What is a Dependency Petition?

A dependency petition is a written request to the court. It explains concerns that a child has been abused, neglected or abandoned, and that there is no parent able to safely care for the child. It asks that the State assume temporary legal custody of the child. Dependency petitions are filed by Children's Administration when a child is believed to unsafe.

Who are the legal parties to a Dependency case?

The parents and the Children's Administration are legal parties to the case. A child's tribe is a legal party to the case. Caregivers are not legal parties to the case. Parents and Children's Administration are represented in court by attorneys.



Who is the voice of the child in court?

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) and GAL (Guardians ad Litem) are appointed by

judges to advocate for the child. The CASA or GAL tells the judge at court hearings what they believe is in the best interest of the child and what the child needs. Older children may be represented by an attorney who tells the court what the child wants.

What is the caseworker's role in court?

The caseworker partners with families and caregivers to keep children safe. The caseworker makes efforts to return the child to the parent, partners with families to create a case plan, and makes recommendations and reports progress to the court.

To Resolve Complaints

- Contact the assigned caseworker, followed by the assigned supervisor, and then the Area Administrator.
- Children's Administration Office of Constituent Relations can help to resolve issues.
 Toll free phone: 1-800-723-4831 https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/resolve-concerns
- Family and Children's Ombuds investigates complaints about agency action or inaction that involve a child or parent involved with child protection or child welfare services.

Toll free phone: 1-800-571-7321

Phone: (206) 439-3870

https://fortress.wa.gov/es/ofcoform/

• Children's Administration Hotline Call 1-866-ENDHARM (1-866-363-4276)

Important Contacts

Caseworker name, phone number and email:

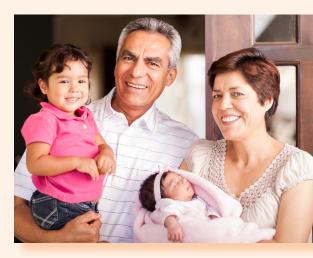
Supervisor name, phone number and email:

CASA/GAL name, phone number and email:

Child's attorney name, phone number and email:



Understanding the Dependency Court Process for Caregivers



You have the right to be:

- Treated with respect
- Notified of court dates and case meetings
- Given the "Caregiver Report to the Court" to complete

You have a responsibility to:

- Provide a safe home for the child
- Cooperate with the court ordered service and visitation plan
- See that the child is cared for and loved
- Keep the caseworker and court informed of the child's progress
- Explain to the child in a positive way why their parent is not able to provide care right now

Dependency Court Process Timeline

CPS Referral

Process begins here

CPS receives a referral regarding abuse or neglect of a child. A screening decision is made; the referral may be taken as information only, or may be assigned for investigation or Family Assessment Response (FAR), If the child is not safe. the child may be removed from the home by a court order, or by law enforcement.

Child is placed into **Protective** Custody

A police officer can

place the child who

has been abused or

neglected or who is

unsafe in protective

custody. Custody

of the child is then

transferred to CPS.

CPS places the child

with a relative or in

foster care. By law, a

child can be kept in

protective custody

72 hours without a

for no more than

court hearing.

72 Hr. Maximum

Shelter Care Hearing (Held within 72 hours of placements)

The court decides

if the child stays in

placement or can

be safely returned

A visitation plan is

set up if the child

stays in care.

home.

Continued Care Hearing

(in some courts) (30 days after placement)

Shelter

30 days

The court again decides if the child should stay in outof-home placement or be returned to the parents. The court reviews the visitation plan and where the child is living.

Fact Finding Hearing

(75 days after the filing of a Dependency Petition (this timeline may be waived in court)

Disposition Hearing

(within 90 days of filing a Dependency Petition)

Court ordered

are determined.

Placement and

addressed. This

occurs with the

Fact Finding.

hearing sometimes

visitation are

services for parents

90 days

If the parents agree to the dependency, agreed orders are entered and the child becomes a dependent of the state. If the parents object to the dependency, testimony is given and the court decides if the child becomes a dependent of the state. In home or out-of-home is

First Dependency Review Hearing

6 months

The court reviews parent progress with services and considers if more services are needed to help them provide a safe home for their child.

The court might determine that it is safe for the child to return home with an in-home dependency with court oversight.

Permanency Planning Hearing

(12 months, concurrent planning, Plan A and Plan B)

12 months

The court decides The court reviews what the child's parents' progress permanent plan and the case should be, and plan. The court what the child's continues to review concurrent or these items every secondary plan six months until should be if permanency is the parents are achieved for the unable to safely child. If a petition to parent their child. terminate parental Permanent plans rights is filed, for a child include separate court dates reunification, will begin for this adoption, and process.

Dependency

Review Hearing

(Ongoing every 6 months)

18 months

Shared Planning Meetings

Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) meetings and Permanency Planning Meetings take place throughout

the life of each case. Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee (LICWAC) staffings are additional shared planning meetings for children who are Native American. Caregivers are notified and invited to participate in all shared planning meetings.

What is important for me to know?

determined.

Children's Administration must offer parents supports and services to help them safely reunify with their child.



Children are returned home when they can be safe in the family home. Caseworkers make recommendations: the court decides.

At any point during the court process, a judge can decide that the child can be safely returned home.

guardianship.

If a parent is unable to make the changes necessary to keep the child safe, they could lose the right to parent their child. Reunification efforts continue until and unless parental rights are terminated.

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) governs the dependency process for Native American children. This includes additional requirements, as well as case planning and coordination with the child's tribe.