

PROBATE CODE OF 1939 (EXCERPT)
Act 288 of 1939

712A.19a Permanency planning hearing; conditions; time limitation; reunion of child and family not required; purpose; obtaining child's views regarding permanency plan; consideration of out-of-state placement; notice; statement; return of child to parent; noncompliance with case service plan; other conditions as evidence; termination of parental rights to child; exceptions; alternative placement plans; powers and appointment of guardian; information considered as evidence; revocation or termination of guardianship.

Sec. 19a. (1) Subject to subsection (2), if a child remains in foster care and parental rights to the child have not been terminated, the court shall conduct a permanency planning hearing within 12 months after the child was removed from his or her home. Subsequent permanency planning hearings must be held no later than every 12 months after each preceding permanency planning hearing during the continuation of foster care. If proper notice for a permanency planning hearing is provided, a permanency planning hearing may be combined with a review hearing held under section 19(2) to (4) of this chapter, but no later than 12 months from the removal of the child from his or her home, from the preceding permanency planning hearing, or from the number of days required under subsection (2). A permanency planning hearing shall not be canceled or delayed beyond the number of months required by this subsection or days as required under subsection (2), regardless of whether there is a petition to terminate parental rights pending.

(2) The court shall conduct a permanency planning hearing within 30 days after there is a judicial determination that reasonable efforts to reunite the child and family are not required. Reasonable efforts to reunify the child and family must be made in all cases except if any of the following apply:

(a) There is a judicial determination that the parent has subjected the child to aggravated circumstances as provided in section 18(1) and (2) of the child protection law, 1975 PA 238, MCL 722.638.

(b) The parent has been convicted of 1 or more of the following:

(i) Murder of another child of the parent.

(ii) Voluntary manslaughter of another child of the parent.

(iii) Aiding or abetting in the murder of another child of the parent or voluntary manslaughter of another child of the parent, the attempted murder of the child or another child of the parent, or the conspiracy or solicitation to commit the murder of the child or another child of the parent.

(iv) A felony assault that results in serious bodily injury to the child or another child of the parent.

(c) The parent has had rights to the child's siblings involuntarily terminated and the parent has failed to rectify the conditions that led to that termination of parental rights.

(d) The parent is required by court order to register under the sex offenders registration act.

(3) A permanency planning hearing must be conducted to review the child's status and the progress being made toward the child's return home or to show why the child should not be placed in the permanent custody of the court. The court shall obtain the child's views regarding the permanency plan in a manner that is appropriate to the child's age. In the case of a child who will not be returned home, the court shall consider in-state and out-of-state placement options. In the case of a child placed out-of-state, the court shall determine whether the out-of-state placement continues to be appropriate and in the child's best interests. The court shall ensure that the agency is providing appropriate services to assist a child who will transition from foster care to independent living.

(4) At or before each permanency planning hearing, the court shall determine whether the agency has made reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan. At the hearing, the court shall determine whether and, if applicable, when the following must occur:

(a) The child may be returned to the parent, guardian, or legal custodian.

(b) A petition to terminate parental rights should be filed.

(c) The child may be placed in a legal guardianship.

(d) The child may be permanently placed with a fit and willing relative.

(e) The child may be placed in another planned permanent living arrangement, but only in those cases where the agency has documented to the court a compelling reason for determining that it would not be in the best interest of the child to follow 1 of the options listed in subdivisions (a) to (d).

(5) The court shall determine whether or not the agency, foster home, or institutional placement has followed the reasonable and prudent parenting standard that the child has had regular opportunities to engage in age or developmentally appropriate activities.

(6) Not less than 14 days before a permanency planning hearing, written notice of the hearing and a

statement of the purposes of the hearing, including a notice that the hearing may result in further proceedings to terminate parental rights, must be served on all of the following:

- (a) The agency. The agency shall advise the child of the hearing if the child is 11 years of age or older.
- (b) The child's foster parent or custodian.
- (c) If the parental rights to the child have not been terminated, the child's parents.
- (d) If the child has a guardian, the guardian for the child.
- (e) If the child has a guardian ad litem, the guardian ad litem for the child.
- (f) If tribal affiliation has been determined, the elected leader of the Indian tribe.
- (g) The attorney for the child, the attorneys for each party, and the prosecuting attorney if the prosecuting attorney has appeared in the case.

(h) If the child is 11 years of age or older, the child.

(i) Other persons as the court may direct.

(7) If parental rights to the child have not been terminated and the court determines at a permanency planning hearing that the return of the child to his or her parent would not cause a substantial risk of harm to the child's life, physical health, or mental well-being, the court shall order the child returned to his or her parent. In determining whether returning the child would cause a substantial risk of harm to the child, the court shall view the failure of the parent to substantially comply with the terms and conditions of the case service plan prepared under section 18f of this chapter as evidence that returning the child to his or her parent would cause a substantial risk of harm to the child's life, physical health, or mental well-being. In addition to considering conduct of the parent as evidence of substantial risk of harm, the court shall consider any condition or circumstance of the child that may be evidence that returning the child to the parent would cause a substantial risk of harm to the child's life, physical health, or mental well-being.

(8) If the court determines at a permanency planning hearing that a child should not be returned to his or her parent, the court may order the agency to initiate proceedings to terminate parental rights. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, if the child has been in foster care under the responsibility of the state for 15 of the most recent 22 months, the court shall order the agency to initiate proceedings to terminate parental rights. The court is not required to order the agency to initiate proceedings to terminate parental rights if 1 or more of the following apply:

(a) The child is being cared for by relatives.

(b) The case service plan documents a compelling reason for determining that filing a petition to terminate parental rights would not be in the best interest of the child. Compelling reasons for not filing a petition to terminate parental rights include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

(i) Adoption is not the appropriate permanency goal for the child.

(ii) No grounds to file a petition to terminate parental rights exist.

(iii) The child is an unaccompanied refugee minor as defined in 45 CFR 400.111.

(iv) There are international legal obligations or compelling foreign policy reasons that preclude terminating parental rights.

(c) The state has not provided the child's family, consistent with the time period in the case service plan, with the services the state considers necessary for the child's safe return to his or her home, if reasonable efforts are required.

(9) If the agency demonstrates under subsection (8) that initiating termination of parental rights to the child is clearly not in the child's best interests, or the court does not order the agency to initiate termination of parental rights to the child under subsection (8), the court shall order 1 or more of the following alternative placement plans:

(a) If the court determines that other permanent placement is not possible, the child's placement in foster care must continue for a limited period to be stated by the court.

(b) If the court determines that it is in the child's best interests based on compelling reasons, the child's placement in foster care may continue on a long-term basis.

(c) Subject to subsection (11), if the court determines that it is in the child's best interests, appoint a guardian for the child, which guardianship may continue until the child is emancipated.

(10) A guardian appointed under subsection (9)(c) has all of the powers and duties set forth under section 5215 of the estates and protected individuals code, 1998 PA 386, MCL 700.5215.

(11) If a child is placed in a guardian's or a proposed guardian's home under subsection (9)(c), the court shall order the department to perform an investigation and file a written report of the investigation for a review under subsection (12) and the court shall order the department to do all of the following:

(a) Perform a criminal record check within 7 days.

(b) Perform a central registry clearance within 7 days.

(c) Perform a home study and file a copy of the home study with the court within 30 days unless a home

study has been performed within the immediately preceding 365 days, under section 13a(11) of this chapter. If a home study has been performed within the immediately preceding 365 days, a copy of that home study must be submitted to the court.

(12) The court's jurisdiction over a juvenile under section 2(b) of this chapter must be terminated after the court appoints a guardian under this section and conducts a review hearing under section 19 of this chapter, unless the juvenile is released sooner by the court.

(13) The court's jurisdiction over a guardianship created under this section must continue until released by court order. The court shall review a guardianship created under this section annually and may conduct additional reviews as the court considers necessary. The court may order the department or a court employee to conduct an investigation and file a written report of the investigation.

(14) In making the determinations under this section, the court shall consider any written or oral information concerning the child from the child's parent, guardian, custodian, foster parent, child caring institution, relative with whom the child is placed, or guardian ad litem in addition to any other evidence, including the appropriateness of parenting time, offered at the hearing. If a qualified residential treatment program placement as provided in section 13a of 1973 PA 116, MCL 722.123a, is presented, the court shall approve or disapprove that qualified residential treatment program placement.

(15) The court may, on its own motion or upon petition from the department or the child's lawyer guardian ad litem, hold a hearing to determine whether a guardianship appointed under this section must be revoked.

(16) A guardian may petition the court for permission to terminate the guardianship. A petition may include a request for appointment of a successor guardian.

(17) After notice and hearing on a petition to revoke or permission to terminate the guardianship, if the court finds by a preponderance of evidence that continuing the guardianship is not in the child's best interests, the court shall revoke or terminate the guardianship and appoint a successor guardian or restore temporary legal custody to the department.

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