

SHELTER CARE HEARING

Bench Card

PURPOSE

To determine:

1. If there is *reasonable cause* to believe that the child(ren) comes within the jurisdiction of the Child Protective Act; **and**,
2. If so, whether it is in the child's best interest to remain in his/her home or to remain in temporary shelter care pending the conclusion of the adjudicatory hearing.¹

WHEN

1. Within 48 hours of the child(ren) being removed or within 24 hours of an alleged offender being removed, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.²
2. Continuances³
 - a. *Request by child's custodian.* The shelter care hearing may be continued for a reasonable time by the request of a parent(s), guardian, or custodian of the child.
 - b. *Request by other parties.* The court may also grant a reasonable continuance to all other parties or participants upon good cause shown.
 - c. *Findings of the court.* If the hearing is continued and if there is a waiver of the statutory time limits for setting the shelter-care hearing, the court must find that it is contrary to the welfare of the child to remain in the home.

WHO MAY BE PRESENT

1. The general public shall be excluded, and only such persons shall be admitted as are found by the court to have a direct interest in the case.⁴
2. The child may be excluded from hearings at any time in the discretion of the court. A counselor, friend, or other person may be permitted to remain in the courtroom at the witness stand as the child testifies.⁵

ADVISEMENT OF RIGHTS AND APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL

1. Advise parent(s) of their rights and appoint counsel where appropriate.⁶ (*See Advisement of Rights Bench Card*)
2. Best practice: Appoint counsel for the child or a guardian *ad litem* represented by counsel.⁷

EVIDENCE

1. The Rules of Evidence do not apply.⁸
2. The evidentiary standard is reasonable cause. The court may consider "any evidence which is of the type which reasonable people may rely upon."⁹
3. The only privileges in effect at the shelter care hearing are the lawyer/client privilege and the clergy privilege. There is no other privilege as to a communication relevant to an issue concerning the physical, mental, or emotional condition of or injury to a child, or concerning the welfare of a child.¹⁰

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MAKING THE RECORD

1. The hearing, in its entirety, must be on the record.
2. The court may enter orders or decrees based upon stipulations only upon a reasonable inquiry by the court to confirm that the stipulation is: knowing and voluntary, has a reasonable basis in fact, and is in the best interests of the child.¹¹

FINDINGS (CASE SPECIFIC)

1. The proceedings were properly initiated by: a) a CPA petition, or b) a Rule 16 expansion, or c) an Order of Removal/Endorsement on Summons.¹²
2. Reasonable cause to believe the child comes within the jurisdiction of the CPA:
 - a. The child lives in or is found within the state of Idaho;¹³ and,
 - b. The child is abandoned, abused, neglected, homeless, or lacks a stable home environment, or the court has jurisdiction over another child living or having custodial visitation in the same household and this child has been exposed to or is at risk of being a victim of abuse, neglect, or abandonment;¹⁴ and,
 - c. The child could not be placed in the temporary sole custody of a parent having joint physical or legal custody,¹⁵ and,

IV-E FINDINGS:

- a. The Department of Health and Welfare (the Department) made reasonable efforts to eliminate the need for shelter care but was not successful; or,
 - b. The Department made reasonable efforts to eliminate the need for shelter care but was not able to safely provide preventative services;¹⁶ and,
 - c. It is contrary to the welfare of the child to remain in the home;¹⁷ and,
 - d. It is in the child's best interests to remain in temporary shelter care.¹⁸
3. Child does/does not come within the jurisdiction of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). (If YES, findings under ICWA must be made. *See* ICWA Bench Card.)¹⁹
 4. Reasonable efforts to prevent placement outside the home could be affected by protective order. If a protective order is entered, additional findings may be required.²⁰
 5. Further efforts to reunify may be temporarily suspended if:
 - a. A termination of parental rights (TPR) petition has been filed regarding the child; or
 - b. There is reason to believe the child has been subjected to aggravated circumstances; or,
 - c. The parental rights to a child's sibling have been involuntarily terminated.²¹

QUESTIONS THE COURT MUST ASK

ICWA (See the ICWA Bench Card.)

The court must ask on the record if there is reason to believe that the child is an Indian child.²² If there is reason to believe the child is an Indian child, but the court does not have enough evidence to determine the child's status, the court must treat the child as an Indian child.²³

Sibling Placement

If a group of siblings was removed from the home but was not placed together, the court must ask about:

1) the Department's efforts to place the siblings together, 2) the reasons the siblings were not placed together, and, 3) about the Department's plan to ensure frequent visitation or ongoing contact among the siblings, unless visitation or contact would be contrary to the wellbeing of one or more siblings.²⁴

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Educational Stability

The court must ask about the Department's efforts to ensure educational stability for the child, including efforts made to keep the child in the same school or the reasons why staying in the same school is not in the child's best interest.²⁵

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

1. Proceed to Adjudicatory hearing.
 - a. There is reasonable cause to believe the child comes within the jurisdiction of the court, and it is in the best interests of the child to be placed in temporary shelter care (see findings above). If so, the case proceeds to adjudicatory hearing.²⁶
 - b. There is reasonable cause to believe that the child comes within the jurisdiction of the court, but it is not in the best interest of the child to be placed in temporary shelter care.²⁷ If there was an emergency removal of the child, the child is released.²⁸
 - c. There is reasonable cause to believe that the child comes within the jurisdiction of the court, but a reasonable effort to prevent placement of the child outside the home could be affected by a protective order safeguarding the child's welfare.²⁹ The court may issue a protective order in addition to, or instead of, placing the child in temporary shelter care.³⁰
2. Dismiss the petition.

There is not reasonable cause to believe that the child comes within the jurisdiction of the court and the court shall dismiss the petition.³¹

ORDER

1. Direct the Department and GAL to investigate and file written reports for the adjudicatory hearing.³²
2. Direct the Department to make reasonable efforts to contact extended family prior to adjudicatory hearing.³³
3. Best practice: Direct the Department to identify unknown parents, locate missing parents, and provide notice to them, and/or utilize paternity tests to establish biological parentage.
4. Schedule next hearing:
 - a. Pretrial: 3 to 5 days before Adjudicatory.
 - b. Adjudicatory: Within 30 days after filing the petition.³⁴

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the specific safety issues that caused the child to be removed from the home and what is preventing the child from returning home today?
2. **Is the Department fully exploring placement options with a fit and willing relative:**
 - a. **Who are the members of the child's extended family (including out-of-state family, adult siblings, and fictive kin)?**
 - b. **Who has been contacted?**
 - c. **Are there placement options?**³⁵
3. Does the current placement support the child's cultural identity?
4. Parents
 - a. Do you understand what happened here today?
 - b. Do you understand what the next steps are?
 - c. Do you have any questions for the court?
5. Department and Guardian *ad Litem*
 - a. Do you understand what is required of the Department and/or Guardian *ad Litem* prior to the adjudicatory?
 - b. Do you have any questions for the court?

ENDNOTES

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- ¹ IC §16-1603, §16-1615; IJR 39(a) and (i).
² IC §16-1608(2) and (3); IJR 39(c) and (d).
³ IC §16-1615(4); IJR 39(f).
⁴ IC §16-1613(1); IJR 39(h), IJR 52(a).
⁵ IC §16-1613(1) and (2).
⁶ IC §16-1611(3); IJR 39(g) and 37(d).
⁷ IC §16-1614; IJR 39(g).
⁸ IRE 101(e)(6).
⁹ IC §16-1615(5); IJR 39(e) and (i)(2), IJR 51(b).
¹⁰ IRE 502, IRE 505; IJR 39(e). *See also* IRE 504(d)(1) Husband/wife privilege; b) IRE 503(d)(4) Physicians and psychotherapists; c) IRE 516(d)(3) School counselors; d) IRE 517(d)(3) Licensed counselors; and e) IRE 518(d)(5) Licensed social workers.
¹¹ IJR 38.
¹² IC §16-1610(1), §16-1615(5)(a); IJR 16.
¹³ IC §16-1603(1), §16-1615(5)(b); IJR 39(i)(2).
¹⁴ IC §16-1603(1) and (2); IJR 39(i)(2).
¹⁵ IC §16-1615(5)(c).
¹⁶ IC §16-1615(5)(b); IJR 39(i)(3).
¹⁷ IC §16-1615(5)(d); IJR 39(i)(5).
¹⁸ IC §16-1615(5)(e); IJR 39(i)(6).
¹⁹ 25 U.S.C. §1903(4).
²⁰ IC §16-1615(8); IJR 39(j).
²¹ IJR 39(m).
²² IC §16-1615(6).
²³ 25 C.F.R. §23.107(2).
²⁴ IC §16-1615(7)(b); 42 U.S.C. §671(a)(31).
²⁵ IC §16-1615(7)(a); 42 U.S.C. §675(1)(G).
²⁶ IC §16-1615(6).
²⁷ *Id.*
²⁸ IC §16-1615(9).
²⁹ IC §16-1615(8).
³⁰ IJR 39(j).
³¹ IC §16-1615(10).
³² IC §16-1616, §16-1633(2).
³³ 42 U.S.C. §671(a)(29).
³⁴ IC §16-1615(6).
³⁵ IC §16-1629(11); 42 U.S.C. §671(a)(29).