

## COMMON PHRASES in DCF CARE & PROTECTION CASES

**Action Plan:** (formerly known as a Service Plan) A document which outlines tasks clients must complete before DCF closes the case.

**Admissible evidence:** Information that the court is allowed to consider when it makes decisions. There are rules that tell lawyers and judges what evidence the court can use.

**Affidavit:** A written statement signed under oath given to the court to support what you are asking the court to do.

**Appeal:** A legal process to challenge a court's decision.

**Custody:** The power to make decisions for a child, including where the child lives, who the child visits, when and where, where the child goes to school, and what medical treatment the child gets. Filed: Given to the court (clerk's office).

**Finding:** An official decision by the judge.

**Hearing:** Anything that happens in court in front of the judge. It will involve lawyers talking to the judge and may involve witnesses answering questions.

**ID (identification):** When a child in a care and protection case meets the judge. Children in these cases must meet the judge at least once. Parents are not present.

**Permanency Plan:** A document the DCF worker will write and file with the court about what DCF thinks is best for the child in the long term. This plan will include what DCF the goal for the child should be. That goal can be: stabilization, reunification, guardianship, adoption, care with kin, and alternative planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA).

**Stabilization:** DCF helps children continue living with their parents.

**Reunification:** DCF helps children go home to their parents.

**Guardianship:** Children live long term with someone other than a parent, but parents can try to get their children back later on.

**Adoption:** Children live permanently with someone other than a parent and do not go back to their parents. Parents lose their rights to their children.

**Care with kin:** Children live long term with family members or family friends who have been approved as foster parents Alternative Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA): Only for children 16 and older. DCF helps them prepare to live on their own.

**Review and Redetermination (R&R):** Any party whose rights haven't been terminated, can ask the court for a new trial after a child has been in DCF's permanent custody or a guardianship for 6 months or longer.

**Party:** Anyone who has a legal right to take part in a court case.

**Serve:** Officially tell parties in writing when to come to court.

**Stipulate:** Agree (usually refers to agreeing that DCF can keep custody of the children for at least six more months).

**Terminate:** Take away.

**TPR (termination of parental rights):** When after a trial a judge decides that a child should not go home with their parent permanently. The parent loses their rights to the child.

**Unfitness:** A legal term meaning a parent cannot care for their child. Can have many different meanings. Discuss with your lawyer how it may apply to you.

**Waive:** Give up as a right. Usually refers to a parent not asking for a temporary custody hearing.