

**STANDING ORDER ON DISCOVERY
IN CASES INVOLVING CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES**

In making this Order, the District Courts of Hunt County, Texas have taken into account (1) the best interests of the child(ren), (2) the rights of the parent(s), (3) the significant amount of disclosure routinely made through statutorily required court reports and review hearings, and (4) the publicly funded nature of this special statutory litigation. This Order is created to assist the parties in their representation of their respective clients, and is intended only to apply to litigation where the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) has filed litigation under Subtitle E of the Texas Family Code.

IT IS, THEREFORE, ORDERED:

1. A party or ad litem for the child(ren) may undertake whatever investigation that they may deem appropriate and whatever formal discovery that is authorized by this Order. In addition, the court shall carefully consider motions for discovery provided by this Order as the need arises. However, the Court encourages cooperation to ensure full disclosure without costly and time consuming discovery.
2. **INTERROGATORIES.** Except with leave of court, a party or ad litem for the child may not serve interrogatories.
3. **DEPOSITIONS.** Except with leave of court, a party or ad litem may not take depositions.
4. **PRODUCTION.** Except as provided by this Order, a party or ad litem may not serve a request for production without leave of court. TDFPS shall produce a copy of the deidentified case record no less than thirty (30) days prior to trial. A "deidentified case record" is a COMPLETE case record with any confidential information redacted. After the record is produced, TDFPS shall supplement the record as required by the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

Upon the written request of a parent or ad litem, in a reasonable time and at a reasonable place, TDFPS shall make available for review all videos, audio, and/or photographs relevant to the case.

No more than five (5) days following the entry of temporary orders, a parent shall sign a release of information for all medical, psychological or psychiatric records, and for all treatment records, including but not limited to records related to drug and/or alcohol abuse.

5. **DISCLOSURE.** Notwithstanding other applicable law, all parties, including the ad litem for the children, shall disclose, within ten (10) days of the date of trial, the following information:

(a) Each fact witness that may be called, their name, address and telephone number, and a brief statement as to their connection with the case;

(b) Each expert witness that may be called, their name, address and telephone number, and a brief statement of the subject matter of their testimony;

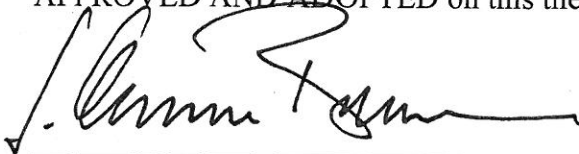
(c) All documentary evidence in the possession of TDFPS or the attorney ad litem which is not found in the case record that may be offered into evidence. Such evidence which comes into the possession of TDFPS or the attorney ad litem less than ten (10) days prior to the date of trial shall be disclosed when obtained;

(d) A list of all video recordings, audio recordings and photographs that may be offered into evidence. All such video recordings, audio recordings and photographs shall be made available for inspection at a reasonable time and place, pursuant to paragraph 4 above.

6. PLEADING DEADLINES. Except with leave of court, all pleadings must be amended at least thirty (30) days prior to trial.

7. SERVICE. All parties who do not have an attorney shall maintain a current address on file with the District Clerk of Hunt County, Texas. Pursuant to the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, a notice to a *pro se* party may be made by notice in open court, or personal service, or service to the current address on file with the District Clerk by sending notice by both certified mail and first class mail.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED on this the 25 day of February, 2021.



Judge J. Andrew Bench
196th Judicial District of Texas



Judge Keli Aiken
354th Judicial District of Texas