



## COURT REPORT GUIDELINES

1. All Court Reports should be a minimum of two pages and a maximum of three pages excluding: the “Case Data Table” and “Persons Contacted” on page one and any children’s photos. All sections of the template must be addressed.
2. Court Reports are **due to your Advocate Supervisor no later than 3 weeks** prior to a scheduled hearing. This allows your supervisor to review your report and make suggestions/recommendations for additions or changes to your report, prior to final submission.
3. All reports are now electronically submitted to the court and to all parties to the case. Please adhere to the draft submission time frame to ensure all parties receive your report prior to the hearing date. Court reports are distributed to: social worker, attorneys for parents and child, county council, and the Dependency Judge for Monterey.
4. If you anticipate difficulties writing your report, contact your supervisor to schedule a time to work on it together, ideally three weeks to one month prior to the scheduled hearing date.
5. Email your report in the CASA of Monterey County Court Report Template (as a Word Doc) directly to your Advocate Supervisor.
6. Using the CASA of Monterey County Court Report Template ‘click’ the header to complete the case data table. If you do not have all of the info required, your supervisor can assist you. Please note, “Total Case Hours” are cumulative and should include all time spent working on your child’s case (not just visits).
7. Recommendations are to focus on the child’s needs. Recommendations should be bulleted items and items that the Judge can actually order.
8. Prepare a brief, concise statement using the guidelines listed below for EACH TOPIC. Support all statements with facts.
9. In your narrative report, list the topics provided below to define each segment of the report. Please leave a space between each specific topic.
10. Attach a photo of the child taken during an activity for your completed report

**I. PERSONS CONTACTED**

- List individuals that you've contacted to gather information for your report. Always include the child.

**II. RECORDS REVIEWED**

- Files from: Social Worker, CASA, Dependency Court, Updates/assessments from school, therapist, CF notes, etc.

**III. CURRENT PLACEMENT STATUS / EDUCATIONAL UPDATE**

- State the child's name, what they prefer to be called if different from their given name and their age, when they came under the jurisdiction of the court.
- State where the child is living now and where they have been living since you were assigned to the case
- Number of placements the child has been in since coming under the jurisdiction of the court
- Changes in placement and/or school since last court hearing- positive or negative
- Describe how youth is doing in current placement. Indicate if there are any problems with the placement.
- Note whether the child is placed in a concurrent or non-concurrent home.
- If child is not placed in a concurrent home, explain why not and describe the efforts made by DSES to locate/place child in a concurrent home. If there are valid reasons for not moving youth at this time explain here.
- Note whether child is placed with their siblings or not. If not, explain efforts to place them together or why placement together is not appropriate at this time.
- Note what school and grade youth is in and if there has been a school change since the last report.
- Note how the child is doing in school and their grades from the last reporting period.
- If youth is in high school/college, note how many credits youth has, how many they need to graduate, and if they are on track to graduate.
- If youth is in elementary or junior high school note if they are on track to matriculate to the next grade level.
- Include comments from teachers on youth's academic performance/social interactions.
- Indicate who holds the child's educational rights

**IV. Observations**

*Do not analyze, attempt to explain or interpret any behavior*

Include:

- Progress on goals / objectives
- Observations about the child's development, attitude, conduct, and reactions to current circumstances
- Does child currently have visits with their parents, siblings, permanent connections? If so, list your observations from these visits (relationships, conflicts, revelations, etc.). If not, why?
- Explain any non-compliance with court orders, visitations, etc.

**V. DESCRIPTION OF THE NEEDS AND WISHES OF THE CHILD**

- List desires or stated needs from the child regardless of whether or not you agree with their wishes. Include (whenever possible) any quotes from the child.
- Be sure to obtain permission from the child before quoting them in this report.
- List any needs you feel should be voiced based on your observations. These needs should be substantiated by facts.

**VI. PEER RELATIONSHIPS / EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Include comments regarding:

- Child's interactions with peers and friendships
- Extra-curricular activities or expressed interests
- Barriers to participating in extra-curricular activities
- Suggestions of extra-curricular activities you feel may benefit the child

**VII. PERMANENT CONNECTIONS**

- Has the child or DSES identified any responsible adult(s), e.g., relative, counselor, teacher, coach, near kin whom has the potential to be a permanent connection? What steps have been taken toward the goal of forming life-long connections?
- Is advocate/child participating in the family finding program? If so, describe efforts and outcomes.
- Statements made by the child of whom they feel they are connected to (who they love, miss, would like to be part of their life...)

**VIII. PERSONAL ASSESSMENT**

- Provide your personal, unbiased assessment of how the child is doing.
- Provide your assessment of the progression of the case.
- The purpose of this area is to present, as the child's advocate, what you feel is in the best interest of the child. When providing your opinions regarding this case, describe how the facts & observations presented in this report bring you to your conclusions.
- Leave your personal biases at the door.

**IX. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Clearly itemize (list as concise bullet points) the recommendations that you have which would further the best interests of this child
- Be sure to know where your child's case is in the court process when listing your recommendations regarding education, current placement, visitations, return to birth parents, etc.
- Recommendations should be specific and actionable items that we are recommending to the Judge.