

ROAD TO REUNIFICATION

**Abuse & Neglect Unit
Greene County Family Court
Juvenile Office**

greencountymo.org/juvenile



COURSE AGENDA

- FAMILY COURT PROCESS
- ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES
- FAMILY SUPPORT TEAM MEETING
- TREATMENT PLANS
- PARENT & CHILD – VISITATION & INTERACTION

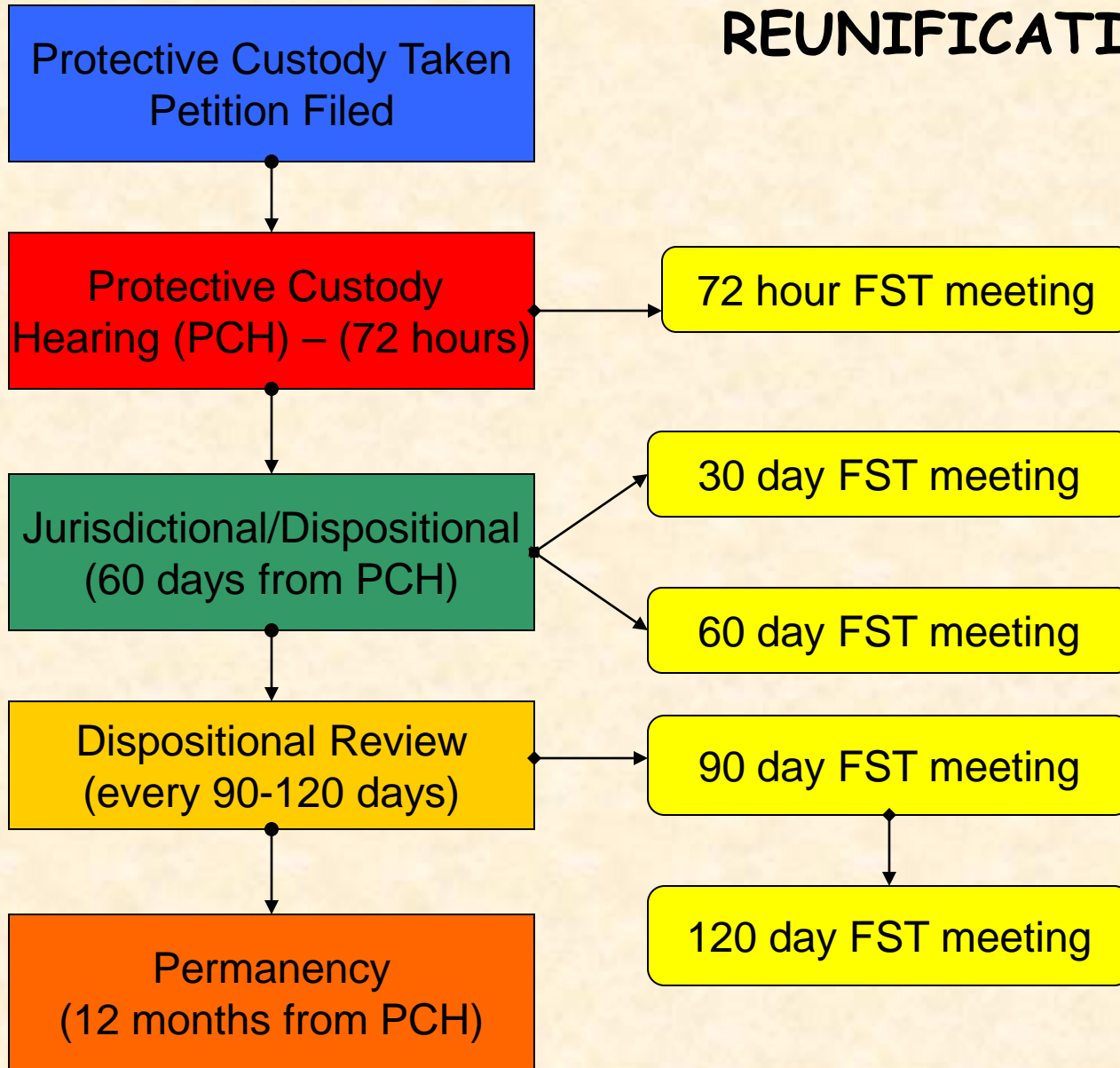


Family Court Process

- Protective Custody Hearing
(within 3 days)
- Jurisdictional/Dispositional Hearing
(within 60 days)
- Dispositional Review Hearing
(every 90-120 days until Permanency)
- Permanency Hearing
(12 months from Protective Custody Hearing)



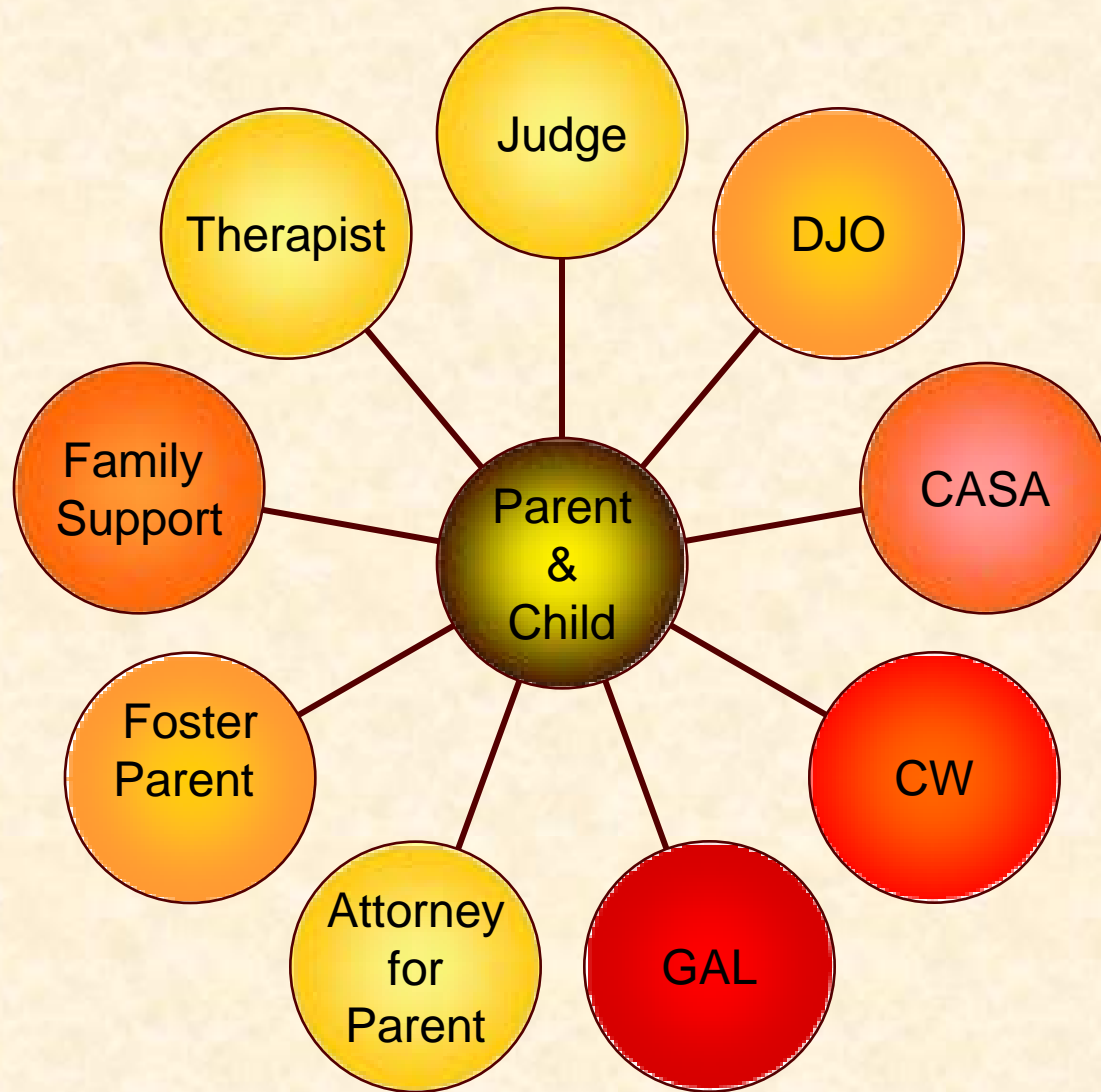
REUNIFICATION FLOWCHART



Family Support Team

A team that ensures that the necessary services and support are provided to all parties of the case.

The team would include the Parent, Case Worker, Court Appointed Special Advocate, Guardian Ad Litem, Parent's Attorney, Deputy Juvenile Officer, and any other individuals working toward the goal of reunifying the child back into the parental home.



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- PARENTS
- JUDGE – Fact finder/decision maker.
- DJO – Court Case Manager
- CD – Investigative worker
- CW – Agency Case Worker
- CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocate
- GAL – Legal Representative for child
- PARENT'S ATTORNEY
- FOSTER PARENTS

PARENTS

Roles/Responsibilities

- Visit and provide emotional support for your child.
- Provide financial support for your child.
- Stay in touch with your team members.
- Attend Family Support Team meetings and court hearings.
- Complete treatment plan

JUDGE

Roles/Responsibilities

- Hears evidence regarding your case.
- Determines what is in your child's best interest.
- Ensures that the case is progressing in a timely manner.
- Makes decisions about your case.

DEPUTY JUVENILE OFFICER

Roles/Responsibilities

- Assists in investigations.
- Make sure that court orders are followed.
- Attend Family Support Team meetings and court hearings.
- Provide information and recommendations to the Judge at hearings.

CHILDREN'S DIVISION - INVESTIGATOR

Roles/Responsibilities

- Receives hotline report.
- Investigates the concerns from the hotline.
- Provides a written report regarding the hotline.

CASE WORKER – ALTERNATIVE CARE CD, BGTM, MBCH, PRESBY, SP PART

Roles/Responsibilities

- Provides written reports for the Judge to review.
- Schedules Family Support Team meetings.
- Monitors child and their placement.
- Makes treatment referrals for the entire family.
- Conducts home visits.
- Arranges visitation for the family.

CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocate

Roles/Responsibilities

- A volunteer for your child.
- Visits with child.
- Talks to family members and other people involved with your child.
- Prepares reports for the Judge to review.
- Attends Family Support Team meetings and court hearings.

GAL – Guardian Ad Litem

Roles/Responsibilities

- Your child's legal representative.
- Represents your child's interests in court.
- Speaks with your child if age appropriate.
- Attends Family Support Team meetings and court hearings.

PARENT'S ATTORNEY

Roles/Responsibilities

- Legal representative for parent.
- Informs parent about case.
- Presents parent's case to the Judge.
- Provides information as to how the parent will reunify with their child.
- Attend Family Support Team meetings and court hearings.

FOSTER PARENTS

Roles/Responsibilities


- Provide a temporary family setting for your child.
- Make child available for and be supportive of family visits.
- Take child to school, doctor and dentist.
- Attend and participate in Family Support Team meetings and court hearings.
- Act as a mentor to the parent when appropriate.
- Keep a life-book for your child.

What is a FST Meeting?

(Family Support Team Meeting)


- An opportunity for the Family Support Team to meet together to discuss what has been happening on the case and what needs to happen.
- An opportunity for each Family Support Team member, including yourself, to provide information and ask questions.
- An opportunity to discuss and make decisions regarding visits.
- Your child may attend if appropriate.

What is a TREATMENT PLAN?

- It is your family plan for change.
 - It contains your responsibilities.
 - It contains the responsibilities of your case worker.
 - It is developed by you and your support team.
 - It is ordered by the Judge.
 - A plan for reunification.
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Treatment Plan

Common requirements on treatment plan

- Visit and provide emotional support for your child.
 - Provide financial support for your child.
 - Provide a safe home for you and your child.
 - Maintain stable employment or have a legal source of income.
 - Complete psychological evaluation.
 - Complete parenting classes.
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Treatment Plan

Common requirements on treatment plan –

- Complete drug and alcohol assessment and Treatment as recommended.
- Complete all requested drug screens.
- Attend and participate in individual and family counseling.
- Sign releases of information.
- Stay in contact with your case worker and the Family Support Team.

How to successfully have your child reunited with you.

- **Be honest and responsible.**
 - **Complete tasks from Treatment Plan.**
 - **Follow the recommendations of the service providers.**
 - **Demonstrate, by your actions, changes of behaviors and attitudes.**
 - **Provide proof of your accomplishments.**
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- A yellow pencil with a sharpened lead tip lies diagonally across the bottom of the frame, resting on a stack of white papers. The background is a soft-focus image of a notebook with blue horizontal lines.

PARENT & CHILD - VISITATION & INTERACTION

- Why visits are important.
- Resources to strengthen visitation and interaction.



IMPORTANCE OF VISITS

"Connection"

☐ Togetherness

- Your child loves you and needs to see you.
- Visits need to be consistent and happen every time they are scheduled.
- Visits need to be about you and your child being together.
 - This is not a time to talk about the case with your child or the Caseworker.



IMPORTANCE OF VISITS

“Connection”

☐ Togetherness for others

- Visits are first about you and your child spending time together.
- You will need to talk with your Caseworker and the Family Support Team if you want others, like relatives or step-parents, to visit with your child.
- Background checks may be requested on anyone visiting your child.



IMPORTANCE OF VISITS

“Preparedness”

- ❑ Bring activities for you and your child to do during the visit.
 - Keep a visit bag ready.
 - Books, familiar toys, games, Crayons/markers/pencils, paper, coloring/activity books, activity items, and snacks.
 - Bring some of the same things each time for consistency.
 - Bring something different each time for excitement.



IMPORTANCE OF VISITS

“Preparedness”

□ Visit snacks

- You do not have to bring a snack.
- If you choose to bring a snack it should be small.
- Try to bring snacks that are healthy.
- If the visit includes a meal time consider bringing a packed lunch from home.
- Bring wipes to help clean up after your child has eaten.



IMPORTANCE OF VISITS

"Interaction"

- ❑ Be sensitive, understanding and accepting of your child's actions and words.
 - Children may call other caregivers "mom" or "dad". Trust that they still know that you are "their" mom/dad.
- ❑ Pay attention show interest and join in your child's activity.
- ❑ Encourage and compliment your child.



IMPORTANCE OF VISITS

"Nearness"

- ❑ Interact with your child.
 - Be gentle and loving.
 - Give hugs and kisses.
 - Make eye contact with your child.
- ❑ Be near your child.
 - Sit on the floor if your child is playing on the floor.



IMPORTANCE OF VISITS

"Emotions"

- ❑ Watch for, respond to and support your child's feelings.
 - Comfort your child if they are sad or hurt.
 - Be excited if your child is happy.
- ❑ Encourage positive emotions.
 - Smile
- ❑ Keep your emotions calm through the end of the visit.



IMPORTANCE OF VISITS

"Exploration"

- ❑ Offer choices, but follow your child's lead to choose the activity and how long the activity will last.
- ❑ Adjust activities to match your child's interest and ability.
- ❑ Offer slight challenges to promote your child's learning and development of new abilities.
- ❑ Let your child try to problem solve (do it on their own).
 - Offer help if needed.



IMPORTANCE OF VISITS

"Communication"

- ☐ Ask open ended questions.
 - Not yes/no questions
- ☐ Talk with your child about what they are and have been doing.
- ☐ Model taking turns when talking with your child.
- ☐ Listen and respond to what your child is saying.
- ☐ Talk with your child about family members and about recent things they have been doing.



IMPORTANCE OF VISITS

"Limits"

- ☐ Don't be afraid to be the parent.
- ☐ Give your child positive directions.
- ☐ Set appropriate limits and consequences.
- ☐ Be firm and clear and follow through.
- ☐ Use distraction, redirection, choices or reasoning to help your child learn appropriate behaviors.



IMPORTANCE OF VISITS

"End of Visit"

- ❑ Transition talk.
 - Let your child know the visit will end soon and plan the next visit.
- ❑ Have a clean-up routine.
- ❑ Don't make promises.
- ❑ Leaving an object.
 - Let your child take with them a drawing that you did together.



IMPORTANCE OF VISITS

"End of Visit"

□ Saying good-bye.

- Keep the good-bye short.
- Reassure your child that you love them you will see them at the next visit.
- Keep your emotions calm.
- Give your child permission to leave with the foster parent.



Resources to strengthen visitation and interaction

- Parenting Classes
- Counseling Services
- Visit Supervisor
- Foster Parent
- Parent Aide



Resources to strengthen visitation and interaction

☐ Parenting Classes

- Help you to understand developmental needs and skills of your child.
- Help strengthen bonding and attachment with your child.
- Help strengthen communication with your child.
- Help make visits more enjoyable.
- Help you build on your parenting skills to be more aware, confident and purposeful in your parenting.



Resources to strengthen visitation and interaction

❑ Counseling Services

- Healthy way to address past issues and reflect on your parenting.
- Healthy way to work through family issues.
- Help to understand how your past affects your parenting and your child's future.
- Help to recognize unhealthy patterns and behaviors and how to choose more healthy ones.
- Therapeutic visits may be set up for some cases.



Resources to strengthen visitation and interaction

☐ Visit Supervisor

- The best source for telling others on the team how well you are interacting with your child.
- They are there to help you during your visit with your child.
- Don't be afraid to ask them for suggestions.



Resources to strengthen visitation and interaction

☐ Parent Aide

- Are assigned on some cases.
- A more personalized Visit Supervisor.
- May arrange visits outside of the agency visiting room.
- Also meet with parent individually to talk about the parents progress.
- Help the parent plans visitation activities.



Resources to strengthen visitation and interaction

☐ Foster Parent

- Can be a source of information exchange for you as a parent.
- Can become a mentor for you as a parent.



This is YOUR case. Take OWNERSHIP over it.

- The Goal for the case is Reunification.
- The Team wants you to succeed.
- Show everyone that you have learned and made changes by your actions and behaviors.



THE ROAD TO REUNIFICATION

QUESTIONS?

