

Rule 15. Findings and Order at Initial Hearing

(a) Matters addressed in all cases. At the close of the initial hearing in all cases, the judicial officer shall enter an order in writing which shall include:

(1) Paternity testing. When the paternity of the child has not been established, appropriate orders for genetic testing to determine paternity.

(2) Discovery and related matters. Orders with respect to discovery, investigation, examinations (e.g., drug, physical, mental), release of records (e.g., educational, medical), appointment of special advocates or guardians ad litem, and other matters needed to ensure speedy resolution of the case.

(3) Calendar for further proceedings. Orders specifying dates and times for mediation, the pre-trial conference and the fact-finding hearing.

(b) At the close of a shelter care hearing the judicial officer shall determine whether the child should be returned home or placed in shelter care or with a relative and shall include in the written findings and order the following:

(1) Harm necessitating placement. A brief statement of the harm necessitating placement, if placement is ordered;

(2) Placement. Placement with a specified relative, a specified private placement, or placement in shelter care, as well as any conditions related to such placement;

(3) Findings on reasonable efforts, whether continuation in the home is contrary to the welfare of the child, and the date of removal from home. A finding whether or not reasonable efforts were made to prevent or eliminate the need for removal or, alternatively, a determination that the child's removal from the home is necessary regardless of any services that could be provided to the child or child's family or that no reasonable efforts are required pursuant to Rule 14(d). A finding shall also be made as to whether continuation in the child's home would be contrary to the welfare of the child. In addition, the judicial officer shall make a finding on the date of the child's removal from home;

(4) Visitation. When the child is placed outside the home, a written provision permitting at least weekly visitation of the child with the parent, guardian or custodian, unless it appears to the judicial officer that at least weekly visitation would create imminent danger or be detrimental to the well-being of the child. In that case, the judicial officer may include in the order an alternative schedule of visits, or may order that visitation be supervised or prohibited. If the judicial officer determines that visitation is to be prohibited or supervised, the reasons for such determination shall be specified in the findings and order. The agency with case responsibility shall provide a copy of the visitation order to the shelter care provider or custodian.

(5) Services and efforts to minimize disruption to the child. The services that must be provided to the child or family and any steps that must be taken to minimize disruption to the child.

(6) Case plan. An order requiring the responsible agency to file a case plan with the Court within 60 days of the date of removal from home.

(7) Paternity testing. Where the paternity of the child has not been established, appropriate orders for genetic testing to determine paternity.

(8) Calendar for further proceedings. Dates and times for mediation, the pre-trial conference, and the fact-finding hearing. If the judicial officer determines that reasonable efforts are not required pursuant to Rule 14(d), the order shall specify the date for a

permanency planning hearing pursuant to D.C. Code § 16-2323 and Rule 32, to be held no later than 30 days after the date of that finding.

(c) Discovery and related matters. At the close of the initial hearing, orders may be entered with respect to discovery, investigation, examinations (drug, physical, mental), release of records (e.g., educational, medical), appointment of special advocates or guardians ad litem, and other matters needed to ensure speedy resolution of the case.