

232.58 Permanency hearings.

1. If an order entered pursuant to this division for an out-of-home placement of a child includes a determination that continuation of the child in the child's home is contrary to the child's welfare, the court shall review the child's continued placement by holding a permanency hearing or hearings in accordance with this section. The initial permanency hearing shall be the earlier of the following:

a. For an order for which the court has not waived reasonable efforts requirements, the permanency hearing shall be held within twelve months of the date the child was removed from the home.

b. For an order in a case in which aggravated circumstances exist for which the court has waived reasonable efforts requirements, the permanency hearing shall be held within thirty days of the date the requirements were waived.

2. Reasonable notice shall be provided of a permanency hearing for an out-of-home placement in which the court order has included a determination that continuation of the child in the child's home is contrary to the child's welfare. A permanency hearing shall be conducted in substantial conformance with the provisions of section 232.99. During the hearing, the court shall consider the child's need for a secure and permanent placement in light of any case permanency plan or evidence submitted to the court and the reasonable efforts made concerning the child. Upon completion of the hearing, the court shall enter written findings identifying a primary permanency goal for the child. If a case permanency plan is in effect at the time of the hearing, the court shall also make a determination as to whether reasonable progress is being made in achieving the permanency goal and in complying with the other provisions of that case permanency plan.

3. After a permanency hearing, the court shall do one of the following:

a. Enter an order pursuant to section 232.52 to return the child to the child's home.

b. Enter an order pursuant to section 232.52 to continue the out-of-home placement of the child for an additional six months at which time the court shall hold a hearing to consider modification of its permanency order. An order entered under this paragraph shall enumerate the specific factors, conditions, or expected behavioral changes which comprise the basis for the determination that the need for removal of the child from the child's home will no longer exist at the end of the additional six-month period.

c. Direct the county attorney or the attorney for the child to institute proceedings to terminate the parent-child relationship.

d. Enter an order, pursuant to findings based upon the existence of the evidence required by subsection 4, to do one of the following:

(1) Transfer guardianship and custody of the child to a suitable person.

(2) Transfer sole custody of the child from one parent to another parent.

(3) Transfer custody of the child to a suitable person for the purpose of long-term care.

(4) If the department has documented to the court's satisfaction a compelling reason for determining that an order under the other subparagraphs of this paragraph "d" would not be in the child's best interest, order another planned permanent living arrangement for the child.

4. Prior to entering a permanency order pursuant to subsection 3, paragraph "d", clear and convincing evidence must exist showing that all of the following apply:

a. A termination of the parent-child relationship would not be in the best interest of the child.

b. Services were offered to the child's family to correct the situation which led to the child's removal from the home.

c. The child cannot be returned to the child's home.

5. Any permanency order may provide restrictions upon the contact between the child and the child's parent or parents, consistent with the best interest of the child.

6. With respect to a dispositional order made pursuant to section 232.52, subsection 2, paragraph "d", "e", or "f", for which the court has suspended or terminated sibling visitation or interaction, when a review is made under this section the court shall consider whether the visitation or interaction can be safely resumed and may modify the suspension or termination as appropriate.

7. Subsequent to the entry of a permanency order pursuant to this section, the child shall not be returned to the care, custody, or control of the child's parent or parents, over a formal objection filed by the child's attorney or guardian ad litem, unless the court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that returning the child to such custody would be in the best interest of the child.

8. Following an initial permanency hearing and the entry of a permanency order which places a child in the custody or guardianship of another person or agency, the court shall retain jurisdiction and annually review the order to ascertain whether the best interest of the child is being served. When the order places the child in the custody of the department for the purpose of a planned permanent living arrangement, the review shall be in a hearing that shall not be waived or continued beyond twelve months after the initial permanency hearing or the last permanency review hearing. Any modification shall be accomplished through a hearing procedure following reasonable notice. During the hearing, all relevant and material evidence shall be admitted and procedural due process shall be provided to all parties.

2001 Acts, ch 135, §10; 2007 Acts, ch 67, §3; 2007 Acts, ch 172, §5