

Types of Hearings for abuse and neglect cases:

Shelter Hearing:

- Within 48 hours after your child has been removed from your home or a complaint has been made, you will be ordered to appear for a shelter hearing.
- A representative from the Department of Human Services will discuss the conditions of your home and your family situation with the court. A child advocate, witnesses and attorneys may also be present at the hearing.
- The Court will appoint a guardian ad litem (representative of the child) and perhaps a CASA worker (which stands for “court appointed special advocate”). The guardian ad litem and CASA worker will investigate the facts and the circumstances of the case and make sure the best interest of your child is met.
- You will be given the opportunity to tell the court why the child should go home with you; however, the court may decide that your child will not go home with you at this time. In this case, you should work with the court and your social worker toward that goal.

Adjudicatory Hearing:

- The Adjudicatory hearing will be scheduled within 90 days from the date of your petition.
- The facts of your case will be examined by the court to determine if evidence proves that your child is actually being abused or neglected.
- The State will call witnesses and you or your lawyer will be able to call witnesses. The court will determine whether your child has been abused or neglected.

Dispositional Hearing:

- The dispositional hearing usually occurs on the same day as the adjudicatory hearing, but you have the right to have this hearing at a later date if you think it best.
- At this hearing, it is the court’s job to insure that your child will not become abused or neglected again.
- You may get an order from the judge requiring you to attend parenting classes, counseling or substance abuse treatment if needed.
- The court may give custody to someone else if it determines that is in the best interest of your child.
- You must follow the orders if you want to be reunited with your child. If you fail to follow the court orders, you may face some serious consequences.

Review Hearing:

- At the review hearing, the judge checks to see if you have followed all of the court’s orders.
- This hearing usually takes place within a year after the dispositional hearing. The span of time between the dispositional and review hearings is designed to give you a chance to complete the requirements ordered to you by the court.