

Rural Nevada Caregiver Courier

July 2019 - This edition is the second in a series on the Court Process. If you have anything that you would like to see featured in our Courier, please email me at KathyMcHanQPI@gmail.com



The Court Process- Adjudicatory Hearing or Admit/Deny Hearing

If a child is in protective custody-with Relatives, Fictive Kin or in a Foster Home, Nevada law requires that the placement be overseen by the Family Court. In this issue of the Caregiver Courier, we will be covering the second step in that court process.

This hearing is known by several names: Adjudicatory Hearing, Arraignment of Pleading, or Admit/Deny Hearing. In this hearing, the child welfare agency will have filed a legal document called a petition that lists the reasons a child is in need of protection.

Parents will be asked to do one of the following:

- Admit that all or some of the allegations are true
- Submit and plead no contest that all or some of the allegations are true
- Choose not to comment
- Deny the allegations and ask for an evidentiary hearing (trial)

If parents choose to go to trial, an evidentiary hearing will be set. If they plead no contest or admit that allegations are true, the next hearing is a review hearing in approximately 3 months.

Court reports and Petitions cannot be shared with Foster Parents, Fictive Kin or Relatives as they are private legal documents. You should get a copy of the safety plan that includes descriptions of safety threats as it relates to the child. If you have not seen the safety plan, please ask the case manager and reference the Information Sharing Brochure (on the QPI website).

Being in court can feel very confusing because Relative Caregivers, Fictive Kin and Foster Parents are not given the court documents. Information sharing is not only permitted by Nevada law, it is required, as a well-informed caregiver is better able to meet the needs of the child and is better prepared to handle the challenges particular to the child. The child's case manager can explain what happened in court relating to the child after it is finished but cannot share the documents that may have confidential information relating to the parents.



Sometimes a court hearing needs to be rescheduled. To hold the hearings, all the papers must be filed correctly and timely, and notifications received by the parties involved. For many reasons things can pop up at the last minute and the hearing can be 'continued' to a later date. The hearing will then be rescheduled to the earliest time available on the court calendar. Unfortunately, delays are very common.

Ice Breakers are now being used all over rural Nevada to open the door to communication between foster and birth families. This is still new to most case managers and foster families and is definitely new to birth families. Please keep giving us your feedback so we can make adjustments to the Ice Breakers and continue to create a culture of collaboration. **NEW!!!** Please ask your case worker for a survey link!

In case of an emergency after hours, please remember the on-call number for your area is on your placement letter.

Support Groups and Why They Matter

Being a caregiver in the world of child welfare is challenging. Between the ever-changing schedule of court hearings, appointments, visits and school, feeding, clothing, housing, teaching, disciplining, loving, guiding, and enjoying the children in your home, you are on the job 24/7. Your friends and family are often your biggest source of support, but once in a while there may be things that you cannot share due to confidentiality or challenges that are unique to caring for a child that has experienced trauma.

Support Groups bring together people who have gone through or are going through a similar experience. In our case, it is caring for children involved in the Child Welfare system. The children we care for have all experienced trauma in some way and they depend on us to be a source of safety and stability. Support groups provide an opportunity for people to share personal experiences, feelings or coping strategies about the process and ways of helping children who have experienced trauma. When I attend support groups or conferences related to foster/kin/adoption I feel more motivated to continue in this work and make connections that build me up so that I can keep going.

The format of support groups can vary greatly. The common forms are in person meetings, group phone calls, zoom or online meetings, Facebook Groups, and online forums. It can be led by a facilitator or be an informal gathering. In Rural Nevada, the physical distances between us do not need to divide us. There is a closed Facebook group called Foster Parents of Rural Nevada. If you are not already a member of the group, you can request to be added by following this link.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/551080981765763/>

Becoming a member of an association can also be an amazing support. Organizations like the National Foster Parent Association (NFPA), North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC), Project Foster, and the Quality Parenting Initiative can help support, educate and strengthen you in your journey.



Elko County has a Foster Closet!

Does your foster child need clothes, shoes or personal items? The Foster Closet may have just what you are looking for. Their goal is to provide essentials to children in foster care in our community. If your child would like to shop the closet you can contact them on Facebook at Elko County Foster Closet or call the Elko DCFS office at 753-1300.

Donations are accepted in Spring Creek at SC association
Anytime Fitness
SC Empower.

Elko at
Blue Lightening Dry Cleaners
Elko Empower
Nevada IT

Pride Training

Carson City

Aug 9-11

Lori Nichols

1-888-423-2659

