months the children have been in the custody of HCJFS as well as the permanency plan. **PARENTS AND RELATIVES NAMES SHOULD BE IN BOLD AND UNDERLINED.** *KEEP HISTORY SHORT.*)

RECOMMENDATIONS: (Should be numbered and listed as below. Add 5 and so on if additional matters need attention. **PARENTS, RELATIVES AND CHILDREN'S NAMES SHOULD BE IN BOLD AND UNDERLINED.** Foster parents' names or identifying information are not to be used. *Keep recommendations in short sentences.*)

1. Placement:

2. Education:

(General 0—5 Structure)

3. Therapy/Medical:
4. Parents Services:
5. Visitation:

BASES: (Paragraphs should be numbered and follow along with recommendations. Each numbered basis should support reasoning for each recommendation. Under Placement include the progress toward a permanency plan. Under therapy, include medication, amount taken, and diagnosis or reason. Keep it factual. **PARENTS, RELATIVES AND CHILDREN'S NAMES SHOULD BE IN BOLD AND UNDERLINED.** Do not include foster parents' names or any identifying information.)

1. Placement:
2. Education:
3. Therapy/Medical:
4. Parents Services:
5. Visitation:

CONTACTS: Information was obtained from (A full and complete list of all contacts made, including experts consulted and other individuals providing information about the case. List should include name and position on the case. A detailed list of the specific dates of contact with the child should also be included. **PARENTS, RELATIVES AND CHILDREN'S NAMES SHOULD BE IN BOLD AND UNDERLINED.** FOSTER PARENTS' NAMES AND IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ARE NOT TO BE USED. PLEASE DO NOT USE ANY ADDRESSES.)

REPRESENTATION: The Guardian ad Litem (GAL) and CASA performed duties as required by O.R.C. Section 2151.281 and Rule 48 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio. I/ We hereby represent that I/we have made reasonable efforts to become informed of the facts of the case and to contact parties, unless impracticable or inadvisable. These reasonable efforts include visiting and meeting regularly with the child, observing the child with each parent, foster parent, guardian, or physical custodian and conducting at least one interview with the child where none of these individuals is present and ascertaining the wishes of the child. These reasonable efforts also include, but are not limited to, a review of relevant records and documents, which may include educational, therapeutic, diagnostic, forensic, mental health, medical, criminal, delinquency, social work, court and other records and materials. I/we have also performed necessary activities, including but not limited to attending court hearings and meetings pertinent to the case, and have performed additional activities in order to investigate, monitor the case, and make recommendations to the Court and advocate on behalf of the child's/children's best interest.

(General 0—5 Structure)

Respectfully Submitted,

(CASA Volunteer Name)
ProKids CASA Volunteer

(CASA Manager Name)
ProKids GAL

(Because of Superintendence Rule 44 dealing with confidentiality and access to Juvenile Court Records, ProKids is required to make changes to court reports. Please note that important items are in BOLD and UNDERLINED. In addition, the following sentence should be at the bottom of the last page of the Court Report.)

The bold and underlined portions of this document are “personal identifiers” as that term is used in Sup. R. 44 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio and are subject to redaction in the event of a request for production of court records by a non-party.

ATTACHMENTS: (Attachments such as therapists’ reports, school records, etc. must be handled carefully and should not be attached to the report. The CASA Manager and the Attorney will determine how to submit the attachments appropriately.)

(General 0 -- 5 Template)

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
JUVENILE DIVISION
HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO

IN RE:

CASE NO:

REVIEW REPORT OF GUARDIAN AD
LITEM AND COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE

MAGISTRATE:

DATE:

HISTORY:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Placement:
2. Education:
3. Therapy/Medical:
4. Parents Services:
5. Visitation:

BASES:

1. Placement:

(General 0 -- 5 Template)

- 2. Education:
- 3. Therapy/Medical:
- 4. Parents Services:
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CONTACTS:

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Respectfully Submitted,

ProKids CASA Volunteer

ProKids GAL

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(School Aged through Age 14 Structure)

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1. Placement:

2. Education:

(School Aged through Age 14 Structure)

3. Therapy/Medical:
4. Parents Services:
5. Visitation:

BASES: (Paragraphs should be numbered and follow along with recommendations. Each numbered basis should support reasoning for each recommendation. Under Placement include the progress toward a permanency plan. Under therapy, include medication, amount taken, and diagnosis or reason. Keep it factual. **PARENTS, RELATIVES AND CHILDREN'S NAMES SHOULD BE IN BOLD AND UNDERLINED.** Do not include foster parents' names or any identifying information.)

1. Placement:
2. Education:

Child has missed _____ days in school year 20XX/20XX.
(Less than 25 days missed insures that the goal of 70% of ProKids children attending 90% of the time is met.)

3. Therapy/Medical:
4. Parents Services:
5. Visitation:

CONTACTS: Information was obtained from (A full and complete list of all contacts made, including experts consulted and other individuals providing information about the case. List should include name and position on the case. A detailed list of the specific dates of contact with the child should also be included. **PARENTS, RELATIVES AND CHILDREN'S NAMES SHOULD BE IN BOLD AND UNDERLINED.** **FOSTER PARENTS' NAMES AND IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ARE NOT TO BE USED.** **PLEASE DO NOT USE ANY ADDRESSES.**)

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Respectfully Submitted,

(CASA Volunteer Name)
ProKids CASA Volunteer

(CASA Manager Name)
ProKids GAL

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(School Aged through 14 Template)

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JUVENILE DIVISION
HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO

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LITEM AND COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE

MAGISTRATE:

DATE:

HISTORY:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Placement:
2. Education:
3. Therapy/Medical:
4. Parents Services:
5. Visitation:

BASES:

(School Aged through 14 Template)

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- 2. Education:
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ProKids GAL

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(Launch 14+ Structure)

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1. Placement/Housing:

2. Education:

(Launch 14+ Structure)

3. Employment/Job Skill Training:
4. Therapy/Medical:
5. Independent Living Skills:
6. Parent or supportive adult information/visitation:

BASES: (Paragraphs should be numbered and follow along with recommendations. Each numbered basis should support reasoning for each recommendation. Under Placement include the progress toward a permanency plan. Under therapy, include medication, amount taken, and diagnosis or reason. Keep it factual. **PARENTS, RELATIVES AND CHILDREN'S NAMES SHOULD BE IN BOLD AND UNDERLINED.** Do not include foster parents' names or any identifying information.)

1. Placement/Housing:
2. Education:

Youth has missed _____ days in school year 20XX/20XX.

(Less than 25 days missed insures that the goal of 70% of ProKids children attending 90% of the time is met.)

Youth has _____ high school credits needed toward graduation.

3. Employment/Job Skill Training:
4. Therapy/Medical:
5. Independent Living Skills:
6. Parent or supportive adult information/visitation:

YOUTH PLAN/GOALS:

CONTACTS: Information was obtained from (A full and complete list of all contacts made, including experts consulted and other individuals providing information about the case. List should include name and position on the case. A detailed list of the specific dates of contact with the child should also be included. **PARENTS, RELATIVES AND CHILDREN'S NAMES SHOULD BE IN BOLD AND UNDERLINED.** **FOSTER PARENTS' NAMES AND IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ARE NOT TO BE USED.** **PLEASE DO NOT USE ANY ADDRESSES.**)

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(CASA Volunteer Name)
ProKids CASA Volunteer

(CASA Manager Name)
ProKids GAL

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(Launch 14+ Template)
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
JUVENILE DIVISION
HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO

IN RE:

CASE NO:

**REVIEW REPORT OF GUARDIAN AD
LITEM AND COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE**

MAGISTRATE:

DATE:

HISTORY:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Placement/Housing:
2. Education:
3. Employment/Job Skill Training:
4. Therapy/Medical:
5. Independent Living Skills:
6. Parent or Supportive Adult Information/Visitation:

BASES:

(Launch 14+ Template)

1. Placement/Housing:
2. Education:
Youth has _____ credits out of _____ needed for graduation.
Youth has missed _____ days in school year 20XX/20XX.
3. Employment/Job Skill Training:
4. Therapy/Medical:
5. Independent Living Skills:
6. Parent or Supportive Adult Information/Visitation:

YOUTH PLAN/GOALS:

CONTACTS:

REPRESENTATION: The Guardian ad Litem (GAL) and CASA performed duties as required by O.R.C. Section 2151.281 and Rule 48 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio. I/We hereby represent that I/we have made reasonable efforts to become informed of the facts of the case and to contact parties, unless impracticable or inadvisable. These reasonable efforts include visiting and meeting regularly with the child, observing the child with each parent, foster parent, guardian, or physical custodian and conducting at least one interview with the child where none of these individuals is present and ascertaining the wishes of the child. These reasonable efforts also include, but are not limited to, a review of relevant records and documents, which may include educational, therapeutic, diagnostic, forensic, mental health, medical, criminal, delinquency, social work, court and other records and materials. I/we have also performed necessary activities, including but not limited to attending court hearings and meetings pertinent to the case, and have performed additional activities in order to investigate, monitor the case, and make recommendations to the Court and advocate on behalf of the child's/children's best interest.

Respectfully Submitted,

ProKids CASA Volunteer

ProKids GAL

(Launch 14+ Template)

The bold and underlined portions of this document are “personal identifiers” as that term is used in Sup. R. 44 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio and are subject to redaction in the event of a request for production of court records by a non-party.

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RESOURCE MATERIALS

- . Education Worksheet to Prepare for Court Report 14-30
- . Tactics for CASA Volunteers to Encourage Attendance 14-31
- . Sample Court Report 14-33

Education Worksheet to Prepare for Court Report

Date _____ CASA Volunteer _____

Child's Name _____ DOB _____ Child's Age _____

1. Enrollment:

Preschool (name) _____ Is this a Headstart Program _____

Grade _____ School Attending _____ District _____

Specialized School/Grade (e.g. charter, home schooling, P.H.) _____

Residential Placement/Grade _____

On track to graduate with diploma? _____ Working on GED _____

High School credits earned _____

Other _____

2. Attendance:

Good/Not An Issue _____ Poor _____

Number of days missed this year _____ Reason _____

Has child been suspended from school this year? _____ Expelled? _____

Has he/she changed schools this year? _____ If so, how many times? _____

Number of school days missed due to changing schools _____

3. School Performance:

Good/Passing _____ Doing Poorly in School/Risk for Failing _____

Reading Level _____ Math Level _____ Based On _____

Is the child receiving Special Education services? _____

If yes, is the IEP current? _____

Are appropriate services being delivered? _____

What is the child's handicap? _____

4. Is the Child Receiving Other Services: (e.g. 504 accommodations, tutoring, etc.) If so, list.

5. If 16 or older, describe what is in the Transition/Independent Living Plan: (This may also be in the IEP if the student receives Special Education services.)

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Tactics for CASA Volunteers to Encourage Attendance

Set clear expectations.

Have specific, intentional, regular conversations with children, parents, foster parents, teachers, social workers, and foster care network workers about the importance of regular attendance. Let them know that you will be keeping track of attendance.

Facilitate positive student-teacher/school connections.

Children need someone who cares about them and their educational success. Make sure the child feels welcome at school. Who is the person who cares and will contact you when there are problems or to share good news?

Encourage connection between the child's caregiver and school.

Offer to facilitate initial contact and on-going meetings about attendance and school progress.

Research school-based services, supports and activities.

Advocate for children's involvement in supportive services at school and after-school activities they will enjoy.

Minimize school day disruptions.

Request that visits and appointments occur outside of school hours. If that is not possible, advocate for them to occur during the least critical class. As an alternative, consider school-based services.

Monitor.

Check on attendance often and keep track. Contact the school for official records, but also ask caregivers and teachers to let you know when school is missed. Update your CASA Manager and other interested parties. Include attendance in your court reports.

Address missed school days immediately.

Contact caregiver and child about absences right away. Connect with them to understand the reason for the absence and what can be done to make up missed work. Contact the school to make sure children are allowed and encouraged to complete missed assignments and tests.

Keep an eye out for repeated absences.

Be concerned when a child misses 5 days in the course of a year and call the child's team to action if it approaches 10 days.

Investigate to understand the causes of absences.

Work with children, parents, foster parents, teachers, social workers, foster care network workers and therapists to understand the child's barriers to consistent school attendance. Seek support from your CASA Manager in developing an action plan to address missed school.

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Offer help with scheduling and time management.

To help children and their caregivers from feeling overwhelmed with challenges, offer assistance in creating a plan to get back on track and make up assignments.

Support the child through placement changes.

If the child has an unavoidable move, advocate for the child to remain in the current school and for transportation to be arranged. If that is not possible, make sure new foster parents, foster care network workers and the new school understand the child needs to be enrolled right away. (Provide them with a copy of the court's entry.) Once enrolled, help facilitate transfer of student records to the new school.

Recognize good attendance and school progress.

Make sure the child and everyone around him/her knows what has been achieved.

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COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
JUVENILE DIVISION
HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO

IN RE: David Smith
Tabitha Smith
Kaylee Jones

CASE NO: F/17/0000 X

REVIEW REPORT OF
GUARDIAN AD LITEM
AND COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE

MAGISTRATE: COLEMAN

DATE: February 28, 2017
Written: February 8, 2017

HISTORY: All three of the above named children were adjudicated neglected and dependent on December 20, 2016, and temporary custody has been granted to Hamilton County Job and Family Services (hereafter referred to as HCJFS).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Placement/Housing:

David is currently placed in a residential treatment center, and should remain there.
Tabitha is placed in a foster home, but should be placed with a relative.
Kaylee has maintained her placement in the home of a relative since removal, and should continue in her placement there.

2. Education:

David should be connected with a tutor, and begin life skills classes.
Tabitha should begin the ETR/IEP process to provide educational intervention.
Kaylee should be placed in preschool with an evaluation for possible language deficiencies, and should also be evaluated by Help Me Grow.

3. Employment/Job Skill Training:

David should be enrolled in life skills classes.
Tabitha and Kaylee: N/A

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4. Therapy/Medical:

David should continue to participate in individual and group therapy at the residential center, and be evaluated to determine if there is a need for medication.

Tabitha should be assessed for therapy needs and any physical or medical needs.

Kaylee should have a hearing evaluation, be assessed for therapy and medical needs.

5. Independent Living Skills:

David should participate in an independent living skills program.

Tabitha and Kaylee: N/A.

6. Parent or Supportive Adult Information/Visitation:

Visits between all children and parents should be supervised at JFS or the FNC, with possible separate visits for mother and father. Siblings should visit with each other at the residential center if appropriate, then at the relative's home following David's release from the program.

7. Parents Services:

Both mother and father should complete a DAF, and follow all recommendations. An assessment by a DV advocate should be completed, and all recommendations should be followed, as well as referrals for substance abuse treatment.

BASES:

1. Placement/Housing:

David should remain in his current setting due to his behavioral issues. A plan for his eventual completion of the program should also be put in place.

Tabitha should be placed with the relative caring for Kaylee. The sisters thrive together and would benefit from living in the same placement.

Kaylee is doing well in her current placement, but would benefit from being placed with her older sister.

2. Education:

David has 12 credits out of 30 needed for graduation, and has missed 5 days in school year 2016/2017. Now that David is in a safe setting, he should be connected with a tutor so he can re-focus on academics.

Tabitha is behind in classes and appears to have either cognitive delays or learning disabilities. Whether these are the result of actual delays or of an inability to cope with the abuse remains to be seen. Therapy may remove the need for tutoring/ETR/IEP.

Kaylee should be placed in preschool and be evaluated for language delays as she does not respond often to questions, only uses few words, and is difficult to understand.

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3. Employment/Job Skill Training:

Since **David's** behaviors exclude him from the possibility of foster care, he must begin to prepare for life on his own after graduation. It will be important for him to have a supportive community of adult mentors and to know how to function independently.

Tabitha and Kaylee: N/A

4. Therapy/Medical:

David is beginning to engage in trauma based therapy, and his initial assessments diagnose him with PTSD. An assessment is needed to determine the cause of his sleep difficulties.

Tabitha often complains of stomach aches and does not eat much. She is physically small and needs to be evaluated medically and therapeutically.

Kaylee does not eat very much, is small in size, and also has sleep difficulties. She needs to be assessed medically and therapeutically.

5. Independent Living Skills:

David should take any independent living classes that are available to him in preparation for his release from the program, and anticipating a move to independent living after sufficient progress and stability in a group home.

Tabitha and Kaylee: N/A

6. Parent or Supportive Adult Information/Visitation:

David will continue to build a relationship with the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) in anticipation of receiving a HEMI mentor upon his release from the program and beginning to build a community of supportive adults around him. He sisters should visit him at the residential center, and sibling visits should move to the relative home upon his release from the program.

David, Tabitha, and Kaylee should have supervised visits with their mother separate from supervised visits with their father at HCJFS or the Family Nurturing Center (FNC).

Tabitha and **Kaylee** should visit with **David** at the residential facility until he completes the program and moves to a group home where he is allowed to leave to visit with his sisters at the relative home.

7. Parents Services:

Mother and Father need to engage in services, beginning with completing a DAF and cooperating with the DV advocate for an assessment. We would ask mother and father to comply with any recommendations from those two assessments.

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YOUTH PLAN/GOALS:

In the most recent visits with **David**, the CASA and Guardian ad Litem (GAL) have found that he would like to enter the military upon high school graduation. The CASA and GAL have worked with **David** to continue finding out why he would like to join the military, and also to create an exercise routine that would begin preparing him physically for taking on this goal. More directly, **David** would like to be released from the residential facility and is working on the goals that have been set at that location (please see attached letter regarding the goals that have been set for him there).

CONTACTS: Face to face with **David** on 12/15/2016, 1/18/2017, and 2/3/2017; face to face with **Tabitha** on 12/12/2016, 1/9/2017, and 2/7/2016; face to face with **Kaylee** on 12/5/2016, 12/21/2016, 1/11/2017, 1/23/2017, and 2/6/2017; Karen Krieger (residential staff member); Tracy Cook (residential in-house therapist); Paul Hunt (residential school staff member); foster mom and dad of **Tabitha**; maternal grandmother (and current placement for **Kaylee**); Candy Stemple (**Tabitha's** teacher); Morgan Zak (**Tabitha's** school social worker/counselor); Allison Hudson (HCJFS intake worker); Raynal Moore (HCJFS ongoing worker); Carol Igoe (Primary Care Physician for all three children prior to removal); Amanda Scheider (Cincinnati Police Officer); Stephanie Kuzma (**David's** teacher prior to removal); Peggy Sweeney (**Tabitha's** teacher prior to removal); Sheri Callaghan (abuse attorney for the above named children).

REPRESENTATION: The Guardian ad Litem (GAL) and CASA performed duties as required by O.R.C. Section 2151.281 and Rule 48 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio. I/We hereby represent that I/we have made reasonable efforts to become informed of the facts of the case and to contact parties, unless impracticable or inadvisable. These reasonable efforts include visiting and meeting regularly with the child, observing the child with each parent, foster parent, guardian, or physical custodian and conducting at least one interview with the child where none of these individuals is present and ascertaining the wishes of the child. These reasonable efforts also include, but are not limited to, a review of relevant records and documents, which may include educational, therapeutic, diagnostic, forensic, mental health, medical, criminal, delinquency, social work, court and other records and materials. I/we have also performed necessary activities, including but not limited to attending court hearings and meetings pertinent to the case, and have performed additional activities in order to investigate, monitor the case, and make recommendations to the Court and advocate on behalf of the child's/children's best interest.

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Respectfully Submitted,

ProKids CASA

ProKids GAL

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