

PARENT ORIENTATION

INVESTIGATION

- A Child Protective Investigator (CPI) conducts an investigation as a result of a call to the abuse hotline.
- In Pasco County, these investigations are performed by the Pasco County Sheriff's Office.

EMERGENCY SHELTER HEARING

- If the CPI concludes there is evidence of abuse, neglect or abandonment and a child is determined to be unsafe, then the CPI will communicate with the State's Attorney, who then submits a **Shelter Petition** to the court to remove the child from the home.
- This petition is also sent to the parents.
- At the hearing, a judge either agrees or disagrees with the petition. If she/he agrees, then the child's removal from the care of the parents is upheld.
- The next legal hearing will be the **Arraignment**.

“VERIFIED”

- If the Child Protection Investigator (CPI) determines there is evidence of abuse, neglect or abandonment, then the case is referred is referred to Eckerd Connects/YFA for Case Management.

PLACEMENT

- When a child is removed from the home, a “placement” decision is made.
- The child may be placed with:
 - A relative
 - A family friend
 - Licensed foster care, which would include:
 - A foster home
 - A residential group care home
 - A residential treatment program

YOUTH AND FAMILY ALTERNATIVES (YFA)

- YFA is a local nonprofit social services provider, who has worked in Pasco County for over 50 years.
- The agency also operates the RAP House Youth Runaway and Crisis Shelter and provides numerous prevention and school-based programs in the County.

ARRAIGNMENT

- After the child is removed from the care of the parent, the next legal hearing is the Arraignment.
- A **Dependency Petition** is submitted and will be used by the court to determine:
 - If the child meets the criteria for dependency (state custody)
 - If a court case is needed to monitor the child's ongoing safety
- During this hearing, the parents have the choice to enter a plea.

ARRAIGNMENT: PLEA

- During the Arraignment hearing the parents have the choice to plead they:
 - **Admit** to the findings of the petition
 - **Consent** to the findings, in that they are willing to consent to the dependency of the child without admitting fault
 - **Deny** to the findings of the petition and are willing to go to trial

ADJUDICATION

- Once the case is “adjudicated,” it is legally and formally open in the court system.
- A case is adjudicated if the parents:
 - Admit to the findings
 - Consent to the findings
 - Are found guilty of the findings after a trial

YFA CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

- Begins a “Case Plan,” that includes input from the parents, family and any other parties that are involved in the case.
- Makes at least monthly visits to the see the child and parents.
- Providing updates to the court on the progress of the Case Plan.
- Partnering with the parent to complete the Case Plan.
- Coordinates needed services for the parent and the child include medical, dental, mental health, food, shelter and education.

CASE PLAN

- It is developed with the input from the parents.
- It states the required changes the parents need to make before reuniting with their child.
- It states the needs of the child through services and placement.
- Once it is approved by the Court, in a Disposition Hearing, it becomes a legal court document that must be followed by both the parents and YFA.

JUDICIAL REVIEW

- A review of the Case Plan with the court will occur at least every 6 months.
- The purpose of these reviews is to:
 - Determine the status of the child
 - The child's needs and placement
 - How the parents are complying with the Case Plan
 - How YFA is complying with the Case Plan

JUDICIAL REVIEW

- The expectation is that the goals and tasks of the Case Plan will be completed within 12 months.
- If the Case Plan is not completed within the 12 months, the court, in addition, will begin to consider other options which may include:
 - Continuation with the goal of reunifying the child with the parents.
 - Or consideration of adoption, permanent guardianship or other planned living arrangements based on the needs of the child.

PERMANENCY

- “Permanency” is the term for a child leaving state care and the closing of the case with the State. Permanency includes three outcomes:
 - **Family Reunification** occurs when the family has completed the Case Plan and it is safe for the child to return home with the parents.
 - **Adoption** occurs when the court determines that the child will not return home with the parents. The rights of the parents for the child are terminated.
 - **Permanent Guardianship** occurs when the court determines that the child will not return home with the parents and when adoption is not an option. The guardian has permanent custody of the child but parental rights are not fully terminated.

YFA LOCATIONS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Trinity Location

7916 Evolutions Way
Trinity, FL 34655
Telephone: 727-569-1740
Fax: 727-569-1750

Dade City Location

36739 State Road 52, Suite 201
Dade City, FL 33525
Telephone: 352-521-1266
Fax: 352-523-5035