

SAMPLE DIRECT EXAMINATION QUESTIONS: TERMINATION TRIAL

I. Background and Foundation

- Please state your name. Spell your name for the Court record.
- What is your business address?
- Are you the CASA volunteer assigned to this case?
- What are your duties as a CASA volunteer?
- How long have you been a CASA?
- Over the course of your time with the CASA program, approximately how many cases have you served on?
 - What types of cases have those been?
- Do you primarily handle one kind of case?
 - What kind?
- Have you received any specialized training to assist you in your role as a CASA volunteer?
 - Describe what kind of training CASAs go through.
- What is your educational background?
 - Describe where, when, and in what field you received your degrees.
- Are you a member of any professional organizations?
 - What organizations?
- What other education, job, or life experience do you have in working with children?
- Prior to your testimony today, did you review your file and the notes that you took on this case?

II. CASA's Involvement In Case

a. Initial Involvement

- When did you first become involved in this case?
- What did you do upon being assigned to the case?
 - File reviewed? Contact with professionals?
- What has been your contact with the child(ren)/parent(s)?
 - Upon your initial contact with the child(ren)/parent(s), what did you observe regarding the condition of the child(ren)/parent(s)?
- Approximately how many hours have you spent on this case?
- What records or reports have you reviewed in conjunction with this case?
- What Court hearings have you attended during your time on this case?

b. Visitation

- What were the visitation arrangements between the parent(s) and child(ren)?
- What has been the pattern of visitation with the parent(s)?
 - Has the parent attended visits regularly?

- Why? Why not?
- Did you observe any of these visits?
 - Where? When? How many?
- Describe for the Court the parent-child interaction during the visits.
 - Did the interaction/lack of interaction concern you in any way?
 - Why? Why not?
- What was the child(ren)'s reaction before/during/after visitation?
 - Did you find the child(ren)'s reaction to be of significance?
 - In what way?

c. Services to Parents

- Did the parent express a willingness to participate in services?
 - What services were offered?
- Did you review the evaluations/reports of those service providers?
- Have you spoken with those service providers?
- Did you talk with the parent about what s/he needed to do to have the child(ren) returned home?
 - Did the parent appear to understand the requirements necessary to have the child returned home?
- Since you have been assigned to the case, what services has the parent successfully completed?
- Can you think of any services that have not yet been offered that could help the parent become able to care for the child within the foreseeable future?
 - Is that service available in the community?

d. Observations

- Where is the child current placed?
 - How long have they been at this placement?
 - How many placements has this child had?
 - Have relative placements been investigated?
- Describe the child's development/adjustment generally?
 - Does the child have any special needs?
 - Describe.
- Have you consulted with any professionals in regard to the child(ren)/parent(s) on this case?
 - With whom?
 - When?
- Have any evaluations been ordered of the child(ren)/parent(s) in this case?
 - What evaluations?
 - Were those evaluations done?
 - Did you review the results of those evaluations?

e. Recommendation

- Do you believe that the parent is currently fit to parent the child?
 - What is the basis of your opinion?
- Do you feel the parent is capable of providing adequate care for the child?
 - What is the basis of your opinion?
- Do you feel the parent is capable of understanding/meeting the physical and emotional needs of the child?
 - What is the basis of your opinion?
- Do you feel the parent is capable of protecting the child from further abuse?
 - What is the basis of your opinion?
- Could the child be placed in a permanent home?
- Does continuation of the parent/child relationship diminish the child's prospects for early integration into a stable and permanent home?
 - Why? Why not?
- Based upon the records and documents that you have reviewed, your observations and discussions with the parties, and your consultation with professionals, do you have a recommendation for the Court regarding the termination of parental rights for this child?
- Do you feel that termination of parental rights is in this child's best interest?
- If parental rights were not terminated or if a decision regarding termination was postponed, would there be any harm to the child?
 - Why? Why not?