

California Welfare and Institutions Code

309. (a) Upon delivery to the social worker of a child who has been taken into temporary custody under this article, the social worker shall immediately investigate the circumstances of the child and the facts surrounding the child's being taken into custody and attempt to maintain the child with the child's family through the provision of services. The social worker shall immediately release the child to the custody of the child's parent, guardian, or responsible relative, regardless of the parent's, guardian's, or relative's immigration status, unless one or more of the following conditions exist:

(1) The child has no parent, guardian, or responsible relative; or the child's parent, guardian, or responsible relative is not willing to provide care for the child.

(2) Continued detention of the child is a matter of immediate and urgent necessity for the protection of the child and there are no reasonable means by which the child can be protected in his or her home or the home of a responsible relative.

(3) There is substantial evidence that a parent, guardian, or custodian of the child is likely to flee the jurisdiction of the court.

(4) The child has left a placement in which he or she was placed by the juvenile court.

(5) The parent or other person having lawful custody of the child voluntarily surrendered physical custody of the child pursuant to Section 1255.7 of the Health and Safety Code and did not reclaim the child within the 14-day period specified in subdivision (e) of that section.

(b) In any case in which there is reasonable cause for believing that a child who is under the care of a physician and surgeon or a hospital, clinic, or other medical facility and cannot be immediately moved and is a person described in Section 300, the child shall be deemed to have been taken into temporary custody and delivered to the social worker for the purposes of this chapter while the child is at the office of the physician and surgeon or the medical facility.

(c) If the child is not released to his or her parent or guardian, the child shall be deemed detained for purposes of this chapter.

319. (a) At the initial petition hearing, the court shall examine the child's parents, guardians, or other persons having relevant knowledge and hear the relevant evidence as the child, the child's parents or guardians, the petitioner, or their counsel desires to present. The court may examine the child, as provided in Section 350.

(b) The social worker shall report to the court on the reasons why the child has been removed from the parent's physical custody, the need, if any, for continued detention, the available services and the referral methods to those services that could facilitate the return of the child to the custody of the child's parents or guardians, and whether there are any relatives who are able and willing to take temporary physical custody of the child. The court shall order the release of the child from custody unless a prima facie showing has been made that the child comes within Section 300, the court finds

that continuance in the parent's or guardian's home is contrary to the child's welfare, and any of the following circumstances exist:

(1) There is a substantial danger to the physical health of the child or the child is suffering severe emotional damage, and there are no reasonable means by which the child's physical or emotional health may be protected without removing the child from the parent's or guardian's physical custody.

(2) There is substantial evidence that a parent, guardian, or custodian of the child is likely to flee the jurisdiction of the court.

(3) The child has left a placement in which he or she was placed by the juvenile court.

(4) The child indicates an unwillingness to return home, if the child has been physically or sexually abused by a person residing in the home.

(c) If the matter is continued pursuant to Section 322 or for any other reason, the court shall find that the continuance of the child in the parent's or guardian's home is contrary to the child's welfare at the initial petition hearing or order the release of the child from custody.

(d) (1) The court shall also make a determination on the record, referencing the social worker's report or other evidence relied upon, as to whether reasonable efforts were made to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from his or her home, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 306, and whether there are available services that would prevent the need for further detention. Services to be considered for purposes of making this determination are case management, counseling, emergency shelter care, emergency in-home caretakers, out-of-home respite care, teaching and demonstrating homemakers, parenting training, transportation, and any other child welfare services authorized by the State Department of Social Services pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 16500) of Part 4 of Division 9. The court shall also review whether the social worker has considered whether a referral to public assistance services pursuant to Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11200) and Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 14000) of Part 3, Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 17000) of Part 5, and Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 18900) of Part 6 of Division 9 would have eliminated the need to take temporary custody of the child or would prevent the need for further detention.

(2) If the child can be returned to the custody of his or her parent or guardian through the provision of those services, the court shall place the child with his or her parent or guardian and order that the services shall be provided. If the child cannot be returned to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian, the court shall determine if there is a relative who is able and willing to care for the child, and has been assessed pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (d) of Section 309.

(3) In order to preserve the bond between the child and the parent and to facilitate family reunification, the court shall consider whether the child can be returned to the custody of his or her parent who is enrolled in a certified substance abuse treatment facility that allows a dependent child to reside with his or her parent. The fact that the parent is enrolled in a certified substance abuse treatment facility that allows a dependent child to reside with his or her parent shall not be, for that reason alone, prima facie evidence of substantial danger. The court shall specify the factual

basis for its conclusion that the return of the child to the custody of his or her parent would pose a substantial danger or would not pose a substantial danger to the physical health, safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the child.

(e) If a court orders a child detained, the court shall state the facts on which the decision is based, specify why the initial removal was necessary, reference the social worker's report or other evidence relied upon to make its determination whether continuance in the home of the parent or legal guardian is contrary to the child's welfare, order temporary placement and care of the child to be vested with the county child welfare department pending the hearing held pursuant to Section 355 or further order of the court, and order services to be provided as soon as possible to reunify the child and his or her family if appropriate.

358. (a) After finding that a child is a person described in Section 300, the court shall hear evidence on the question of the proper disposition to be made of the child. Prior to making a finding required by this section, the court may continue the hearing on its own motion, the motion of the parent or guardian, or the motion of the child, as follows:

(1) If the child is detained during the continuance, and the social worker is not alleging that subdivision (b) of Section 361.5 is applicable, the continuance shall not exceed 10 judicial days. The court may make an order for detention of the child or for the child's release from detention, during the period of continuance, as is appropriate.

(2) If the child is not detained during the continuance, the continuance shall not exceed 30 days after the date of the finding pursuant to Section 356. However, the court may, for cause, continue the hearing for an additional 15 days.

(3) If the social worker is alleging that subdivision (b) of Section 361.5 is applicable, the court shall continue the proceedings for a period not to exceed 30 days. The social worker shall notify each parent of the content of subdivision (b) of Section 361.5 and shall inform each parent that if the court does not order reunification a permanency planning hearing will be held, and that his or her parental rights may be terminated within the timeframes specified by law.

(b) Before determining the appropriate disposition, the court shall receive in evidence the social study of the child made by the social worker, any study or evaluation made by a child advocate appointed by the court, and other relevant and material evidence as may be offered, including, but not limited to, the willingness of the caregiver to provide legal permanency for the child if reunification is unsuccessful. In any judgment and order of disposition, the court shall specifically state that the social study made by the social worker and the study or evaluation made by the child advocate appointed by the court, if there be any, has been read and considered by the court in arriving at its judgment and order of disposition. Any social study or report submitted to the court by the social worker shall include the individual child's case plan developed pursuant to Section 16501.1.

(c) If the court finds that a child is described by subdivision

(h) of Section 300 or that subdivision (b) of Section 361.5 may be applicable, the court shall conduct the dispositional proceeding pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 361.5.

358.1. Each social study or evaluation made by a social worker or child advocate appointed by the court, required to be received in evidence pursuant to Section 358, shall include, but not be limited to, a factual discussion of each of the following subjects:

(a) Whether the county welfare department or social worker has considered either of the following:

(1) Child protective services, as defined in Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 16500) of Part 4 of Division 9, as a possible solution to the problems at hand, and has offered these services to qualified parents if appropriate under the circumstances.

(2) Whether the child can be returned to the custody of his or her parent who is enrolled in a certified substance abuse treatment facility that allows a dependent child to reside with his or her parent.

(b) What plan, if any, for return of the child to his or her parents and for achieving legal permanence for the child if efforts to reunify fail, is recommended to the court by the county welfare department or probation officer.

(c) Whether the best interests of the child will be served by granting reasonable visitation rights with the child to his or her grandparents, in order to maintain and strengthen the child's family relationships.

(d) (1) Whether the child has siblings under the court's jurisdiction, and, if any siblings exist, all of the following:

(A) The nature of the relationship between the child and his or her siblings.

(B) The appropriateness of developing or maintaining the sibling relationships pursuant to Section 16002.

(C) If the siblings are not placed together in the same home, why the siblings are not placed together and what efforts are being made to place the siblings together, or why those efforts are not appropriate.

(D) If the siblings are not placed together, all of the following:

(i) The frequency and nature of the visits between the siblings.

(ii) If there are visits between the siblings, whether the visits are supervised or unsupervised. If the visits are supervised, a discussion of the reasons why the visits are supervised, and what needs to be accomplished in order for the visits to be unsupervised.

(iii) If there are visits between the siblings, a description of the location and length of the visits.

(iv) Any plan to increase visitation between the siblings.

(E) The impact of the sibling relationships on the child's placement and planning for legal permanence.

(2) The factual discussion shall include a discussion of indicators of the nature of the child's sibling relationships, including, but not limited to, whether the siblings were raised together in the same home, whether the siblings have shared significant common experiences or have existing close and strong bonds, whether either sibling expresses a desire to visit or live with his or her sibling, as applicable, and whether ongoing contact

is in the child's best emotional interest.

(e) If the parent or guardian is unwilling or unable to participate in making an educational decision for his or her child, or if other circumstances exist that compromise the ability of the parent or guardian to make educational decisions for the child, the county welfare department or social worker shall consider whether the right of the parent or guardian to make educational decisions for the child should be limited. If the study or evaluation makes that recommendation, it shall identify whether there is a responsible adult available to make educational decisions for the child pursuant to Section 361.

(f) Whether the child appears to be a person who is eligible to be considered for further court action to free the child from parental custody and control.

(g) Whether the parent has been advised of his or her option to participate in adoption planning, including the option to enter into a postadoption contact agreement as described in Section 8616.5 of the Family Code, and to voluntarily relinquish the child for adoption if an adoption agency is willing to accept the relinquishment.

(h) The appropriateness of any relative placement pursuant to Section 361.3. However, this consideration may not be cause for continuance of the dispositional hearing.

(i) Whether the caregiver desires, and is willing, to provide legal permanency for the child if reunification is unsuccessful.

(j) For an Indian child, in consultation with the Indian child's tribe, whether tribal customary adoption is an appropriate permanent plan for the child if reunification is unsuccessful.

(k) On and after the date that the director executes a declaration pursuant to Section 11217, whether the child has been placed in an approved relative's home under a voluntary placement agreement for a period not to exceed 180 days, the parent or guardian is not interested in additional family maintenance or family reunification services, and the relative desires and is willing to be appointed the child's legal guardian.