**SFCASA DEPENDENCY COURT REPORT**

**INSTRUCTIONS and TEMPLATE**

***Report drafts are due to your Case Supervisor no later than 3 calendar weeks before the hearing date.***

**Content Guidelines:**

* **Court reports should be rooted in fact-based observations from the current six-month reporting period.**
* **The information in your report should not come as a surprise to the team of services providers, the youth, or their family. Remember, you serve in a supportive relationship and are engaged collaboratively with the team, family, and youth.**
* **Collaboration with your Case Supervisor is expected to:**
1. **Edit for non-judgmental clarity and bias reduction.**
2. **Represent best interest advocacy through the lens of minimum sufficient level of care.**
3. **Include youth voice and take a strengths-based approach.**
* **Do not copy content from the PSW’s (county social worker) report.**
* **Do not copy content from previous CASA reports; best practice is to start fresh and never update your last report.** *The judge and parties will have access to previous CASA reports. Verbatim repetition and old information are both unhelpful and disrespectful of the youth, their family and the Court’s time. If such information is in your report, the power of the CASA report is greatly diminished.*

**Format:**

* Set margins for 1.0” on both sides and top & bottom.
* Use the youth’s initials in the drafts you exchange with your Case Supervisor in order to protect the youth’s confidentiality.
* Delete all instructions prior to submitting your draft report, including this page.
* Starting on page 2, insert centered page numbers at the bottom of the report.
* Use Times New Roman, 12 point font.
* Do not use contractions (use “they are” instead of “they’re”).
* Let your Case Supervisor know if you’d like to include pictures with your report!

**Distribution:**

* The final version of your edited court report will be signed on your behalf by your Case Supervisor.
* SFCASA will file and electronically distribute a password protected filed copy of your court report to the named parties.
* A soft copy of your filed court report will be posted to the specific Court Hearing in your Case Record in the Advocate Link database.
* It may be helpful to both you and the youth’s team if you bring a hard copy of your filed court report to have as a reference at the hearing.

**COURT REPORT**

**Name of Dependent:**  **Petition No.:**

**Date of Birth:**  **Dept. No.:**

**Age:**  **Time of Hearing:**

 **Date of Hearing:**

 **Type of Hearing:**

The above information can be found in Advocate Link or the PSW’s Status Review Report. Be sure to check in with the youth’s attorney to confirm the hearing date and time at least three weeks before the scheduled hearing and share any changes with your Case Supervisor.

**COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE:**

First Last

**PERSONS CONTACTED:**

First Last, Dependent [use youth’s initials in all drafts with your Case Supervisor]

First Last, PSW

First Last, Dependent’s Attorney

* Additionally, list first and last names of all the people you spoke with **during the current reporting period** (include appropriate titles).
* Other contacts may include parents, relative and non-relative support relationships, service providers of housing, education, healthcare, therapeutic services, permanency, transitional planning, development (Regional Center), or juvenile justice (if involved).

**RECORDS REVIEWED:**

HSA-FCS File *(if this is your first court report, include date of review)*

HSA-FCS Status Review Report for Six-Month Review Hearing on [insert date] [if you have seen the report prior to filing your report]

* List any current educational, health, or permanency-related documents such as IEPs, grade reports, Health and Education Passports (HEP), genograms, etc. Include the dates of the document review in parentheses.
* If the youth has an active JV-220 review and include.

**CONCLUSIONS: *(Conclusions should be succinct, numbered statements.)***

1. State whether the dependent [use dependent’s initials] should remain a dependent of the Court or the case should be dismissed.
2. State whether the dependent should remain in current placement or not.
3. In separate conclusions, list the need (or absence of need) for specific services in order of importance (educational needs, medical/dental needs, physical/mental/behavioral health therapy, other) that the dependent should be supported in accessing. What additional supports would encourage this access?
4. If visitation is recommended, state with whom. Consider if the dependent has appropriate access to family members such as biological parents and siblings.
5. List other sources of support or needs to be considered (e.g., enrichment activities, family-finding and engagement, housing, financial literacy, access to job training/supportive employment, etc.).

**SUMMARY OF CONTACTS** ***(paragraph form)***

* Start by stating when you were assigned to the case: “I was appointed as the CASA for [initials] on month, day and year” (dates should be formatted: 01/01/2001).
* Provide a summary of the communications you had with service providers (PSW, attorney, and caregiver) during reporting period. *This section should be brief.*
* Briefly describe your time with the youth during this reporting period (frequency, activities engaged in). Briefly describe the strengths you have observed in the youth, bringing them to life with your observations. This is a preview of your Summary section at the end.

**BODY OF REPORT:**

In the following sections, provide factual information from the most recent reporting period. Emphasize any milestones achieved and progress made. Include current challenges or barriers the youth is facing, and any contributing deficits in community resources or services.

Depending on the individual case and its level of activity, your comments may be more or less extensive for any one of these advocacy areas. **Ground the reasons for each of the summary Conclusions indicated above with *fact-based observations in the body of the report*.** If you are including information gathered from others, note the source and dates of those conversations and/or documents. If you don’t have the exact date, provide an approximate date.

**PLACEMENT *(paragraph form)***

* Describe the placement, length of time, and suitability for current level of need.
* Describe how the youth’s voice and opinions are incorporated into decision making around placement. Use quotes wherever possible.
* If the youth had multiple placements during this period, describe the housing and length of time in each, including any details regarding why the move occurred.
* Carefully consider any inferences you are making. For example, if you describe the caregiver(s) as “conscientious,” include observations of behaviors and actions that demonstrate this. Refrain from using vague and subjective adjectives such as “loving” and “caring.” Refrain from using language such as “it seems” and “it appears.” Instead, include direct observations or quotes.

**EDUCATION *(paragraph form)***

* List the school or program name, grade level, and any school changes during reporting period.
* State the name and relationship to the youth of the Educational Rights Holder. If you do not hold education rights, describe your collaboration.
* In order to support recommendations for increased support or celebrate growth, include the youth’s current grades, attendance record, school achievements/awards, and any discipline actions. Provide context and always celebrate progress.
* If you highlight an area that is in need of attention, ensure that you are making a specific ask that would support that need.
* If the youth currently has an IEP or 504 Plan, list the last meeting date and the services/accommodations they are receiving. What is working and what is not?
* Describe involvement in extracurricular activities at the school (sports, band, student government, school clubs, etc.).
* If relevant, provide information regarding tutoring or status of requests for tutoring.
* Share the youth’s voice on current/future goals and postsecondary/vocational plans.
* If they are moving onto or currently attending postsecondary education, describe the status of college and financial aid applications (FAFSA, Dream Act, Chafee, CalGrant, etc.).
* As relevant, include current employment and/or job training.

**HEALTHCARE *(paragraph form)***

* Physical health: include recent medical, dental, and vision appointments, any outstanding needs, and any needs met during the reporting period. Include any medications currently being prescribed and any changes to this.
* Mental and behavioral health: include a brief description of the services they are involved in, their frequency, and highlight the progress and/or goals of their services—as appropriate and respectful.
* *Be mindful that your Case Supervisor may advise that certain healthcare information should not be included for reasons of privacy and/or confidentiality.*
* Highlight the youth’s voice and opinions around the health services they receive.
* If the youth has an active JV-220 (is currently being prescribed psychotropic medications), include the type, basic symptoms being treated, any behavioral or therapeutic services the youth is receiving, the youth’s opinion of the medications, and any concerns about the type or amount of medications.

**COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS *(paragraph form)***

* Describe the formal, informal, family, and non-kin relationships the youth has, including how frequently they see each other.
* Remember to consider all avenues of permanency, such as school friends, older siblings, relatives in other states, coaches, friends’ families, etc.
* Describe any relationships in need of exploration and/or support, including any court-ordered visitations or informal visitations.
* Describe the type and frequency of extracurricular activities and if the youth has access to engagement with their personal passions.

**INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS (Youth ages 16-20) *(paragraph form)***

* List when youth was referred to ILSP/ILP services and how they access services, as well as involvement in other programs supporting independent living skills.
* Describe how the youth is learning about their rights and the resources available to them. Consider the youth’s progress in independent living skills such as:
	+ financial literacy/independence (budgeting, checking account, credit checks).
	+ utilization of public transportation and/or progress toward a driver’s license.
	+ employment (job search techniques, resume writing, interviewing skills).
	+ management of healthcare needs (expressing needs and accessing services).
	+ goal setting, self-advocacy, including around the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.
* Include successes and milestones in addition to areas of growth and need.

**SUMMARY *(paragraph form)***

* Lastly, conclude your report with a short paragraphor two that includes:
	+ What do you enjoy about working with the youth?
	+ What do you observe and experience to be their strengths?
	+ How can the court, the team, the service providers, and you as the CASA provide additional support to meet the needs you have listed in the report?
	+ What do you hope to support the youth with during the next period?
	+ What, if anything, have they asked specifically for your support with?

**NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT ON CASE:**

To date, I have spent a total of [include cumulative number of hours here— available in Advocate Link] hours on this case, [include number of hours with youth here—available in Advocate Link] of which have been spent directly with [youth’s initials].

Respectfully Submitted,

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First Last First Last

SFCASA Volunteer SFCASA Case Supervisor

Date Submitted: [Insert date]

cc: First Last, PSW

 First Last, Dependent’s Attorney

 First Last, City Attorney

 First Last, Mother’s Attorney\*

 First Last, Father’s Attorney\*

[Any additional attorneys on case (e.g. any Guardian ad litems or other attorneys appointed for special needs, such as education, estate planning, etc.)]

*\* When a youth reaches age 18 and elects to remain in dependency as a non-minor dependent (NMD), attorney(s) for the parent(s) are relieved of their assignments. Similarly, if parental rights have been terminated in the matter of a minor youth, attorney(s) for the parent(s) are relieved. In these matter attorney(s) for parent(s) should not be listed.*