

FAMILY CODE

TITLE 5. THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AND THE SUIT AFFECTING THE
PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

SUBTITLE E. PROTECTION OF THE CHILD

CHAPTER 263. REVIEW OF PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN UNDER CARE OF
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 263.001. DEFINITIONS. (a) In this chapter:

(1) "Advanced practice nurse" has the meaning assigned by Section 157.051, Occupations Code.

(1-a) "Age-appropriate normalcy activity" has the meaning assigned by Section 264.001.

(1-b) "Department" means the Department of Family and Protective Services.

(2) "Child's home" means the place of residence of at least one of the child's parents.

(3) "Household" means a unit composed of persons living together in the same dwelling, without regard to whether they are related to each other.

(3-a) "Least restrictive setting" means a placement for a child that, in comparison to all other available placements, is the most family-like setting.

(3-b) "Physician assistant" has the meaning assigned by Section 157.051, Occupations Code.

(4) "Substitute care" means the placement of a child who is in the conservatorship of the department in care outside the child's home. The term includes foster care, institutional care, adoption, placement with a relative of the child, or commitment to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department.

(b) In the preparation and review of a service plan under this chapter, a reference to the parents of the child includes both parents of the child unless the child has only one parent or unless, after due diligence by the department in attempting to locate a parent, only one parent is located, in which case the reference is to the remaining parent.

(c) With respect to a child who is older than six years of age and who is removed from the child's home, if a suitable relative or other designated caregiver is not available as a placement for the child, placing the child in a foster home or a general residential operation operating as a cottage home is considered the least restrictive setting.

(d) With respect to a child who is six years of age or younger and who is removed from the child's home, if a suitable relative or other designated caregiver is not available as a placement for the child, the least restrictive setting for the child is placement in:

(1) a foster home; or

(2) a general residential operation operating as a cottage home, only if the department determines it is in the best interest of the child.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 751, Sec. 108, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 268 (S.B. 6), Sec. 1.36, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 108 (H.B. 1629), Sec. 4, eff. May 23, 2009.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 204 (H.B. 915), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 1.170, eff. April 2, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 262 (S.B. 1407), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1022 (H.B. 1542), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1022 (H.B. 1542), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 263.002. REVIEW OF PLACEMENTS BY COURT; FINDINGS. (a) In a suit affecting the parent-child relationship in which the department has been appointed by the court or designated in an

affidavit of relinquishment of parental rights as the temporary or permanent managing conservator of a child, the court shall hold a hearing to review:

(1) the conservatorship appointment and substitute care; and

(2) for a child committed to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, the child's commitment in the Texas Juvenile Justice Department or release under supervision by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department.

(b) At each permanency hearing under this chapter, the court shall review the placement of each child in the temporary managing conservatorship of the department who is not placed with a relative caregiver or designated caregiver as defined by Section [264.751](#). The court shall include in its findings a statement whether the department placed the child with a relative or other designated caregiver.

(c) At each permanency hearing before the final order, the court shall review the placement of each child in the temporary managing conservatorship of the department who has not been returned to the child's home. The court shall make a finding on whether returning the child to the child's home is safe and appropriate, whether the return is in the best interest of the child, and whether it is contrary to the welfare of the child for the child to return home.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 751, Sec. 109, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 108 (H.B. [1629](#)), Sec. 5, eff. May 23, 2009.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. [219](#)), Sec. 1.171, eff. April 2, 2015.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 317 (H.B. [7](#)), Sec. 23, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 263.0021. NOTICE OF HEARING; PRESENTATION OF EVIDENCE.

(a) Notice of a hearing under this chapter shall be given to all

persons entitled to notice of the hearing.

(b) The following persons are entitled to at least 10 days' notice of a hearing under this chapter and are entitled to present evidence and be heard at the hearing:

- (1) the department;
- (2) the foster parent, preadoptive parent, relative of the child providing care, or director or director's designee of the group home or general residential operation where the child is residing;
- (3) each parent of the child;
- (4) the managing conservator or guardian of the child;
- (5) an attorney ad litem appointed for the child under Chapter 107, if the appointment was not dismissed in the final order;
- (6) a guardian ad litem appointed for the child under Chapter 107, if the appointment was not dismissed in the final order;
- (7) a volunteer advocate appointed for the child under Chapter 107, if the appointment was not dismissed in the final order;
- (8) the child if:
 - (A) the child is 10 years of age or older; or
 - (B) the court determines it is appropriate for the child to receive notice; and
- (9) any other person or agency named by the court to have an interest in the child's welfare.

(c) Notice of a hearing under this chapter may be given:

- (1) as provided by Rule 21a, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure;
- (2) in a temporary order following a full adversary hearing;
- (3) in an order following a hearing under this chapter;
- (4) in open court; or
- (5) in any manner that would provide actual notice to a person entitled to notice.

(d) The licensed administrator of the child-placing agency

responsible for placing the child or the licensed administrator's designee is entitled to at least 10 days' notice of a permanency hearing after final order.

(e) Notice of a hearing under this chapter provided to an individual listed under Subsection (b)(2) must state that the individual may, but is not required to, attend the hearing and may request to be heard at the hearing.

(f) In a hearing under this chapter, the court shall determine whether the child's caregiver is present at the hearing and allow the caregiver to testify if the caregiver wishes to provide information about the child.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 10, eff. Jan 1, 1998;

Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 5, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997,

75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 83, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 2001, 77th

Leg., ch. 849, Sec. 6, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 885 (H.B. 843), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 1.178, eff. April 2, 2015.

Transferred, redesignated and amended from Family Code, Section 263.301 by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 28, eff. September 1, 2015.

Amended by:

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 317 (H.B. 7), Sec. 24, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 263.0025. SPECIAL EDUCATION DECISION-MAKING FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE. (a) In this section, "child" means a child in the temporary or permanent managing conservatorship of the department who is eligible under Section 29.003, Education Code, to participate in a school district's special education program.

(a-1) A foster parent for a child may act as a parent for the child, as authorized under 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(b), if:

(1) the rights and duties of the department to make decisions regarding the child's education under Section 153.371

have not been limited by court order; and

(2) the foster parent agrees to the requirements of Sections 29.015(a)(3) and (b), Education Code.

(a-2) Sections 29.015(b-1), (c), and (d), Education Code, apply to a foster parent who acts or desires to act as a parent for a child for the purpose of making special education decisions.

(b) To ensure the educational rights of a child are protected in the special education process, the court may appoint a surrogate parent for the child if:

(1) the child's school district is unable to identify or locate a parent for the child; or

(2) the foster parent of the child is unwilling or unable to serve as a parent for the purposes of this subchapter.

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), the court may appoint a person to serve as a child's surrogate parent if the person:

(1) is willing to serve in that capacity; and

(2) meets the requirements of 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(b).

(d) The following persons may not be appointed as a surrogate parent for the child:

(1) an employee of the department;

(2) an employee of the Texas Education Agency;

(3) an employee of a school or school district; or

(4) an employee of any other agency that is involved in the education or care of the child.

(e) The court may appoint a child's guardian ad litem or court-certified volunteer advocate, as provided by Section 107.031(c), as the child's surrogate parent.

(f) In appointing a person to serve as the surrogate parent for a child, the court may consider the person's ability to meet the qualifications listed under Sections 29.0151(d)(2)-(8), Education Code.

(g) If the court prescribes training for a person who is appointed as the surrogate parent for a child, the training program must comply with the minimum standards for training established by rule by the Texas Education Agency.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 688 (H.B. 2619), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2013.

Amended by:

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1025 (H.B. 1556), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 263.003. INFORMATION RELATING TO PLACEMENT OF CHILD.

(a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), not later than the 10th day before the date set for a hearing under this chapter, the department shall file with the court any document described by Sections 262.114(a-1) and (a-2) that has not been filed with the court.

(b) The department is not required to file the documents required by Subsection (a) if the child is in an adoptive placement or another placement that is intended to be permanent.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 856 (S.B. 2385), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 263.004. NOTICE TO COURT REGARDING EDUCATION DECISION-MAKING.

(a) Unless the rights and duties of the department under Section 153.371(10) to make decisions regarding the child's education have been limited by court order, the department shall file with the court the name and contact information for each person who has been:

(1) designated by the department to make educational decisions on behalf of the child; and

(2) assigned to serve as the child's surrogate parent in accordance with 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(b) and Section 29.001(10), Education Code, for purposes of decision-making regarding special education services, if applicable.

(b) Not later than the fifth day after the date an adversary hearing under Section 262.201 or 262.205 is concluded, the information required by Subsection (a) shall be filed with the court and a copy shall be provided to the school the child attends.

(c) If a person other than a person identified under Subsection (a) is designated to make educational decisions or assigned to serve as a surrogate parent, the department shall

include the updated information in a permanency progress report filed under Section 263.303 or 263.502. The updated information must be provided to the school the child attends not later than the fifth day after the date of designation or assignment.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 688 (H.B. 2619), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 29, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 263.0045. EDUCATION IN HOME SETTING FOR FOSTER CHILDREN. On request of a person providing substitute care for a child who is in the managing conservatorship of the department, the department shall allow the person to provide the child with an education in a home setting unless:

(1) the right of the department to allow the education of the child in a home setting has been specifically limited by court order;

(2) a court at a hearing conducted under this chapter finds, on good cause shown through evidence presented by the department in accordance with the applicable provisions in the department's child protective services handbook (CPS August 2013), that education in the home setting is not in the best interest of the child; or

(3) the department determines that federal law requires another school setting.

Added by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 27, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 263.005. ENFORCEMENT OF FAMILY SERVICE PLAN. The department shall designate existing department personnel to ensure that the parties to a family service plan comply with the plan.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 943, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 263.006. WARNING TO PARENTS. At the status hearing under Subchapter C and at each permanency hearing under Subchapter D held after the court has rendered a temporary order appointing

the department as temporary managing conservator, the court shall inform each parent in open court that parental and custodial rights and duties may be subject to restriction or to termination unless the parent or parents are willing and able to provide the child with a safe environment.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 6, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 80, eff. Jan. 1, 1998.

Sec. 263.0061. NOTICE TO PARENTS OF RIGHT TO COUNSEL.

(a) At the status hearing under Subchapter C and at each permanency hearing under Subchapter D held after the date the court renders a temporary order appointing the department as temporary managing conservator of a child, the court shall inform each parent not represented by an attorney of:

(1) the right to be represented by an attorney; and

(2) if a parent is indigent and appears in opposition to the suit, the right to a court-appointed attorney.

(b) If a parent claims indigence and requests the appointment of an attorney in a proceeding described by Subsection (a), the court shall require the parent to complete and file with the court an affidavit of indigence. The court may hear evidence to determine whether the parent is indigent. If the court determines the parent is indigent, the court shall appoint an attorney to represent the parent.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 810 (S.B. [1759](#)), Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 263.007. REPORT REGARDING NOTIFICATION OF RELATIVES. Not later than the 10th day before the date set for a hearing under Subchapter C, the department shall file with the court a report regarding:

(1) the efforts the department made to identify, locate, and provide information to the individuals described by Section [262.1095](#);

(2) the name of each individual the department identified, located, or provided with information; and

(3) if applicable, an explanation of why the department was unable to identify, locate, or provide information to an individual described by Section [262.1095](#).
Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1071 (S.B. [993](#)), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 263.008. FOSTER CHILDREN'S BILL OF RIGHTS. (a) In this section:

(1) "Agency foster home" and "facility" have the meanings assigned by Section [42.002](#), Human Resources Code.

(2) Repealed by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 , Sec. 86, eff. September 1, 2015.

(3) "Foster children's bill of rights" means the rights described by Subsection (b).

(b) It is the policy of this state that each child in foster care be informed of the child's rights provided by state or federal law or policy that relate to:

(1) abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, and harassment;

(2) food, clothing, shelter, and education;

(3) medical, dental, vision, and mental health services, including the right of the child to consent to treatment;

(4) emergency behavioral intervention, including what methods are permitted, the conditions under which it may be used, and the precautions that must be taken when administering it;

(5) placement with the child's siblings and contact with members of the child's family;

(6) privacy and searches, including the use of storage space, mail, and the telephone;

(7) participation in school-related extracurricular or community activities;

(8) interaction with persons outside the foster care system, including teachers, church members, mentors, and friends;

(9) contact and communication with caseworkers, attorneys ad litem, guardians ad litem, and court-appointed special advocates;

(10) religious services and activities;

- (11) confidentiality of the child's records;
- (12) job skills, personal finances, and preparation for adulthood;
- (13) participation in a court hearing that involves the child;
- (14) participation in the development of service and treatment plans;
- (15) if the child has a disability, the advocacy and protection of the rights of a person with that disability; and
- (16) any other matter affecting the child's ability to receive care and treatment in the least restrictive environment that is most like a family setting, consistent with the best interests and needs of the child.

(c) The department shall provide a written copy of the foster children's bill of rights to each child placed in foster care in the child's primary language, if possible, and shall inform the child of the rights described by the foster children's bill of rights:

(1) orally in the child's primary language, if possible, and in simple, nontechnical terms; or

(2) for a child who has a disability, including an impairment of vision or hearing, through any means that can reasonably be expected to result in successful communication with the child.

(d) A child placed in foster care may, at the child's option, sign a document acknowledging the child's understanding of the foster children's bill of rights after the department provides a written copy of the foster children's bill of rights to the child and informs the child of the rights described by the foster children's bill of rights in accordance with Subsection (c). If a child signs a document acknowledging the child's understanding of the foster children's bill of rights, the document must be placed in the child's case file.

(e) An agency foster home or other residential child-care facility in which a child is placed in foster care shall provide a copy of the foster children's bill of rights to a child on the child's request. The foster children's bill of rights must be

printed in English and in a second language.

(f) The department shall promote the participation of foster children and former foster children in educating other foster children about the foster children's bill of rights.

(g) The department shall develop and implement a policy for receiving and handling reports that the rights of a child in foster care are not being observed. The department shall inform a child in foster care and, if appropriate, the child's parent, managing conservator, or guardian of the method for filing a report with the department under this subsection.

(h) This section does not create a cause of action.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 791 (H.B. 2170), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Redesignated from Family Code, Section 263.007 by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 161 (S.B. 1093), Sec. 22.001(17), eff. September 1, 2013.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 1.172, eff. April 2, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 994 (S.B. 206), Sec. 86(14), eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 317 (H.B. 7), Sec. 25, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 317 (H.B. 7), Sec. 26, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 263.009. PERMANENCY PLANNING MEETINGS. (a) The department shall hold a permanency planning meeting for each child for whom the department is appointed temporary managing conservator in accordance with a schedule adopted by the commissioner of the department by rule that is designed to allow the child to exit the managing conservatorship of the department safely and as soon as possible and be placed with an appropriate adult caregiver who will permanently assume legal responsibility for the child.

(b) At each permanency planning meeting, the department shall:

(1) identify any barriers to achieving a timely

permanent placement for the child;

(2) develop strategies and determine actions that will increase the probability of achieving a timely permanent placement for the child; and

(3) use the family group decision-making model whenever possible.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 , Sec. 86(15), eff. September 1, 2015.

(d) Repealed by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 , Sec. 86(15), eff. September 1, 2015.

(e) Repealed by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 , Sec. 86(15), eff. September 1, 2015.

(f) Repealed by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 , Sec. 86(15), eff. September 1, 2015.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1324 (S.B. 534), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2013.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 30, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 86(15), eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 316 (H.B. 5), Sec. 11, eff. September 1, 2017.

SUBCHAPTER B. SERVICE PLAN AND VISITATION PLAN

Sec. 263.101. DEPARTMENT TO FILE SERVICE PLAN. Except as provided by Section 262.2015, not later than the 45th day after the date the court renders a temporary order appointing the department as temporary managing conservator of a child under Chapter 262, the department shall file a service plan.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1150, Sec. 24, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1390, Sec. 43, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 1.173, eff. April 2, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 31, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 263.102. SERVICE PLAN; CONTENTS. (a) The service plan must:

- (1) be specific;
- (2) be in writing in a language that the parents understand, or made otherwise available;
- (3) be prepared by the department in conference with the child's parents;
- (4) state appropriate deadlines;
- (5) specify the primary permanency goal and at least one alternative permanency goal;
- (6) state steps that are necessary to:
 - (A) return the child to the child's home if the placement is in foster care;
 - (B) enable the child to remain in the child's home with the assistance of a service plan if the placement is in the home under the department's supervision; or
 - (C) otherwise provide a permanent safe placement for the child;
- (7) state the actions and responsibilities that are necessary for the child's parents to take to achieve the plan goal during the period of the service plan and the assistance to be provided to the parents by the department or other agency toward meeting that goal;
- (8) state any specific skills or knowledge that the child's parents must acquire or learn, as well as any behavioral changes the parents must exhibit, to achieve the plan goal;
- (9) state the actions and responsibilities that are necessary for the child's parents to take to ensure that the child attends school and maintains or improves the child's academic compliance;
- (10) state the name of the person with the department whom the child's parents may contact for information relating to the child if other than the person preparing the plan; and
- (11) prescribe any other term or condition that the

department determines to be necessary to the service plan's success.

(b) The service plan shall include the following statement:

TO THE PARENT: THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT DOCUMENT. ITS PURPOSE IS TO HELP YOU PROVIDE YOUR CHILD WITH A SAFE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN THE REASONABLE PERIOD SPECIFIED IN THE PLAN. IF YOU ARE UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO PROVIDE YOUR CHILD WITH A SAFE ENVIRONMENT, YOUR PARENTAL AND CUSTODIAL DUTIES AND RIGHTS MAY BE RESTRICTED OR TERMINATED OR YOUR CHILD MAY NOT BE RETURNED TO YOU. THERE WILL BE A COURT HEARING AT WHICH A JUDGE WILL REVIEW THIS SERVICE PLAN.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 , Sec. 86(16), eff. September 1, 2015.

(d) The department or other authorized entity must write the service plan in a manner that is clear and understandable to the parent in order to facilitate the parent's ability to follow the requirements of the service plan.

(e) Regardless of whether the goal stated in a child's service plan as required under Subsection (a)(5) is to return the child to the child's parents or to terminate parental rights and place the child for adoption, the department shall concurrently provide to the child and the child's family, as applicable:

(1) time-limited family reunification services as defined by 42 U.S.C. Section 629a for a period not to exceed the period within which the court must render a final order in or dismiss the suit affecting the parent-child relationship with respect to the child as provided by Subchapter E; and

(2) adoption promotion and support services as defined by 42 U.S.C. Section 629a.

(f) The department shall consult with relevant professionals to determine the skills or knowledge that the parents of a child under two years of age should learn or acquire to provide a safe placement for the child. The department shall incorporate those skills and abilities into the department's service plans, as appropriate.

(g) Repealed by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 , Sec. 86(16), eff. September 1, 2015.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 268 (S.B. 6), Sec. 1.38(a), eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1406 (S.B. 758), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 1.174, eff. April 2, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 32, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 86(16), eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 263.103. ORIGINAL SERVICE PLAN: SIGNING AND TAKING EFFECT. (a) The original service plan shall be developed jointly by the child's parents and a representative of the department, including informing the parents of their rights in connection with the service plan process. If a parent is not able or willing to participate in the development of the service plan, it should be so noted in the plan.

(a-1) Before the original service plan is signed, the child's parents and the representative of the department shall discuss each term and condition of the plan.

(b) The child's parents and the person preparing the original service plan shall sign the plan, and the department shall give each parent a copy of the service plan.

(c) If the department determines that the child's parents are unable or unwilling to participate in the development of the original service plan or sign the plan, the department may file the plan without the parents' signatures.

(d) The original service plan takes effect when:

- (1) the child's parents and the appropriate representative of the department sign the plan; or
- (2) the court issues an order giving effect to the plan without the parents' signatures.

(e) The original service plan is in effect until amended by the court or as provided under Section 263.104.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 598 (S.B. 218), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 1.175, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 263.104. AMENDED SERVICE PLAN. (a) The service plan may be amended at any time. The department shall work with the parents to jointly develop any amendment to the service plan, including informing the parents of their rights in connection with the amended service plan process.

(b) The amended service plan supersedes the previously filed service plan and takes effect when:

(1) the child's parents and the appropriate representative of the department sign the plan; or

(2) the department determines that the child's parents are unable or unwilling to sign the amended plan and files it without the parents' signatures.

(c) A parent may file a motion with the court at any time to request a review and modification of the amended service plan.

(d) An amended service plan remains in effect until:

(1) superseded by a later-amended service plan that goes into effect as provided by Subsection (b); or

(2) modified by the court.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 598 (S.B. 218), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 1.176, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 263.105. REVIEW OF SERVICE PLAN; MODIFICATION. (a) The service plan currently in effect shall be filed with the court.

(b) The court shall review the plan at the next required hearing under this chapter after the plan is filed.

(c) The court may modify an original or amended service plan at any time.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.
Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1150, Sec. 25, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1390, Sec. 44, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.
Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1071 (S.B. 993), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1071 (S.B. 993), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 263.106. COURT IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICE PLAN. After reviewing the original or any amended service plan and making any changes or modifications it deems necessary, the court shall incorporate the original and any amended service plan into the orders of the court and may render additional appropriate orders to implement or require compliance with an original or amended service plan.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 598 (S.B. 218), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 263.107. VISITATION PLAN. (a) This section applies only to a child in the temporary managing conservatorship of the department for whom the department's goal is reunification of the child with the child's parent.

(b) Not later than the 30th day after the date the department is named temporary managing conservator of a child, the department in collaboration with each parent of the child shall develop a visitation plan.

(c) In determining the frequency and circumstances of visitation under this section, the department must consider:

- (1) the safety and best interest of the child;
- (2) the age of the child;
- (3) the desires of each parent regarding visitation with the child;
- (4) the location of each parent and the child; and
- (5) the resources available to the department,

including the resources to:

(A) ensure that visitation is properly supervised by a department employee or an available and willing volunteer the department determines suitable after conducting a background and criminal history check; and

(B) provide transportation to and from visits.

(d) Not later than the 10th day before the date of a status hearing under Section 263.201, the department shall file with the court a copy of the visitation plan developed under this section.

(e) The department may amend the visitation plan on mutual agreement of the child's parents and the department or as the department considers necessary to ensure the safety of the child. An amendment to the visitation plan must be in the child's best interest. The department shall file a copy of any amended visitation plan with the court.

(f) A visitation plan developed under this section may not conflict with a court order relating to possession of or access to the child.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 191 (S.B. 352), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 263.108. REVIEW OF VISITATION PLAN; MODIFICATION.

(a) At the first hearing held under this chapter after the date an original or amended visitation plan is filed with the court under Section 263.107, the court shall review the visitation plan, taking into consideration the factors specified in Section 263.107(c).

(b) The court may modify, or order the department to modify, an original or amended visitation plan at any time.

(c) A parent who is entitled to visitation under a visitation plan may at any time file a motion with the court to request review and modification of an original or amended visitation plan.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 191 (S.B. 352), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 263.109. COURT IMPLEMENTATION OF VISITATION PLAN.

(a) After reviewing an original or amended visitation plan, the

court shall render an order regarding a parent's visitation with a child that the court determines appropriate.

(b) If the court finds that visitation between a child and a parent is not in the child's best interest, the court shall render an order that:

(1) states the reasons for finding that visitation is not in the child's best interest; and

(2) outlines specific steps the parent must take to be allowed to have visitation with the child.

(c) If the order regarding visitation between a child and a parent requires supervised visitation to protect the health and safety of the child, the order must outline specific steps the parent must take to have the level of supervision reduced.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 191 (S.B. 352), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.

SUBCHAPTER C. STATUS HEARING

Sec. 263.201. STATUS HEARING; TIME. (a) Not later than the 60th day after the date the court renders a temporary order appointing the department as temporary managing conservator of a child, the court shall hold a status hearing to review the child's status and the service plan developed for the child.

(b) A status hearing is not required if the court holds an initial permanency hearing under Section 262.2015 and makes findings required by Section 263.202 before the date a status hearing is required by this section.

(c) The court shall require each parent, alleged father, or relative of the child before the court to submit the proposed child placement resources form provided under Section 261.307 at the status hearing, if the form has not previously been submitted.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 8, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 3, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 81, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1150, Sec. 26, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1390, Sec. 45, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 268 (S.B. 6), Sec. 1.37(a), eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1071 (S.B. 993), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 263.202. STATUS HEARING; FINDINGS. (a) If all persons entitled to citation and notice of a status hearing under this chapter were not served, the court shall make findings as to whether:

(1) the department has exercised due diligence to locate all necessary persons, including an alleged father of the child, regardless of whether the alleged father is registered with the registry of paternity under Section 160.402; and

(2) the child and each parent, alleged father, or relative of the child before the court have furnished to the department all available information necessary to locate an absent parent, alleged father, or relative of the child through exercise of due diligence.

(b) Except as otherwise provided by this subchapter, a status hearing shall be limited to matters related to the contents and execution of the service plan filed with the court. The court shall review the service plan that the department filed under this chapter for reasonableness, accuracy, and compliance with requirements of court orders and make findings as to whether:

(1) a plan that has the goal of returning the child to the child's parents adequately ensures that reasonable efforts are made to enable the child's parents to provide a safe environment for the child;

(2) the child's parents have reviewed and understand the plan and have been advised that unless the parents are willing and able to provide the child with a safe environment, even with the assistance of a service plan, within the reasonable period of time specified in the plan, the parents' parental and custodial duties and rights may be subject to restriction or to termination under this code or the child may not be returned to the parents;

(3) the plan is reasonably tailored to address any

specific issues identified by the department; and

(4) the child's parents and the representative of the department have signed the plan.

(b-1) After reviewing the service plan and making any necessary modifications, the court shall incorporate the service plan into the orders of the court and may render additional appropriate orders to implement or require compliance with the plan.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1071, Sec. 9, eff. September 1, 2011.

(d) Repealed by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1071, Sec. 9, eff. September 1, 2011.

(e) At the status hearing, the court shall make a finding as to whether the court has identified the individual who has the right to consent for the child under Section 266.003.

(f) The court shall review the report filed by the department under Section 263.007 and inquire into the sufficiency of the department's efforts to identify, locate, and provide information to each adult described by Section 262.1095(a). The court shall order the department to make further efforts to identify, locate, and provide information to each adult described by Section 262.1095(a) if the court determines that the department's efforts have not been sufficient.

(f-1) The court shall ask all parties present at the status hearing whether the child or the child's family has a Native American heritage and identify any Native American tribe with which the child may be associated.

(g) The court shall give the child's parents an opportunity to comment on the service plan.

(h) If a proposed child placement resources form as described by Section 261.307 has not been submitted, the court shall require each parent, alleged father, or other person to whom the department is required to provide a form to submit a completed form.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.
Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 751, Sec. 111, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1150, Sec. 27, eff. Sept. 1, 1999;

Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1390, Sec. 46, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 306, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 268 (S.B. 6), Sec. 1.38(b), eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 268 (S.B. 6), Sec. 1.39, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1071 (S.B. 993), Sec. 7, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1071 (S.B. 993), Sec. 9, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 1.177, eff. April 2, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 697 (H.B. 825), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 263.203. APPOINTMENT OF ATTORNEY AD LITEM; ADMONISHMENTS. (a) The court shall advise the parties of the provisions regarding the mandatory appointment of an attorney ad litem under Subchapter A, Chapter 107, and shall appoint an attorney ad litem to represent the interests of any person eligible if the appointment is required by that subchapter.

(b) The court shall advise the parties that progress under the service plan will be reviewed at all subsequent hearings, including a review of whether the parties have acquired or learned any specific skills or knowledge stated in the plan.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1071 (S.B. 993), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2011.

SUBCHAPTER D. PERMANENCY HEARINGS

Sec. 263.302. CHILD'S ATTENDANCE AT HEARING. The child shall attend each permanency hearing unless the court specifically excuses the child's attendance. A child committed to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department may attend a permanency hearing in person, by telephone, or by videoconference. The court shall consult with the child in a developmentally appropriate manner

regarding the child's permanency plan, if the child is four years of age or older and if the court determines it is in the best interest of the child. Failure by the child to attend a hearing does not affect the validity of an order rendered at the hearing.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 11, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 6, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 84, eff. Jan. 1, 1998.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1304 (S.B. 759), Sec. 1, eff. June 15, 2007.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 108 (H.B. 1629), Sec. 6, eff. May 23, 2009.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 734 (H.B. 1549), Sec. 85, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 263.3025. PERMANENCY PLAN. (a) The department shall prepare a permanency plan for a child for whom the department has been appointed temporary managing conservator. The department shall give a copy of the plan to each person entitled to notice under Section 263.0021(b) not later than the 10th day before the date of the child's first permanency hearing.

(b) In addition to the requirements of the department rules governing permanency planning, the permanency plan must contain the information required to be included in a permanency progress report under Section 263.303.

(c) The department shall modify the permanency plan for a child as required by the circumstances and needs of the child.

(d) In accordance with department rules, a child's permanency plan must include concurrent permanency goals consisting of a primary permanency goal and at least one alternate permanency goal.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 12, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 7, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 85, eff. Jan. 1, 1998. Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 809, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 620 (H.B. 2331), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1372 (S.B. 939), Sec. 4, eff. June 19, 2009.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 33, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 263.3026. PERMANENCY GOALS; LIMITATION. (a) The department's permanency plan for a child may include as a goal:

(1) the reunification of the child with a parent or other individual from whom the child was removed;

(2) the termination of parental rights and adoption of the child by a relative or other suitable individual;

(3) the award of permanent managing conservatorship of the child to a relative or other suitable individual; or

(4) another planned, permanent living arrangement for the child.

(b) If the goal of the department's permanency plan for a child is to find another planned, permanent living arrangement for the child, the department shall document that there is a compelling reason why the other permanency goals identified in Subsection (a) are not in the child's best interest.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1372 (S.B. 939), Sec. 5, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 263.303. PERMANENCY PROGRESS REPORT BEFORE FINAL ORDER. (a) Not later than the 10th day before the date set for each permanency hearing before a final order is rendered, the department shall file with the court and provide to each party, the child's attorney ad litem, the child's guardian ad litem, and the child's volunteer advocate a permanency progress report unless the court orders a different period for providing the report.

(b) The permanency progress report must contain:

(1) information necessary for the court to conduct the permanency hearing and make its findings and determinations under Section 263.306;

(2) information on significant events, as defined by

Section [264.018](#); and

(3) any additional information the department determines is appropriate or that is requested by the court and relevant to the court's findings and determinations under Section [263.306](#).

(c) A parent whose parental rights are the subject of a suit affecting the parent-child relationship, the attorney for that parent, or the child's attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem may file a response to the department's report filed under this section. A response must be filed not later than the third day before the date of the hearing.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 751, Sec. 112, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 13, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 8, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 86, eff. Jan. 1, 1998.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 172 (H.B. [307](#)), Sec. 24, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 108 (H.B. [1629](#)), Sec. 7, eff. May 23, 2009.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1372 (S.B. [939](#)), Sec. 6, eff. June 19, 2009.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. [219](#)), Sec. 1.179, eff. April 2, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. [206](#)), Sec. 34, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 263.304. INITIAL PERMANENCY HEARING; TIME. (a) Not later than the 180th day after the date the court renders a temporary order appointing the department as temporary managing conservator of a child, the court shall hold a permanency hearing to review the status of, and permanency plan for, the child to ensure that a final order consistent with that permanency plan is rendered before the date for dismissal of the suit under this chapter.

(b) The court shall set a final hearing under this chapter on a date that allows the court to render a final order before the

date for dismissal of the suit under this chapter. Any party to the suit or an attorney ad litem for the child may seek a writ of mandamus to compel the court to comply with the duties imposed by this subsection.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.
Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 751, Sec. 113, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 14, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 9, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 87, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1090, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Sec. 263.305. SUBSEQUENT PERMANENCY HEARINGS. A subsequent permanency hearing before entry of a final order shall be held not later than the 120th day after the date of the last permanency hearing in the suit. For good cause shown or on the court's own motion, the court may order more frequent hearings.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.
Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 15, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 10, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 88, eff. Jan. 1, 1998.

Sec. 263.306. PERMANENCY HEARINGS BEFORE FINAL ORDER.

(a) Repealed by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 324 (S.B. 1488), Sec. 7.009(c), eff. September 1, 2017.

(a-1) At each permanency hearing before a final order is rendered, the court shall:

(1) identify all persons and parties present at the hearing;

(2) review the efforts of the department or other agency in:

(A) locating and requesting service of citation on all persons entitled to service of citation under Section 102.009; and

(B) obtaining the assistance of a parent in providing information necessary to locate an absent parent, alleged father, or relative of the child;

(3) ask all parties present whether the child or the

child's family has a Native American heritage and identify any Native American tribe with which the child may be associated;

(4) review the extent of the parties' compliance with temporary orders and the service plan and the extent to which progress has been made toward alleviating or mitigating the causes necessitating the placement of the child in foster care;

(5) review the permanency progress report to determine:

(A) the safety and well-being of the child and whether the child's needs, including any medical or special needs, are being adequately addressed;

(B) the continuing necessity and appropriateness of the placement of the child, including with respect to a child who has been placed outside of this state, whether the placement continues to be in the best interest of the child;

(C) the appropriateness of the primary and alternative permanency goals for the child developed in accordance with department rule and whether the department has made reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan, including the concurrent permanency goals, in effect for the child;

(D) whether the child has been provided the opportunity, in a developmentally appropriate manner, to express the child's opinion on any medical care provided;

(E) for a child receiving psychotropic medication, whether the child:

(i) has been provided appropriate nonpharmacological interventions, therapies, or strategies to meet the child's needs; or

(ii) has been seen by the prescribing physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice nurse at least once every 90 days;

(F) whether an education decision-maker for the child has been identified, the child's education needs and goals have been identified and addressed, and there have been major changes in the child's school performance or there have been serious disciplinary events;

(G) for a child 14 years of age or older, whether

services that are needed to assist the child in transitioning from substitute care to independent living are available in the child's community; and

(H) for a child whose permanency goal is another planned permanent living arrangement:

(i) the desired permanency outcome for the child, by asking the child;

(ii) whether, as of the date of the hearing, another planned permanent living arrangement is the best permanency plan for the child and, if so, provide compelling reasons why it continues to not be in the best interest of the child to:

(a) return home;

(b) be placed for adoption;

(c) be placed with a legal guardian;

or

(d) be placed with a fit and willing relative;

(iii) whether the department has conducted an independent living skills assessment under Section [264.121\(a-3\)](#);

(iv) whether the department has addressed the goals identified in the child's permanency plan, including the child's housing plan, and the results of the independent living skills assessment;

(v) if the youth is 16 years of age or older, whether there is evidence that the department has provided the youth with the documents and information listed in Section [264.121\(e\)](#); and

(vi) if the youth is 18 years of age or older or has had the disabilities of minority removed, whether there is evidence that the department has provided the youth with the documents and information listed in Section [264.121\(e-1\)](#);

(6) determine whether to return the child to the child's parents if the child's parents are willing and able to provide the child with a safe environment and the return of the child is in the child's best interest;

(7) estimate a likely date by which the child may be

returned to and safely maintained in the child's home, placed for adoption, or placed in permanent managing conservatorship; and

(8) announce in open court the dismissal date and the date of any upcoming hearings.

(b) Repealed by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 , Sec. 86(18), eff. September 1, 2015.

(c) In addition to the requirements of Subsection (a-1), at each permanency hearing before a final order is rendered the court shall review the department's efforts to ensure that the child has regular, ongoing opportunities to engage in age-appropriate normalcy activities, including activities not listed in the child's service plan.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.
Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 751, Sec. 114, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 16, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 11, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 89, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1390, Sec. 47, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 306, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 2001; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 849, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 108 (H.B. [1629](#)), Sec. 8, eff. May 23, 2009.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1372 (S.B. [939](#)), Sec. 7, eff. June 19, 2009.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 191 (S.B. [352](#)), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 204 (H.B. [915](#)), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 688 (H.B. [2619](#)), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. [219](#)), Sec. 1.180, eff. April 2, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 262 (S.B. [1407](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 697 (H.B. [825](#)), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 35, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 36, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 86(17), eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 86(18), eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 324 (S.B. 1488), Sec. 7.009(a), eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 324 (S.B. 1488), Sec. 7.009(b), eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 324 (S.B. 1488), Sec. 7.009(c), eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 937 (S.B. 1758), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 263.307. FACTORS IN DETERMINING BEST INTEREST OF CHILD. (a) In considering the factors established by this section, the prompt and permanent placement of the child in a safe environment is presumed to be in the child's best interest.

(b) The following factors should be considered by the court and the department in determining whether the child's parents are willing and able to provide the child with a safe environment:

(1) the child's age and physical and mental vulnerabilities;

(2) the frequency and nature of out-of-home placements;

(3) the magnitude, frequency, and circumstances of the harm to the child;

(4) whether the child has been the victim of repeated harm after the initial report and intervention by the department;

(5) whether the child is fearful of living in or returning to the child's home;

(6) the results of psychiatric, psychological, or developmental evaluations of the child, the child's parents, other family members, or others who have access to the child's home;

(7) whether there is a history of abusive or assaultive conduct by the child's family or others who have access to the child's home;

(8) whether there is a history of substance abuse by the child's family or others who have access to the child's home;

(9) whether the perpetrator of the harm to the child is identified;

(10) the willingness and ability of the child's family to seek out, accept, and complete counseling services and to cooperate with and facilitate an appropriate agency's close supervision;

(11) the willingness and ability of the child's family to effect positive environmental and personal changes within a reasonable period of time;

(12) whether the child's family demonstrates adequate parenting skills, including providing the child and other children under the family's care with:

(A) minimally adequate health and nutritional care;

(B) care, nurturance, and appropriate discipline consistent with the child's physical and psychological development;

(C) guidance and supervision consistent with the child's safety;

(D) a safe physical home environment;

(E) protection from repeated exposure to violence even though the violence may not be directed at the child; and

(F) an understanding of the child's needs and capabilities; and

(13) whether an adequate social support system consisting of an extended family and friends is available to the child.

(c) In the case of a child 16 years of age or older, the following guidelines should be considered by the court in determining whether to adopt the permanency plan submitted by the department:

(1) whether the permanency plan submitted to the court includes the services planned for the child to make the transition from foster care to independent living; and

(2) whether this transition is in the best interest of the child.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 1.181, eff. April 2, 2015.

SUBCHAPTER E. FINAL ORDER FOR CHILD UNDER DEPARTMENT CARE

Sec. 263.401. DISMISSAL AFTER ONE YEAR; NEW TRIALS; EXTENSION. (a) Unless the court has commenced the trial on the merits or granted an extension under Subsection (b) or (b-1), on the first Monday after the first anniversary of the date the court rendered a temporary order appointing the department as temporary managing conservator, the court's jurisdiction over the suit affecting the parent-child relationship filed by the department that requests termination of the parent-child relationship or requests that the department be named conservator of the child is terminated and the suit is automatically dismissed without a court order. Not later than the 60th day before the day the suit is automatically dismissed, the court shall notify all parties to the suit of the automatic dismissal date.

(b) Unless the court has commenced the trial on the merits, the court may not retain the suit on the court's docket after the time described by Subsection (a) unless the court finds that extraordinary circumstances necessitate the child remaining in the temporary managing conservatorship of the department and that continuing the appointment of the department as temporary managing conservator is in the best interest of the child. If the court makes those findings, the court may retain the suit on the court's docket for a period not to exceed 180 days after the time described by Subsection (a). If the court retains the suit on the court's docket, the court shall render an order in which the court:

(1) schedules the new date on which the suit will be

automatically dismissed if the trial on the merits has not commenced, which date must be not later than the 180th day after the time described by Subsection (a);

(2) makes further temporary orders for the safety and welfare of the child as necessary to avoid further delay in resolving the suit; and

(3) sets the trial on the merits on a date not later than the date specified under Subdivision (1).

(b-1) If, after commencement of the initial trial on the merits within the time required by Subsection (a) or (b), the court grants a motion for a new trial or mistrial, or the case is remanded to the court by an appellate court following an appeal of the court's final order, the court shall retain the suit on the court's docket and render an order in which the court:

(1) schedules a new date on which the suit will be automatically dismissed if the new trial has not commenced, which must be a date not later than the 180th day after the date on which:

(A) the motion for a new trial or mistrial is granted; or

(B) the appellate court remanded the case;

(2) makes further temporary orders for the safety and welfare of the child as necessary to avoid further delay in resolving the suit; and

(3) sets the new trial on the merits for a date not later than the date specified under Subdivision (1).

(c) If the court grants an extension under Subsection (b) or (b-1) but does not commence the trial on the merits before the dismissal date, the court's jurisdiction over the suit is terminated and the suit is automatically dismissed without a court order. The court may not grant an additional extension that extends the suit beyond the required date for dismissal under Subsection (b) or (b-1), as applicable.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 17, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 12, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 90, eff. Jan. 1, 1998. Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1090, Sec. 8, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 866 (H.B. 1481), Sec. 2, eff. June 15, 2007.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 866 (H.B. 1481), Sec. 5, eff. June 15, 2007.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 38, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 317 (H.B. 7), Sec. 27, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 319 (S.B. 11), Sec. 12, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 263.402. LIMIT ON EXTENSION. The parties to a suit under this chapter may not extend the deadlines set by the court under this subchapter by agreement or otherwise.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 17, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 12, eff. Jan. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 90, eff. Jan. 1, 1997. Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1390, Sec. 48, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1090, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 866 (H.B. 1481), Sec. 3, eff. June 15, 2007.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 317 (H.B. 7), Sec. 28, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 319 (S.B. 11), Sec. 13, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 263.403. MONITORED RETURN OF CHILD TO PARENT.
(a) Notwithstanding Section 263.401, the court may retain jurisdiction and not dismiss the suit or render a final order as required by that section if the court renders a temporary order that:

(1) finds that retaining jurisdiction under this section is in the best interest of the child;

(2) orders the department to:

(A) return the child to the child's parent; or

(B) transition the child, according to a schedule

determined by the department or court, from substitute care to the parent while the parent completes the remaining requirements imposed under a service plan and specified in the temporary order that are necessary for the child's return;

(3) orders the department to continue to serve as temporary managing conservator of the child; and

(4) orders the department to monitor the child's placement to ensure that the child is in a safe environment.

(a-1) Unless the court has granted an extension under Section 263.401(b), the department or the parent may request the court to retain jurisdiction for an additional six months as necessary for a parent to complete the remaining requirements in a service plan and specified in the temporary order that are mandatory for the child's return.

(b) If the court renders an order under this section, the court shall:

(1) include in the order specific findings regarding the grounds for the order; and

(2) schedule a new date, not later than the 180th day after the date the temporary order is rendered, for dismissal of the suit unless a trial on the merits has commenced.

(c) If before the dismissal of the suit or the commencement of the trial on the merits a child placed with a parent under this section must be moved from that home by the department or the court renders a temporary order terminating the transition order issued under Subsection (a)(2)(B), the court shall, at the time of the move or order, schedule a new date for dismissal of the suit. The new dismissal date may not be later than the original dismissal date established under Section 263.401 or the 180th day after the date the child is moved or the order is rendered under this subsection, whichever date is later.

(d) If the court renders an order under this section, the court must include in the order specific findings regarding the grounds for the order.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 17, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 12, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 90, eff. Jan. 1, 1998. Renumbered

from Family Code Sec. 263.402 by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1090, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 866 (H.B. 1481), Sec. 4, eff. June 15, 2007.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 317 (H.B. 7), Sec. 29, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 263.404. FINAL ORDER APPOINTING DEPARTMENT AS MANAGING CONSERVATOR WITHOUT TERMINATING PARENTAL RIGHTS. (a) The court may render a final order appointing the department as managing conservator of the child without terminating the rights of the parent of the child if the court finds that:

(1) appointment of a parent as managing conservator would not be in the best interest of the child because the appointment would significantly impair the child's physical health or emotional development; and

(2) it would not be in the best interest of the child to appoint a relative of the child or another person as managing conservator.

(b) In determining whether the department should be appointed as managing conservator of the child without terminating the rights of a parent of the child, the court shall take the following factors into consideration:

(1) that the child will reach 18 years of age in not less than three years;

(2) that the child is 12 years of age or older and has expressed a strong desire against termination or has continuously expressed a strong desire against being adopted; and

(3) the needs and desires of the child.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 17, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Renumbered from Family Code Sec. 263.403 by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1090, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 39, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 263.4041. VERIFICATION OF TRANSITION PLAN. Notwithstanding Section 263.401, for a suit involving a child who is 14 years of age or older and whose permanency goal is another planned permanent living arrangement, the court shall verify that:

(1) the department has conducted an independent living skills assessment for the child as provided under Section 264.121(a-3);

(2) the department has addressed the goals identified in the child's permanency plan, including the child's housing plan, and the results of the independent living skills assessment;

(3) if the youth is 16 years of age or older, there is evidence that the department has provided the youth with the documents and information listed in Section 264.121(e); and

(4) if the youth is 18 years of age or older or has had the disabilities of minority removed, there is evidence that the department has provided the youth with the documents and information listed in Section 264.121(e-1).

Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 937 (S.B. 1758), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 263.405. APPEAL OF FINAL ORDER. (a) An appeal of a final order rendered under this subchapter is governed by the procedures for accelerated appeals in civil cases under the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure. The appellate court shall render its final order or judgment with the least possible delay.

(b) A final order rendered under this subchapter must contain the following prominently displayed statement in boldfaced type, in capital letters, or underlined: "A PARTY AFFECTED BY THIS ORDER HAS THE RIGHT TO APPEAL. AN APPEAL IN A SUIT IN WHICH TERMINATION OF THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP IS SOUGHT IS GOVERNED BY THE PROCEDURES FOR ACCELERATED APPEALS IN CIVIL CASES UNDER THE TEXAS RULES OF APPELLATE PROCEDURE. FAILURE TO FOLLOW THE TEXAS RULES OF APPELLATE PROCEDURE FOR ACCELERATED APPEALS MAY RESULT IN THE DISMISSAL OF THE APPEAL."

(b-1) Repealed by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 75, Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2011.

(c) The supreme court shall adopt rules accelerating the disposition by the appellate court and the supreme court of an appeal of a final order granting termination of the parent-child relationship rendered under this subchapter.

(d) Repealed by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 75, Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2011.

(e) Repealed by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 75, Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2011.

(f) Repealed by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 75, Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2011.

(g) Repealed by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 75, Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2011.

(h) Repealed by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 75, Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2011.

(i) Repealed by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 75, Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2011.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1090, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 176 (H.B. 409), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 526 (S.B. 813), Sec. 2, eff. June 16, 2007.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 75 (H.B. 906), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 75 (H.B. 906), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 263.4055. SUPREME COURT RULES. The supreme court by rule shall establish civil and appellate procedures to address:

(1) conflicts between the filing of a motion for new trial and the filing of an appeal of a final order rendered under this chapter; and

(2) the period, including an extension of at least 20 days, for a court reporter to submit the reporter's record of a trial to an appellate court following a final order rendered under this chapter.

Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 317 (H.B. 7), Sec. 30, eff.

September 1, 2017.

Sec. 263.406. COURT INFORMATION SYSTEM. The Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System shall consult with the courts presiding over cases brought by the department for the protection of children to develop an information system to track compliance with the requirements of this subchapter for the timely disposition of those cases.

Renumbered from Family Code Sec. 263.404 by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1090, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Sec. 263.407. FINAL ORDER APPOINTING DEPARTMENT AS MANAGING CONSERVATOR OF CERTAIN ABANDONED CHILDREN; TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS. (a) There is a rebuttable presumption that a parent who delivers a child to a designated emergency infant care provider in accordance with Subchapter D, Chapter 262:

(1) is the child's biological parent;

(2) intends to relinquish parental rights and consents to the termination of parental rights with regard to the child; and

(3) intends to waive the right to notice of the suit terminating the parent-child relationship.

(a-1) A party that seeks to rebut a presumption in Subsection (a) may do so at any time before the parent-child relationship is terminated with regard to the child.

(b) If a person claims to be the parent of a child taken into possession under Subchapter D, Chapter 262, before the court renders a final order terminating the parental rights of the child's parents, the court shall order genetic testing for parentage determination unless parentage has previously been established. The court shall hold the petition for termination of the parent-child relationship in abeyance for a period not to exceed 60 days pending the results of the genetic testing.

(c) Before the court may render an order terminating parental rights with regard to a child taken into the department's custody under Section 262.303, the department must:

(1) verify with the National Crime Information Center

and state and local law enforcement agencies that the child is not a missing child; and

(2) obtain a certificate of the search of the paternity registry under Subchapter E, Chapter 160, not earlier than the date the department estimates to be the 30th day after the child's date of birth.

Added by Acts 2001 77th Leg., ch. 809, Sec. 6, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.
Renumbered from Family Code Sec. 263.405 by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1275, Sec. 2(54), eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 620 (H.B. 2331), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1035 (H.B. 1747), Sec. 1, eff. June 15, 2007.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1283 (H.B. 3997), Sec. 12, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 263.408. REQUIREMENTS FOR APPOINTMENT OF NONPARENT AS MANAGING CONSERVATOR. (a) In a suit in which the court appoints a nonparent as managing conservator of a child:

(1) the department must provide the nonparent with an explanation of the differences between appointment as a managing conservator of a child and adoption of a child, including specific statements informing the nonparent that:

(A) the nonparent's appointment conveys only the rights specified by the court order or applicable laws instead of the complete rights of a parent conveyed by adoption;

(B) a parent may be entitled to request visitation with the child or petition the court to appoint the parent as the child's managing conservator, notwithstanding the nonparent's appointment as managing conservator; and

(C) the nonparent's appointment as the child's managing conservator will not result in the eligibility of the nonparent and child for postadoption benefits; and

(2) in addition to the rights and duties provided under Section 153.371, the court order appointing the nonparent as managing conservator must include provisions that address the

authority of the nonparent to:

(A) authorize immunization of the child or any other medical treatment that requires parental consent;

(B) obtain and maintain health insurance coverage for the child and automobile insurance coverage for the child, if appropriate;

(C) enroll the child in a day-care program or school, including prekindergarten;

(D) authorize the child to participate in school-related or extracurricular or social activities, including athletic activities;

(E) authorize the child to obtain a learner's permit, driver's license, or state-issued identification card;

(F) authorize employment of the child;

(G) apply for and receive public benefits for or on behalf of the child; and

(H) obtain legal services for the child and execute contracts or other legal documents for the child.

(b) The court must require evidence that the nonparent was informed of the rights and duties of a nonparent appointed as managing conservator of a child before the court renders an order appointing the nonparent as managing conservator of a child.

Added by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 182 (S.B. 314), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2015.

SUBCHAPTER F. PERMANENCY HEARINGS AFTER FINAL ORDER

Sec. 263.501. PERMANENCY HEARING AFTER FINAL ORDER.

(a) If the department has been named as a child's managing conservator in a final order that does not include termination of parental rights, the court shall conduct a permanency hearing after the final order is rendered at least once every six months until the department is no longer the child's managing conservator.

(b) If the department has been named as a child's managing conservator in a final order that terminates a parent's parental rights, the court shall conduct a permanency hearing not later than the 90th day after the date the court renders the final order. The

court shall conduct additional permanency hearings at least once every six months until the department is no longer the child's managing conservator.

(c) Notice of each permanency hearing shall be given as provided by Section [263.0021](#) to each person entitled to notice of the hearing.

(d) Repealed by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 , Sec. 86(19), eff. September 1, 2015.

(e) Repealed by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 , Sec. 86(19), eff. September 1, 2015.

(f) The child shall attend each permanency hearing in accordance with Section [263.302](#).

(g) A court required to conduct permanency hearings for a child for whom the department has been appointed permanent managing conservator may not dismiss a suit affecting the parent-child relationship filed by the department regarding the child while the child is committed to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department or released under the supervision of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, unless the child is adopted or permanent managing conservatorship of the child is awarded to an individual other than the department.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 17, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 12, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 90, eff. Jan. 1, 1997. Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 849, Sec. 8, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1304 (S.B. [759](#)), Sec. 2, eff. June 15, 2007.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 108 (H.B. [1629](#)), Sec. 9, eff. May 23, 2009.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1372 (S.B. [939](#)), Sec. 8, eff. June 19, 2009.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 885 (H.B. [843](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 734 (H.B. [1549](#)), Sec. 86, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. [206](#)), Sec. 41, eff.

September 1, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 42, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 86(19), eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 263.502. PERMANENCY PROGRESS REPORT AFTER FINAL ORDER.

(a) Not later than the 10th day before the date set for a permanency hearing after a final order is rendered, the department shall file a permanency progress report with the court and provide a copy to each person entitled to notice under Section 263.0021.

(a-1) The permanency progress report must contain:

(1) information necessary for the court to conduct the permanency hearing and make its findings and determinations under Section 263.5031;

(2) information on significant events, as defined by Section 264.018; and

(3) any additional information the department determines is appropriate or that is requested by the court and relevant to the court's findings and determinations under Section 263.5031.

(a-2) For good cause shown, the court may:

(1) order a different deadline for filing the permanency progress report; or

(2) waive the reporting requirement for a specific hearing.

(b) Repealed by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 , Sec. 86(20), eff. September 1, 2015.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 , Sec. 86(20), eff. September 1, 2015.

(d) Repealed by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 , Sec. 86(20), eff. September 1, 2015.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 17, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 12, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 90, eff. Jan. 1, 1998.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1372 (S.B. 939), Sec. 9, eff.

June 19, 2009.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 1.182, eff. April 2, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 43, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 44, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 86(20), eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 263.503. PLACEMENT REVIEW HEARINGS; PROCEDURE.

(a) Expired.

(b) Expired.

Without reference to the addition of this subsection, this section was repealed by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 86(21), eff. September 1, 2015.

(c) In addition to the requirements of Subsection (a), at each placement review hearing the court shall review the department's efforts to ensure that the child has regular, ongoing opportunities to engage in age-appropriate normalcy activities, including activities not listed in the child's service plan.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 600, Sec. 17, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 603, Sec. 12, eff. Jan. 1, 1998; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 90, eff. Jan. 1, 1998. Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 849, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., Ch. 108, Sec. 11, eff. May 23, 2009; Acts 2009, 81st Leg., Ch. 1372, Sec. 10, eff. June 19, 2009.

Reenacted and amended by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 91 (S.B. 1303), Sec. 9.003, eff. September 1, 2011.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 204 (H.B. 915), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 688 (H.B. 2619), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 1.183, eff.

April 2, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 262 (S.B. 1407), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 86(21), eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 263.5031. PERMANENCY HEARINGS FOLLOWING FINAL ORDER. At each permanency hearing after the court renders a final order, the court shall:

(1) identify all persons and parties present at the hearing;

(2) review the efforts of the department or other agency in notifying persons entitled to notice under Section 263.0021; and

(3) review the permanency progress report to determine:

(A) the safety and well-being of the child and whether the child's needs, including any medical or special needs, are being adequately addressed;

(B) whether the department placed the child with a relative or other designated caregiver and the continuing necessity and appropriateness of the placement of the child, including with respect to a child who has been placed outside of this state, whether the placement continues to be in the best interest of the child;

(C) if the child is placed in institutional care, whether efforts have been made to ensure that the child is placed in the least restrictive environment consistent with the child's best interest and special needs;

(D) the appropriateness of the primary and alternative permanency goals for the child, whether the department has made reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan, including the concurrent permanency goals, in effect for the child, and whether:

(i) the department has exercised due diligence in attempting to place the child for adoption if parental rights to the child have been terminated and the child is eligible

for adoption; or

(ii) another permanent placement, including appointing a relative as permanent managing conservator or returning the child to a parent, is appropriate for the child;

(E) for a child whose permanency goal is another planned permanent living arrangement:

(i) the desired permanency outcome for the child, by asking the child;

(ii) whether, as of the date of the hearing, another planned permanent living arrangement is the best permanency plan for the child and, if so, provide compelling reasons why it continues to not be in the best interest of the child to:

(a) return home;

(b) be placed for adoption;

(c) be placed with a legal guardian;

or

(d) be placed with a fit and willing relative;

(iii) whether the department has conducted an independent living skills assessment under Section [264.121\(a-3\)](#);

(iv) whether the department has addressed the goals identified in the child's permanency plan, including the child's housing plan, and the results of the independent living skills assessment;

(v) if the youth is 16 years of age or older, whether there is evidence that the department has provided the youth with the documents and information listed in Section [264.121\(e\)](#); and

(vi) if the youth is 18 years of age or older or has had the disabilities of minority removed, whether there is evidence that the department has provided the youth with the documents and information listed in Section [264.121\(e-1\)](#);

(F) if the child is 14 years of age or older, whether services that are needed to assist the child in transitioning from substitute care to independent living are available in the child's community;

(G) whether the child is receiving appropriate medical care and has been provided the opportunity, in a developmentally appropriate manner, to express the child's opinion on any medical care provided;

(H) for a child receiving psychotropic medication, whether the child:

(i) has been provided appropriate nonpharmacological interventions, therapies, or strategies to meet the child's needs; or

(ii) has been seen by the prescribing physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice nurse at least once every 90 days;

(I) whether an education decision-maker for the child has been identified, the child's education needs and goals have been identified and addressed, and there are major changes in the child's school performance or there have been serious disciplinary events;

(J) for a child for whom the department has been named managing conservator in a final order that does not include termination of parental rights, whether to order the department to provide services to a parent for not more than six months after the date of the permanency hearing if:

(i) the child has not been placed with a relative or other individual, including a foster parent, who is seeking permanent managing conservatorship of the child; and

(ii) the court determines that further efforts at reunification with a parent are:

(a) in the best interest of the child; and

(b) likely to result in the child's safe return to the child's parent; and

(K) whether the department has identified a family or other caring adult who has made a permanent commitment to the child.

Added by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 944 (S.B. 206), Sec. 45, eff. September 1, 2015.

Amended by:

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 317 (H.B. 7), Sec. 31, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 937 (S.B. 1758), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2017.

SUBCHAPTER G. EXTENDED JURISDICTION AFTER CHILD'S 18TH BIRTHDAY

Sec. 263.601. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Extended foster care" means a residential living arrangement in which a young adult voluntarily delegates to the department responsibility for the young adult's placement and care and in which the young adult resides with a foster parent or other residential services provider that is:

(A) licensed or approved by the department or verified by a licensed or certified child-placing agency; and

(B) paid under a contract with the department.

(2) "Guardianship services" means the services provided by the Department of Aging and Disability Services under Subchapter E, Chapter 161, Human Resources Code.

(3) "Institution" means a residential facility that is operated, licensed, registered, certified, or verified by a state agency other than the department. The term includes a residential service provider under a Medicaid waiver program authorized under Section 1915(c) of the federal Social Security Act that provides services at a residence other than the young adult's own home.

(3-a) "Trial independence" means the status assigned to a young adult under Section 263.6015.

(4) "Young adult" means a person who was in the conservatorship of the department on the day before the person's 18th birthday.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 96 (H.B. 704), Sec. 1, eff. May 23, 2009.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., 1st C.S., Ch. 3 (H.B. 79), Sec. 11.01, eff. September 28, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., 1st C.S., Ch. 4 (S.B. 1), Sec. 63.01, eff. September 28, 2011.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 456 (S.B. 886), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 263.6015. TRIAL INDEPENDENCE. (a) A young adult is assigned trial independence status when the young adult:

(1) does not enter extended foster care at the time of the young adult's 18th birthday; or

(2) exits extended foster care before the young adult's 21st birthday.

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), a court order is not required for a young adult to be assigned trial independence status. Trial independence is mandatory for a period of at least six months beginning on:

(1) the date of the young adult's 18th birthday for a young adult described by Subsection (a)(1); or

(2) the date the young adult exits extended foster care.

(c) A court may order trial independence status extended for a period that exceeds the mandatory period under Subsection (b) but does not exceed one year from the date the period under Subsection (b) commences.

(d) Except as provided by Subsection (e), a young adult who enters or reenters extended foster care after a period of trial independence must complete a new period of trial independence as provided by Subsection (b)(2).

(e) The trial independence status of a young adult ends on the young adult's 21st birthday.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 456 (S.B. 886), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 263.602. EXTENDED JURISDICTION. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (f), a court that had jurisdiction over a young adult on the day before the young adult's 18th birthday continues to have extended jurisdiction over the young adult and shall retain the case on the court's docket while the young adult is in extended foster care and during trial independence as described by Section 263.6015.

(b) A court with extended jurisdiction over a young adult in extended foster care shall conduct extended foster care review hearings every six months for the purpose of reviewing and making findings regarding:

(1) whether the young adult's living arrangement is safe and appropriate and whether the department has made reasonable efforts to place the young adult in the least restrictive environment necessary to meet the young adult's needs;

(2) whether the department is making reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan that is in effect for the young adult, including a permanency plan for independent living;

(3) whether, for a young adult whose permanency plan is independent living:

(A) the young adult participated in the development of the plan of service;

(B) the young adult's plan of service reflects the independent living skills and appropriate services needed to achieve independence by the projected date; and

(C) the young adult continues to make reasonable progress in developing the skills needed to achieve independence by the projected date; and

(4) whether additional services that the department is authorized to provide are needed to meet the needs of the young adult.

(c) Not later than the 10th day before the date set for a hearing under this section, the department shall file with the court a copy of the young adult's plan of service and a report that addresses the issues described by Subsection (b).

(d) Notice of an extended foster care review hearing shall be given as provided by Rule 21a, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, to the following persons, each of whom has a right to present evidence and be heard at the hearing:

(1) the young adult who is the subject of the suit;

(2) the department;

(3) the foster parent with whom the young adult is placed and the administrator of a child-placing agency responsible for placing the young adult, if applicable;

(4) the director of the residential child-care facility or other approved provider with whom the young adult is placed, if applicable;

(5) each parent of the young adult whose parental rights have not been terminated and who is still actively involved in the life of the young adult;

(6) a legal guardian of the young adult, if applicable; and

(7) the young adult's attorney ad litem, guardian ad litem, and volunteer advocate, the appointment of which has not been previously dismissed by the court.

(e) If, after reviewing the young adult's plan of service and the report filed under Subsection (c), and any additional testimony and evidence presented at the review hearing, the court determines that the young adult is entitled to additional services, the court may order the department to take appropriate action to ensure that the young adult receives those services.

(f) Unless the court extends its jurisdiction over a young adult beyond the end of trial independence as provided by Section [263.6021\(a\)](#) or [263.603\(a\)](#), the court's extended jurisdiction over a young adult as described in Subsection (a) terminates on the earlier of:

(1) the last day of the month in which trial independence ends; or

(2) the young adult's 21st birthday.

(g) A court with extended jurisdiction described by this section is not required to conduct periodic hearings described in this section for a young adult during trial independence and may not compel a young adult who has elected to not enter or has exited extended foster care to attend a court hearing. A court with extended jurisdiction during trial independence may, at the request of a young adult, conduct a hearing described by Subsection (b) or by Section [263.6021](#) to review any transitional living services the young adult is receiving during trial independence.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 96 (H.B. [704](#)), Sec. 1, eff. May 23, 2009.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., 1st C.S., Ch. 3 (H.B. 79), Sec. 11.02, eff. September 28, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., 1st C.S., Ch. 4 (S.B. 1), Sec. 63.02, eff. September 28, 2011.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 456 (S.B. 886), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 263.6021. VOLUNTARY EXTENDED JURISDICTION FOR YOUNG ADULT RECEIVING TRANSITIONAL LIVING SERVICES.

(a) Notwithstanding Section 263.602, a court that had jurisdiction over a young adult on the day before the young adult's 18th birthday may, at the young adult's request, render an order that extends the court's jurisdiction beyond the end of trial independence if the young adult receives transitional living services from the department.

(b) Unless the young adult reenters extended foster care before the end of the court's extended jurisdiction described by Subsection (a), the extended jurisdiction of the court under this section terminates on the earlier of:

(1) the young adult's 21st birthday; or

(2) the date the young adult withdraws consent to the extension of the court's jurisdiction in writing or in court.

(c) At the request of a young adult who is receiving transitional living services from the department and who consents to voluntary extension of the court's jurisdiction under this section, the court may hold a hearing to review the services the young adult is receiving.

(d) Before a review hearing scheduled under this section, the department must file with the court a report summarizing the young adult's transitional living services plan, services being provided to the young adult under that plan, and the young adult's progress in achieving independence.

(e) If, after reviewing the report and any additional testimony and evidence presented at the hearing, the court determines that the young adult is entitled to additional services, the court may order the department to take appropriate action to ensure that the young adult receives those services.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., 1st C.S., Ch. 3 (H.B. 79), Sec. 11.03, eff. September 28, 2011.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., 1st C.S., Ch. 4 (S.B. 1), Sec. 63.03, eff. September 28, 2011.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 456 (S.B. 886), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 263.603. EXTENDED JURISDICTION TO DETERMINE GUARDIANSHIP. (a) Notwithstanding Section 263.6021, if the court believes that a young adult may be incapacitated as defined by Section 1002.017(2), Estates Code, the court may extend its jurisdiction on its own motion without the young adult's consent to allow the department to refer the young adult to the Department of Aging and Disability Services for guardianship services as required by Section 48.209, Human Resources Code.

(b) The extended jurisdiction of the court under this section terminates on the earliest of the date:

(1) the Department of Aging and Disability Services determines a guardianship is not appropriate under Chapter 161, Human Resources Code;

(2) a court with probate jurisdiction denies the application to appoint a guardian; or

(3) a guardian is appointed and qualifies under the Estates Code.

(c) If the Department of Aging and Disability Services determines a guardianship is not appropriate, or the court with probate jurisdiction denies the application to appoint a guardian, the court under Subsection (a) may continue to extend its jurisdiction over the young adult only as provided by Section 263.602 or 263.6021.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subchapter, a young adult for whom a guardian is appointed and qualifies is not considered to be in extended foster care or trial independence and the court's jurisdiction ends on the date the guardian for the young adult is appointed and qualifies unless the guardian requests the extended jurisdiction of the court under Section 263.604.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 96 (H.B. 704), Sec. 1, eff. May 23, 2009.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., 1st C.S., Ch. 3 (H.B. 79), Sec. 11.04, eff. September 28, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., 1st C.S., Ch. 4 (S.B. 1), Sec. 63.04, eff. September 28, 2011.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 456 (S.B. 886), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 324 (S.B. 1488), Sec. 22.020, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 263.604. GUARDIAN'S CONSENT TO EXTENDED JURISDICTION.

(a) A guardian appointed for a young adult may request that the court extend the court's jurisdiction over the young adult.

(b) A court that extends its jurisdiction over a young adult for whom a guardian is appointed may not issue an order that conflicts with an order entered by the probate court that has jurisdiction over the guardianship proceeding.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 96 (H.B. 704), Sec. 1, eff. May 23, 2009.

Sec. 263.605. CONTINUED OR RENEWED APPOINTMENT OF ATTORNEY AD LITEM, GUARDIAN AD LITEM, OR VOLUNTEER ADVOCATE. A court with extended jurisdiction under this subchapter may continue or renew the appointment of an attorney ad litem, guardian ad litem, or volunteer advocate for the young adult to assist the young adult in accessing services the young adult is entitled to receive from the department or any other public or private service provider.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 96 (H.B. 704), Sec. 1, eff. May 23, 2009.

Sec. 263.606. DUTIES OF ATTORNEY OR GUARDIAN AD LITEM. An attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem appointed for a young adult who receives services in the young adult's own home from a service provider or resides in an institution that is licensed, certified, or verified by a state agency other than the department shall assist

the young adult as necessary to ensure that the young adult receives appropriate services from the service provider or institution, or the state agency that regulates the service provider or institution.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 96 (H.B. 704), Sec. 1, eff. May 23, 2009.

Sec. 263.607. PROHIBITED APPOINTMENTS AND ORDERS. (a) The court may not appoint the department or the Department of Aging and Disability Services as the managing conservator or guardian of a young adult.

(b) A court may not order the department to provide a service to a young adult unless the department:

(1) is authorized to provide the service under state law; and

(2) is appropriated money to provide the service in an amount sufficient to comply with the court order and the department's obligations to other young adults for whom the department is required to provide similar services.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 96 (H.B. 704), Sec. 1, eff. May 23, 2009.

Sec. 263.608. RIGHTS OF YOUNG ADULT. A young adult who consents to the continued jurisdiction of the court has the same rights as any other adult of the same age.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 96 (H.B. 704), Sec. 1, eff. May 23, 2009.