Reasonable Efforts Findings Checklist

Best Practice Tip: At the beginning of each hearing, consider swearing in the parent(s), social worker, and guardian ad litem if testimony about reasonable efforts is taken.

Ex Parte Emergency Removal Hearing

Tex. Fam. Code §§ 262.102(a)(6), 262.107(a)(5)

- What specific efforts did DFPS make to prevent removal?
- Were DFPS' efforts to locate all parents reasonable based on the circumstances?
- If the child was already removed, what efforts did DFPS make or what efforts can DFPS make today to eliminate the need for removal?
- Are DFPS' efforts reasonable based on the circumstances of the child and each parent?

Adversary Hearing

Tex. Fam. Code § 262.201(g)(2), (3), (g-1)(2)

- What specific efforts did DFPS make to prevent removal?
- What efforts did DFPS make or what efforts can DFPS make to enable the child to return home? (Ask the parents and all parties and participants for input.)
- What efforts did DFPS make to enable possession by a parent who was not involved in the removal?
- Has DFPS made reasonable efforts to locate any missing or unknown parents?
- Are DFPS' efforts reasonable based on the circumstances of the child and each parent?
- If placement with a parent is not currently an option, what efforts did DFPS make to place the child with a relative or kinship caregiver?

Status Hearing

Tex. Fam. Code § 263.202(b)(1)

- Does the service plan ensure that DFPS makes reasonable efforts to address the conditions leading to removal and reunify the family?
- Is the service plan narrowly tailored to address the individualized needs of the child and each parent?
- Are DFPS' efforts reasonable based on the circumstances of the child and each parent?
- Has DFPS made reasonable efforts to locate any missing or unknown parents?
- If placement with a parent is not currently an option, what efforts did DFPS make to place the child with a relative or kinship caregiver?

Permanency Hearing Prior to Final Order

Tex. Fam. Code § 263.306(a-1)(5)(C)

- What specific efforts did DFPS make to finalize the primary and concurrent permanency goals for the child?
- What specific efforts did DFPS make to address the conditions leading to removal and reunify the child and family?
- What specific efforts did DFPS make to finalize an alternative permanent plan for the child?
- If there continue to be any missing or unknown parents, has DFPS made reasonable efforts to locate them?
- Are DFPS' efforts reasonable based on the circumstances of the child and each parent?
- If placement with a parent is not currently an option, what efforts did DFPS make to place the child with a relative or kinship caregiver?

Reasonable Efforts Findings Checklist

continued

Final Hearing

Tex. Fam. Code § 161.001(f)-(g)

- What specific efforts did DFPS make to return the child to the parent prior to the commencement of a trial on the merits?
- Is there a continuing danger to the child in the home despite reasonable efforts being made?

Permanency Hearing After Final Order

Tex. Fam. Code § 263.5031(a)(4)(E)

- What specific efforts did DFPS make to finalize permanency for the child, including continued efforts to locate and identify safe and appropriate relatives and kinship caregivers?
- Are DFPS' efforts reasonable based on the circumstances of the child?
- If final permanency was not achieved, what efforts did DFPS make to achieve final permanency for the child?
- Has DFPS made reasonable efforts to determine whether a parent's circumstances have materially and substantially changed so that they may be considered a safe and appropriate option for the child?

