

REVIEW HEARING

TIMEFRAME

The initial review hearing is held within 75 days of removal. A second review is held approximately 4 months after the initial review. Subsequent reviews are held as necessary at the discretion of the court. CASA should advocate for reviews no more than 90 days apart to prevent unnecessary delays in permanency.

PURPOSE

To move the case toward permanency by evaluating the actions of DFCS and the parents, ensuring the placement is appropriate, and confirming that all court-ordered services are in place and having their intended effect.

- ▶ Refer to the **At Every Hearing** guide for findings, practices, and considerations that apply across all hearings.

COURT FINDINGS

The findings required at this hearing are largely covered by the **At Every Hearing** guide. In addition, at this hearing the court shall:

- Approve the completion of the relative search
- Schedule the next review hearing

If after the 75-day review the court finds a lack of substantial progress toward the case plan, it must order DFCS to develop a non-reunification or concurrent case plan within 14 days. The court then has 45 days to amend or adopt the plan. If the lack of progress is because DFCS has not made necessary referrals or provided ordered services, this must be brought to the court's attention.



If a parent's lack of progress is because DFCS has not made necessary referrals or provided ordered services, this must be brought to the court's attention.

CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

Some cases are reviewed periodically by a Judicial Citizen Review Panel rather than directly by the court. A panel may only hear periodic reviews — it may not hear the initial review or permanency hearings.

After a panel review, the panel must submit its report and recommendations to the court and to the parents within 5 days. The panel may recommend changes to the permanency plan, including TPR. If recommending TPR, the panel must notify DFCS and the child's attorney. DFCS must provide the foster or pre-adoptive placement with any portions of the report addressing the permanency plan and services recommended for the child.

Any party may request a court hearing on the panel report within 5 days of receiving it. If no request is made, the court must enter an order incorporating the recommendations. If a request for a hearing is made, the court must hear evidence and enter such portions of the panel recommendation as it finds essential. If the panel finds a lack of substantial progress by a parent, the court must convene a hearing within 30 days to consider whether non-reunification is appropriate.



PRACTICE POINTS

- Attend panel reviews and submit a written report in advance. If the CASA volunteer cannot attend, a report should still be submitted so CASA's recommendations are on the record.
- Review panel recommendations carefully, and request a court hearing within 5 days if in disagreement with any of the recommendations.

NOTICE OF PLACEMENT MOVES

Placement changes may arise at or between review hearings. DFCS must provide at least 5 days written notice of a proposed move to the court, the child if age 14 or older, the parents, the current placement, the child's attorney, the GAL/CASA, and all attorneys of record. In an emergency, notice must be provided within 24 hours of the change. Any of these parties may request a hearing on the proposed change within 5 days of receiving notice.

- ▶ See the **Placement Stability** guide for full detail on the notice process, hearing requirements, and CASA's advocacy role.



PRACTICE POINTS

- Contact the child before and after any placement change, whether planned or an emergency.
- If a proposed change is not in the child's best interests, request a hearing immediately. The five-day window closes quickly.

PREPARING FOR THE HEARING

Preparing for a review hearing means arriving with current information from every source and a clear analysis of what is and is not working in the case.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Is the visitation schedule sufficient to support the permanency plan and maintain the parent-child bond?
- Is the permanency goal still realistic given the current circumstances?
- Have timely referrals been made? Are the services and supports needed for reunification in place?
- Does the child want to attend court? Does the caregiver know about the hearing and plan to attend?
- Is there evidence CASA wants presented, and which attorney is best positioned to present it?



PRACTICE POINTS

- Review current court orders and the case plan. Identify barriers, unmet needs, and what appears to be inhibiting progress. Share the parent's strengths and progress.
- Connect with DFCS, the child, caregivers, parents, attorneys, and providers before the hearing. Keep parties updated about important changes, and share recommendations proactively.
- Confirm the caregiver has been notified of the hearing and plans to attend.
- Check with the child about whether they want to attend court and help arrange transportation or a virtual link.
- Submit a court report that addresses the parties' progress on the case plan, identifies and recommends any additional assessments or services needed, confirms that family time supports the permanency plan, and uses relevant best interest factors to support all recommendations.



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CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

GEORGIA