

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR
HARDEE, HIGHLANDS AND POLK COUNTIES, FLORIDA**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 6-20.0

RE: PROCEDURES FOR SHELTER HEARINGS IN THE JUVENILE DIVISION

WHEREAS, various issues have been identified as problems concerning the processes of filing, scheduling, and building files for Shelter hearings in the Juvenile Dependency Division, and

WHEREAS, said identified problems are hindering the administration of justice in the Juvenile Dependency Division; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to standardize the practice among all of the agencies involved as well as all divisions in the Dependency Court, and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to insure that all pleadings are properly and accurately filed and indexed by the Clerk of the Court, and

WHEREAS, the proper administration of justice in this circuit will be served by the adoption of the following administrative provisions.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is ORDERED that:

SECTION 1: APPLICABILITY

These provisions shall apply to dependency and termination of parental rights actions in the Juvenile Division of the Circuit Court of the Tenth Judicial Circuit in and for Polk County, Florida, in addition to any other administrative orders applicable to the court generally, and are intended to complement the Florida Rules of Juvenile Procedure. These provisions supersede all conflicting provisions in prior administrative orders adopted in this circuit. These provisions affect the procedures that shall be applicable during the judicial work weeks, excluding weekends and holidays.

SECTION 2: PROCEDURES FOR SHELTER HEARINGS

1. The Department of Children and Families will initiate shelter proceedings by delivering the original or copies of the Shelter Petition and the Interim Placement Report (IPR) to the Clerk of the Court and his/her designees and to the Juvenile Court

- Director and his/her designees. Said delivery shall serve as notification of the necessity for scheduling a Shelter hearing. Attachments to e-mails will be accepted.
2. Said delivery shall take place no later than 11:00 a.m. in order to be scheduled on the docket for a shelter hearing on that day. All petitions that are delivered after 11:00 o'clock will be scheduled for hearing on the following day.
 3. Upon receiving said copy of the petition and IPRs, the Clerk of the Court will assign a case number and a Dependency Division, either J-1 or J-4, to the petition. The Clerk of the Court shall also place the case on the Shelter Hearing Docket for that day.
 4. The Juvenile Court Director, upon receipt of the Shelter Petition and IPR, shall forward those documents to the judge who will be handling Shelter hearings on that particular day.
 5. The attorney for the Department of Children and Families shall file the original signed Shelter Petition in court with the judge or Clerk of the Court if they had not previously done so prior to the hearing.
 6. Shelter hearings shall begin at 1:00 p.m. in the designated courtroom.
 7. This administrative order shall be effective upon signing.

DONE and ORDERED this 20th day of August, 2009.

J. DAVID LANGFORD
CHIEF JUDGE