

Court Report Tips and Tricks

Preparing for your Report:

1. Make sure you can open and use the template. If not, arrange how to get info to your AS.
2. Take thorough notes: Nothing will help you more than your own documentation.
3. Get **first & last name** and **job title** of everybody you talk to.
4. **Dates:** Write down any date that a change occurs, as well as the date you had the conversation with the source.
5. Two months prior to report, get out the template and look through all questions.
 - a. Call Social Worker/Professionals with any questions you have no answer to.
6. Turn in report **on time**, no matter what!
 - a. Report is due 3 weeks prior to hearing, but the Court requires it 1 week prior to the hearing. This gives only 2 weeks for as many as 6 separate reads/edits.
7. Remember who is reading your report: judge, attorneys, social workers, and parents.
 - a. AS may change your language to be more professional where needed.

The Report

Below is the basic layout of the court report by subject area:

History	Current	Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason for Removal • Case Documentation • Prior Referrals/History • Full Placement History 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Intro • CASA visits • Placement • Current relative visits • Health • School • Parent visits • SW Rec 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child summary • Articulate areas of need

1. When in doubt, include more information, not less.
2. Use Complete Sentences: Include the question in the answer, no bullets or shorthand
3. Attribute Everything: According to...
 - a. If referencing more than one source in any section, please be careful to clarify where the information came from, even if it may seem repetitive.
4. Do not leave question blank: Write N/A if it does not apply (ex: DSEP for a child 6 and older)
5. **Do NOT repeat wording** from previous reports, even if there has been no change in the information.
 - a. Example:
 - i. First report: Megan lives in a large, clean home with her foster parents, their 5-year-old son and their two dogs.
 - ii. Second report: Megan lives with her foster parents in an inviting and tidy house, along with the caregivers' 6-year-old son and their two dogs.

Challenging Subjects

1. SB 89: Sexual Health Curriculum
 - a. CASAs only responsibility is to ask the social worker *if* the child has received the education and is not responsible for giving that information to the youth. If SW is unsure, just report that.
2. Visits
 - a. If your case is in reunification, there is a separate section for visits with each parent, so do not include in relative visits.
3. Therapy
 - a. Include start/end dates, frequency and the agency/program that the therapy is through, as well as goals and progress/feedback.

Small Improvements

1. Write out all dates
 - a. Dates: August 27, 2019
2. If you do not have the date, Month and Year are better than nothing
 - b. August 2019
4. Do not use contractions
 - a. Example: Julie can't believe it's been two years vs. Julie cannot believe it has been two years.
5. Do not use "*the* mother" or "*the* father"
 - a. Extra credit: use Ms. Or Mr. and the last name when referring to either parent, rather than mom or dad
6. Remember that the template is copy and pasted into a narrative form, so the hope is that answers should transfer smoothly.