**REPORT WRITING BASICS**

1. Work with your Peer Coordinator and have your report to your PC 14 days prior to

the hearing. If no PC, please get your report to your CS at least 10 days prior. As you become more experienced, this timeline can modify.

1. Use the report template (use the one for that type of hearing).
2. Be concise, clear, fact-based, and thorough.
3. Keep to **two pages** or one page for a JR.
4. Use Times New Roman typeface 12pt.
5. In the opening paragraph, include the child’s name, age, and gender; state

 the names of the parents; summarize the reasons the children came into care; and

 indicate if ICWA applies.

1. After initially introducing the adults by first and last names, refer to them as

 Ms., Mr., Mrs. with last names - Avoid FIRST NAMES.

1. The most critical part of your report is the “Recommendations:” this is the section

 the Judge will refer back to after reading the complete report:

* 1. Think about and craft your recommendations first
	2. Everything else in your report should be information that supports your recommendations
1. Make sure in “Status of Children” that you include:
	1. Health/medical status
	2. Any behavioral issues
	3. Educational needs/status
	4. How the visits go with the parents
2. Make sure the reader can “hear” the child’s voice.
3. Maintain “strengths based approach;” no “personal attacks against parents,

 relatives, CWs. There is a way to finesse it. Do not use the report to complain.

1. Try to remain objective, even with your verbs and adjectives. Instead of “mom

 claimed,” write “mom stated.” Instead of “mom is very addicted,” write “mom is

 addicted.”

1. Before quoting a professional, get an OK.
2. Do not name any person in the report who is not a legal party (relatives, foster

 parents, teachers, and etc.). Do not mention names of siblings who are not in care.

1. Do not use the names of schools or locations where a person reading the report

 could locate a child.

1. Do not overuse “I.” The focus is not on you, the focus is on the child/parents.
2. Expect edits and suggestions: we will work with you as much as possible to get the edits

 correct; however, if we are behind on time, we may have to make important edits

 without consulting you.

1. Keep the focus on the child’s best interests.

**REPORT WRITING SPECIFICS**

1. **Follow the report format:** otherwise, we have to rewrite it
2. **Judicial Review:** you cannot recommend a permanency plan change at a JR hearing, only at a perm hearing. At a JR, you can recommend setting an early perm to then change the plan.

EX: “That the case be set for an early permanency hearing to change the plan to adoption”

**Perm Hearing**: you must make a recommendation about the permanency plan

1. **Eliminate redundancies:** Judges do not like to reread the same information over and over

EX 1: Put the following in the “Recommendations”

“That Charlie remain a ward of the court in the care and custody of DHS/CW with continued placement in foster care.”

Later on, in the “Parent Status,” support this recommendation with:

Mom was required to attend five treatment groups a week; she attended no groups in June and only two groups in July. Dad has not engaged in his required treatment since the action agreement was signed. Mom is staying off and on with friends and has no stable or consistent home. As of the writing of this report, dad was reported as being homeless.

EX 2: Put the following in your “Recommendations”

“That Charlie receive counseling services.”

Later on, in the “Child Status,” support this recommendation with:

“According to the foster parent, Charlie has been exhibiting behavioral issues immediately preceding and following visits with parents. Charlie is in need of guidance to support him in working through these issues.”

1. **Concerns:** There is no need to exactly reiterate what you stated in your recommendations or your status paragraph. This should be a brief paragraph at the most.

EX 1: “To date, neither mom nor dad has completed required services, nor do they have a stable, permanent home or a manner whereby they can safely parent Charlie.”

1. **Conclusion**: One or two final sentences that really highlight the overall message you want to leave with the Judge. Statements about the need for permanency should include specifics that invoke ORS legal verbiage.

EX 1:“After three years, it is not in the best interest of Charlie for attempts to continue to reunite him with his parents.

EX 2: “As the parents are making progress and are invested in ameliorating the reasons their children came into care, this CASA is hopeful that the children may be returned to their care within three to six months.”



**§ 419B.090¹ Juvenile court**

* **• jurisdiction**
* **• policy**

(1) The juvenile court is a court of record and exercises jurisdiction as a court of general and equitable jurisdiction and not as a court of limited or inferior jurisdiction.

(2)(a) It is the policy of the State of Oregon to recognize that children are individuals who have legal rights. Among those rights are the right to:

(A) Permanency with a safe family;

(B) Freedom from physical, sexual or emotional abuse or exploitation; and

(C) Freedom from substantial neglect of basic needs.

(b) Parents and guardians have a duty to afford their children the rights listed in paragraph (a) of this subsection. Parents and guardians have a duty to remove any impediment to their ability to perform parental duties that afford these rights to their children. When a parent or guardian fails to fulfill these duties, the juvenile court may determine that it is in the best interests of the child to remove the child from the parent or guardian either temporarily or permanently.

(c) The provisions of this chapter shall be liberally construed to the end that a child coming within the jurisdiction of the court may receive such care, guidance, treatment and control as will lead to the childs welfare and the protection of the community.

(3) It is the policy of the State of Oregon to safeguard and promote each childs right to safety, stability and well-being. The State of Oregon recognizes the importance of a childs relationships with parents, siblings, grandparents and other relatives.

(4) It is the policy of the State of Oregon to guard the liberty interest of parents protected by the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution and to protect the rights and interests of children, as provided in subsection (2) of this section. The provisions of this chapter shall be construed and applied in compliance with federal constitutional limitations on state action established by the United States Supreme Court with respect to interference with the rights of parents to direct the upbringing of their children, including, but not limited to, the right to:

(a) Guide the secular and religious education of their children;

(b) Make health care decisions for their children; and

(c) Discipline their children.

(5) It is the policy of the State of Oregon, in those cases not described as extreme conduct under ORS [419B.502 (Termination upon finding of extreme conduct)](http://www.oregonlaws.org/ors/419B.502), to offer appropriate reunification services to parents and guardians to allow them the opportunity to adjust their circumstances, conduct or conditions to make it possible for the child to safely return home within a reasonable time. Although there is a strong preference that children live in their own homes with their own families, the state recognizes that it is not always possible or in the best interests of the child or the public for children who have been abused or neglected to be reunited with their parents or guardians. In those cases, the State of Oregon has the obligation to create or provide an alternative, safe and permanent home for the child.

(6) The State of Oregon recognizes the value of the Indian Child Welfare Act and hereby incorporates the policies of that Act. [1997 c.873 §2a; 1999 c.859 §22; 2001 c.686 §21; 2007 c.71 §112; 2007 c.806 §3]