

# CHILD PROTECTION COURT HEARINGS TIMELINE

## Preliminary Hearing

**Timing:** Within 24 hours of a child protection petition being submitted to the court alleging removal is necessary.

**Purpose:** The court determines if there is enough evidence for the case to go forward, and whether the child should be in foster care.

## Initial Dispositional Hearing

**Timing:** Within 1 month of the adjudication hearing. Sometimes this hearing occurs on the same day as the Adjudication Hearing.

**Purpose:** The court will consider whether to adopt the case service plan. If the court adopts the plan, the court will order the parent and agency to comply with the plan.

## Permanency Planning Hearing

**Timing:** Within 1 year after the original petition has been filed in the case and once a year thereafter, unless the court holds the hearing sooner.

**Purpose:** This hearing is to determine an appropriate permanent home for the child. The court will review the parent's progress in completing the case service plan.

## Post-Termination of Parental Rights Review Hearing

**Timing:** Within 91 days after the termination of parental rights, and every 3 months thereafter.

**Purpose:** The court will review the appropriateness of the child's permanency goal, the child's placement, and the efforts being made to place the child for adoption or in other permanent placement in a timely manner.

## Adjudication Hearing (Trial or Plea)

**Timing:** Within 2 months of the preliminary hearing if the child is removed from home.

**Purpose:** The judge or jury will listen to the evidence and decide whether the child has been abused or neglected.

## Dispositional Review Hearing

**Timing:** Within 6 months of removal and every 3 months thereafter.

**Purpose:** The court will review the child's status in foster care and the case service plan. The court will make sure the parent(s) and the caseworker are doing what is required in the plan, and may modify the plan. The court will assess whether the parent has made progress to eliminate the barriers to the child safely returning home.

## Termination of Parental Rights

**Timing:** May be requested at any time.

The state must request termination of parental rights if the child has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. Some exceptions apply.

**Purpose:** The judge will determine if there are legal grounds to permanently terminate parental rights. If the judge finds that termination of parental rights is in the child's best interests, the child will become a ward of the state and may be available for adoption.