

THE TROUP COUNTY, GEORGIA JUVENILE COURT

SERVICE PROVIDER PROTOCOL FOR ONGOING SERVICES IN DEPENDENCY CASES

The purpose of the Service Provider Protocol for Ongoing Services in Dependency Cases (referred to herein as the Protocol) is to ensure that services needed by the children and families (the “Clients”) served by the Troup County Department of Family and Children Services (the “Agency”) and the Troup County Juvenile Court (the “Court”) are consistently and seamlessly made available early on and throughout the life of a case so that case plans can be implemented timely and effectively.

1. The Agency, the Court and all service providers providing ongoing services to the children and families served by the Agency and the Court (the “Service Providers”) shall make a good faith effort to comply with the provisions of this Protocol as it may be amended from time to time.
2. In scheduling and prioritizing their services, Service Providers shall give consideration to a child’s sense of time and the time frames provided for under state and federal law within which to achieve permanency for children served by the Agency and the Court.
3. The Agency Case Manager shall be responsible for scheduling the initial meeting between the Client and the Service Provider, and shall, where possible, notify the Client or the Client’s caretaker of the initial meeting in writing in a manner that can be proven at a hearing if necessary.
4. The Agency shall provide to the Service Provider in advance of the initial meeting all information the Service Provider may need to serve the Client, including, but not necessarily limited to, copies of all previous evaluations and assessments in the possession of the Agency and a case summary, which shall include the specific reason found by the Court as to why the child cannot be maintained safely at home or, where the child is in the home, the specific reason the child is at risk of harm/removal (the “Reason for Services”).
5. The services to be provided to the client shall focus primarily on the Reason for Services, but the Service Provider may provide additional recommended services with the approval of the Agency.
6. Following the initial meeting and at the conclusion of each and every subsequent meeting, the next meeting shall be scheduled and the Client shall be given written notice of the next meeting in a manner that can be proven at a hearing if necessary.

7. The Agency shall notify the Service Provider of upcoming hearings or reviews not less than ten days in advance of such hearing or review.
8. Not less than five days in advance of each hearing or review, the Service Provider shall provide to the Agency a summary of the services being provided to the Client specifically focused on the Reason for Services, the dates of each meeting since the last report, the dates of any missed meetings since the last report, an assessment of the progress on the issues being addressed relative to the Reason for Services, a prognosis for future services and progress, and any other information the Service Provide believes the Agency needs to know.
9. The Service Provider shall, within reason, be available to testify at any hearing or review if and when requested.
10. The Service Provider shall notify the Agency in writing of any missed or rescheduled appointments.
11. The Agency shall monitor the Client's participation in services, shall attempt to remind the Client of scheduled appointments close in time to the appointments, and shall assist in overcoming any barriers to the Client receiving the services.
12. A basic premise of this Protocol is that there comes a time in the life of a case where the parents/Clients have to demonstrate the will and capacity to schedule and attend all of their appointments on their own, but that it is not typically during the first three to six months of the case. During that initial period, it is the responsibility of the Agency to support the parent/Client in accessing services in a consistent and meaningful way.