**Dependency Process**

**Child Abuse Hotline:** When Child Protective Services (CPS) receives a call, they have up to 30 days to investigate the allegations. If the child is removed from the home, CPS files a petition and the Detention hearing must take place within 72 hours of removal.

**Detention hearing:** This is the first hearing held on a case. The parents are notified about the proceedings and given a copy of the petition. Attorneys are assigned. The Court decides whether the child should remain with a parent or be placed outside of the home. The Court will also make orders about whether or not the parents can visit with the child.

**Jurisdiction Hearing**: This hearing is held to determine if the petition is true and if so, the Court will take jurisdiction over the minor(s). The petition could be dismissed at this hearing.

J/D or

Juris/

Dispo

**Disposition Hearing**: This hearing is held after the Court has taken jurisdiction and the Court will need to determine if reunification services will be offered or not. The DPSS social services practitioner will recommend a case plan and reunification services for the family if appropriate.

***Oftentimes the Jurisdiction and Disposition hearings will be heard one after the other and the hearing will be listed as a combined Jurisdiction/Disposition hearing. CASAs may only make recommendations on dispositional issues. If the Disposition hearing is set far enough out, the CASA may be asked to write a report for the Disposition hearing.***

**From JD hearing to 6, 12, 18 month review hearing, the CASA will:**

* receive a copy of the parents’ case plan
* speak with bio parents regarding their compliance on their case plans
* Observe visits between bio parents and minor(s)
* Advocate for services related to educational issues, concurrent planning, developmental, therapeutic and medical needs.
* Visit the minor at least once a month

**6 and 12 Month Review hearings:** These hearings are set to determine if the parents are making substantial progress on their case plans. If the parents are making progress, they will be given an additional 6 months of reunification services. The CASA will write a report for these hearings.

**-**If a child in the sibling group is under 3 years old, services can be terminated at the 6 MRH, otherwise, most likely will be extended to at least the 12 MRH.

**18 Month Review Hearing:** The children must be placed with the parent by this time or you must recommend terminating services to the parents. If you think the child should return home, you can recommend that the case remain open for continued services (family maintenance services). If you recommend that services be terminated and the child should not return home, then you will need to recommend that a 366.26 hearing be set to determine a permanent plan. The CASA will write a report for this hearing.

**366.26 Hearing:** This hearing occurs only if reunification was unsuccessful and an alternate permanent plan must be implemented. The permanent plan can be adoption, guardianship, or long-term foster care. The 366.26 is the only hearing where parental rights can be terminated, and parental rights must be terminated if adoption is chosen as the permanent plan. The CASA will write a report for this hearing.

**Post Permanency Hearing:** If the parents fail to reunify and another permanent plan is identified (adoption, guardianship, or long-term foster care), the minor will have a Post Permanency Planning Review hearing (PPPR) every six months until their permanent plan is finalized (adoption/guardianship) or until they age out of the system (long-term foster care). The CASA will write a report for these hearings.

**If the child returns home:**

If reunification occurs, ideally family maintenance services will be offered and the CASA will stay involved and write CASA reports for any subsequent family maintenance review hearing.

**When does a CASA come off of the case?**

* If the petition is dismissed at the Jurisdiction hearing OR
* When Jurisdiction is terminated when one of the following occurs:
* Child successfully reunifies with parents and the Court terminates Jurisdiction
* Guardianship or Adoption is finalized
* Emancipation (child turns 18 and no longer wants a CASA)