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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**FAMILY DIVISION RULES**

5.1 APPLICABILITY OF RULES; SANCTIONS

(a) Applicability of Rules. These Rules apply in all departments of the Family Law Division. Local Rule 1.1 defines “counsel” as including self-represented litigants and attorneys. Both will be held to the same standards of practice and procedure.

(b) Sanctions. For any noncompliance with these rules, the court may set an order to show cause why sanctions or other penalties should not be imposed pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 575.2.

(Rule 5.1 new and effective July 1, 2011)

5.2 COVER SHEET

The first paper filed by the petitioner in an action or proceeding must be accompanied by a Family Law Case Cover Sheet, (FAM020). All Family Law Division forms are located at the court’s website [www.lacourt.org](http://www.lacourt.org), select Divisions, Family Law.

(Rule 5.2 [7/1/2011, 5/17/2013] amended and effective July 1, 2020)

5.3 SESSION HOURS AND CALENDARING

(a) Remote Appearances for Hearings:

(1) The court may permit in-person or remote hearing appearances for parties as defined in Family Code section 6303 and witnesses for domestic violence and other restraining order matters.

(2) All other remote appearances are pursuant to California Rules of Court, rule 3.672.

(3) Information for registering and appearing remotely for court hearings is available on the court’s public website or by contacting the court’s self-help center.

(b) Ex Parte Application. An *ex parte* application and order, including notice thereof, must comply with California Rules of Court, rules 5.151-5.169, except for good cause shown or as otherwise provided by law. In a Domestic Violence Prevention Act proceeding, an application may be made without notice pursuant to Family Code section 6300.

(1) Restraining Order Ex Parte Application. An *ex parte* application for temporary restraining order or other order under the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (Fam. Code, § 6200 *et seq.*) and other *ex parte* application for temporary restraining order in a matter specifically assigned to the Family Law Division may be either electronically filed 24 hours a day or physically delivered to the clerk’s office in any district courthouse necessary to ensure the safety of the requesting party. Applications for a temporary restraining order or other order under the Domestic Violence Prevention Act filed on a court day before 3:00 p.m. will be ruled on the same day. Applications filed on a court day after 3:00 p.m. or on a non-court day will be ruled on the next court day.

(2) Family Law Ex Parte Application:

(A) Timing. A party bringing an *ex parte* application on a ground other than specified in subsection (b)(1) above, for which notice was provided, must file the application before 10:00 a.m. on the day for which notice was provided. If notice was not provided, a party must file the application before 10:00 a.m. on the day on which the applicant seeks the order.

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(B) Presentation of Application. A party must file the *ex parte* application electronically or by physically delivering it to the clerk’s office of the district courthouse to which the case is assigned.

(C) Opposition. A party must file any papers in opposition to the *ex parte* application before 10:00 a.m. on the day for which notice was provided. The opposition papers must be filed electronically or by physically delivering them to the clerk’s office of the district courthouse to which the case is assigned.

(D) Hearing. The court may make emergency orders based on the documents submitted or may set a hearing before ruling on an *ex parte* application. The court will provide reasonable notice of such hearing to permit in-person or remote appearances.

(E) Service. A party bringing an *ex parte* application and a party providing written opposition must serve the papers on the other party or on the other party’s attorney at the first reasonable opportunity.

(c) Calendaring a Noticed Motion and Trial

(1) Request for Order and Other Noticed Motion: A request for an order and other motion hearings are generally set at 8:30 a.m. on court days not otherwise reserved for trials or other proceedings, unless otherwise ordered by the court. At the time of presenting the request or other motion, the filing clerk will set the matter in the assigned department only on the days available therefor. The moving papers must include on the face page and caption of form FL-300 the exact nature of the request for order or other non-Family Code request that is included in the request or motion.

(2) Trials and Family Code Section 217 Hearings: The department to which the case is assigned will set trial, a Family Code section 217 hearing, and related proceedings pursuant to Local Rule 5.13 at times and days available in that department.

(Rule 5.3 [7/1/2011, 1/1/2012, 5/17/2013, 1/1/2014, 7/1/2017, 7/1/2020, 11/2/2020]  
amended and effective January 1, 2024)

#### 5.4 FAMILY LAW DIVISION RELATED CASES

Family law cases are related if they involve the same parties and are based on issues governed by the Family Code or by the guardianship provisions of the Probate Code. A Family Law case may be related to one or more Family Law cases, Probate cases, or cases brought under Code of Civil Procedure section 527.6 (*See* Cal. Rules of Court, rule 5.440.) Related family law cases must be assigned to the same department except as provided in Local Rule 5.5.

Counsel in any related case must promptly serve and file a notice of related cases as required by California Rules of Court, rules 3.300(a) and (b).

(Rule 5.4 [7/1/2011, 5/17/2013] amended and effective July 1, 2020)

#### 5.5 TRANSFER OF RELATED FAMILY LAW CASES

A department to which a related family law case is assigned may transfer the case to another family law department, or may cause another related family law case to be transferred to itself. Related family law cases must be transferred, except for good cause, to the department to which the lead case is assigned, according to the following guidelines.

(1) The first filed marital or Registered Domestic Partnership status case (dissolution, legal separation or nullity) must be the lead case;

(2) The first filed parentage case (Uniform Parentage Act) must be the lead case when there is no marital status case or Registered Domestic Partnership case;

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(3) Government parentage and support cases may be related to other family law cases pursuant to Local Rule 5.24;

(4) The first filed action for exclusive custody (Fam. Code, § 3120) must be the lead case when there is no marital status or parentage case;

(5) A Domestic Violence Prevention Act (“DVPA”) case must not be the lead case over any other type of family law case except:

(A) When a case is opened to receive an order closing a dependency case involving a minor child also identified in the DVPA case. In that circumstance, the two cases must be related with the DVPA case as the lead case. In the event that the DVPA case is dismissed, the case opened to receive an order closing a dependency case will remain in the court to which it was assigned as a related case; or

(B) When a case is brought under Code of Civil Procedure section 527.6 in which event the DVPA case shall be the lead case.

(6) A case opened to receive an order closing a dependency case must not be a lead case over any other type of family law case, and must be related to any other family law case involving the same minor child.

A department assigned related cases may consolidate or dismiss any of those cases as permitted by law.

(Rule 5.5 [7/1/2011, 1/1/2012] amended and effective July 1, 2020)

## 5.6 ELECTRONIC FILING

(a) Mandatory Electronic Filing. Except as otherwise provided in this rule, a represented party in a family law action must file documents electronically. The filer must use an approved electronic filing service provider (“EFSP”). EFSP information is available on the court’s website at [www.lacourt.org](http://www.lacourt.org).

(b) Litigants Exempt from Mandatory Electronic Filing.

(1) A self-represented litigant is exempt from mandatory electronic filing requirements. Although not required, self-represented litigants are encouraged to participate in electronic filing and service.

(2) A represented party may apply for exemption from electronic filing requirements.

(3) The Local Child Support Agency and Department of Child Support Services need not use an EFSP and may instead electronically file documents in accordance with the statewide Department of Child Support Services filing interface and as agreed with the court.

(c) Documents That May Not Be Filed Electronically. The following documents may not be filed electronically:

(1) A challenge for cause or a peremptory challenge of a judicial officer pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure sections 170.3 or 170.6.

(2) Bond or undertaking documents.

(3) Trial and evidentiary hearing exhibits.

(4) Documents filed in a case initiated by the Local Child Support Agency, except as specified in section (b) of this rule.

(d) Lodgments. Documents attached to a Notice of Lodgment may be lodged in paper form. The document entitled "Notice of Lodgment" must be filed electronically. When a litigant requests that part or all of a document be sealed, the litigant must electronically file the motion or application to seal

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and must provide a courtesy copy of the electronically filed motion or application with the documents lodged conditionally under seal.

(e) Technical Requirements.

(1) Documents must be electronically filed in PDF, text searchable format.

(2) Declarations, proofs of service, and exhibits to documents must be text searchable when technologically feasible without impairment of the document's image and must be bookmarked within the document.

(3) Each document must be electronically filed as a separate PDF document.

(4) Multiple documents relating to one case may be uploaded in one envelope transaction except that a writ or abstract must be submitted in a separate envelope.

(5) The court will send court-generated documents to the email address the filing party registered with the EFSP. The filing party must timely serve all other persons entitled to notice.

(f) Restraining Order. A Restraining Order *ex parte* application may be filed electronically or in paper form.

(g) Hearing Date. The court's case management system will automatically schedule the hearing on a request for order on the next available date. A party may request a change to the hearing date by submitting form LASC FAM 218, REQUEST TO CONTINUE HEARING DATE FOR A REQUEST FOR ORDER OR MOTION, AND ORDER THEREON (FAMILY LAW) at least 45 calendar days before the hearing date. LASC FAM 218 may not be used to request to continue the hearing of any restraining order, mandatory settlement conference, order to show cause, or trial.

(Rule 5.6 new and effective July 1, 2023)

**5.7 RESERVED**

(Rule 5.7 [7/1/2011, 1/1/2012] **REPEALED** effective July 1, 2017)

**5.8 RESERVED**

(Rule 5.8 [as EVIDENTIARY OBJECTIONS 7/1/2011]  
**REPEALED** and effective May 17, 2013)

**5.9 FINANCIAL DECLARATIONS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

The parties must completely fill in all blanks on financial declarations (including the Income and Expense Declaration), as required by California Rules of Court, rule 5.92. If a party claims that a previously-filed financial declaration is "current" within the meaning of California Rules of Court, rule 5.427(d), a copy must be attached to the moving or responding papers.

In addition to the schedules and pay stubs required to be attached to the Income and Expense Declaration, the parties must bring to the hearing copies of state and federal income tax returns (including all supporting schedules) and all loan applications (whether or not the loan was granted) for the last two years.

(Rule 5.9 [7/1/2011, 5/17/2013] amended and effective July 1, 2017)

**5.10 TEMPORARY SPOUSAL SUPPORT**

In determining the proper amount of temporary spousal support, the court may use the guideline developed in Santa Clara County.

(Rule 5.10 [as EVIDENCE OF ATTORNEYS' FEES, EXPERTS' FEES AND COSTS 7/1/2011  
**REPEALED** 5/17/2013] new and effective January 1, 2016)

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5.11 **RESERVED**

(Rule 5.11 [as PREPARATION OF ORDERS AFTER HEARING 7/1/2011, 1/1/2012]  
**REPEALED** and effective May 17, 2013)

5.12 **FAMILY-CENTERED CASE RESOLUTION**

It is the intent of the court to provide judicial assistance and management to the parties in family law cases in order to focus on early resolution of cases through settlement, expedite the processing of cases, and reduce the costs of litigation. (*See* Fam. Code, § 2450.)

The court may hold a status conference at the first hearing calendared by a party after the response to the Petition is filed. At the status conference, the court may review the progress of the case, identify unresolved issues, develop discovery plans and discuss the possibility of settlement.

At the status conference, counsel must inform the court of the following matters:

- (1) the attendance of both parties at parents and children together (“PACT”) or completion of the on-line program available through the court’s website, and Family Court Services mediation;
- (2) the service by both parties of a complete Preliminary Declaration of Disclosure;
- (3) the filing with the court of a Declaration Regarding Service of Declaration of Disclosure and Income and Expense Declaration;
- (4) the readiness of the parties to participate in mediation;
- (5) the appropriateness of referral to arbitration;
- (6) the willingness of the parties, to limit, schedule or expedite discovery, including the willingness to provide the opposing party, without a discovery request: (a) the name, address, and telephone number of each individual likely to have discoverable information that supports the party’s disclosures, and (b) a copy of, or a description by category and location of, all documents, data compilations, and tangible things that are in the possession, custody or control of the party and that supports the party’s disclosures;
- (7) the appropriateness of implementation of a family centered case resolution plan pursuant to Family Code section 2451; and
- (8) the willingness of the parties to stipulate to the appointment of court experts, and allocate the expert’s expense, or to schedule a hearing for the appointment and expense allocation of court experts.

At any status conference, the court may:

- (1) schedule disclosure of expert witnesses, by stipulation;
- (2) inquire whether issues can be narrowed by stipulation and set dates for the filing of stipulations;
- (3) set dates for further status conferences, as needed, and no less often than every six months;
- (4) set dates for other events that must take place before the next status conference;
- (5) set the date for trial and/or settlement conferences; and
- (6) take such other action, as permitted by law, which could promote the just and efficient disposition of the case.

Appearance by counsel at any status conference, either in person or by telephone (if approved in advance by the court), is mandatory. Failure to appear will result in the setting of an order to show cause why sanctions should not be imposed. No appearance is required if excused by the court, a judgment has been filed, or the case has been dismissed.

(Rule 5.12 [7/1/2011] amended and effective May 17, 2013)



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5.13 TRIAL SETTING

A party may request that the case be set for trial by filing the court's Request for Trial Setting form number FAM 014, by request for order, orally, or as otherwise directed by the court.

The department to which the case is assigned, upon finding that the case is ready for trial setting, may, in its discretion, transfer the case to Department 2, or to another department, for all trial setting, trial readiness and trial settlement related matters, from which the case will then be re-assigned for trial to any available trial department, which could include the department originally assigned. The department originally assigned will continue to handle all other non-trial and post trial proceedings.

The parties will be notified in open court or by mail of the date and time of the trial and/or pre-trial proceedings.

The parties are required to provide the court with reasonable and accurate time estimates for trial. Unless otherwise ordered, trial counsel and the parties must appear at the trial setting conference in person.

In the event that the case settles, the parties must immediately notify the court, so that the trial date may be vacated.

(Rule 5.13 [7/1/2011, 5/17/2013, 1/1/2016] amended and effective July 1, 2020)

5.14 TRIAL READINESS, SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES AND PRE-TRIAL ORDERS

At a Trial Readiness Conference ("TRC") or other trial setting proceeding the court may make orders deemed necessary for the case to be considered ready for trial and may set the case for a Settlement Conference ("SC"), Mandatory Settlement Conference ("MSC"), Family Centered Case Resolution ("FCCR"), Arbitration, or other Alternate Dispute Resolution proceedings.

All parties and trial counsel must appear personally at the Trial Setting Conference, FCCR, TRC, SC, MSC, Arbitration, or other Alternate Dispute Resolution proceeding unless otherwise ordered, and comply with Local Rule 5.9.

The court's role at the TRC, SC, or MSC is to assist the parties in settlement negotiations. Prior to a TRC, SC, or MSC, counsel must hold at least one face-to-face or telephonic settlement discussion, and make a full exchange of all pertinent information. The parties must be prepared to discuss the issues in the case, preparedness for trial, efforts at settlement, and trial time estimates.

(a) Pre-Trial Orders. Unless otherwise ordered, not less than seven calendar days before a SC, MSC, Arbitration, or other Alternate Dispute Resolution proceeding, each party must serve on the other the following:

(1) A conformed copy of the Declaration Regarding Service of Preliminary Declaration of Disclosure (form FL-141);

(2) A current Income and Expense Declaration (form FL-150) as required by Family Code section 3665 and California Rules of Court, rule 5.260, and Local Rule 5.9. The parties must attach pay stubs for the last two months. If self-employed, the parties must also attach a Profit and Loss Statement for the past two years or a Schedule C from their last tax return. The parties must completely fill in all blanks on financial declarations. "Unknown", "minimal" and "TBD" are not acceptable answers. The parties must bring to court copies of last year's State and Federal Income Tax Returns, including all supporting schedules;

(3) A Schedule of Assets and Debts (form FL-142), Property Declaration (form FL-160), Propertizer, or equivalent balance sheet. The parties must list community property and separate property assets and debts with a proposed division, as well as accurate fair market values and loan balances as of the current date and at the date of separation, if applicable. "Unknown", "minimal" and "TBD" are not acceptable answers;

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(4) An exhibit list. The parties must exchange all non-impeachment exhibits to be offered at trial. The exhibits must be consecutively numbered as directed by the court. Exhibits must be pre-marked. Exhibits of more than one page must be given page numbers. The parties must bring the exhibits to the SC, MSC, Arbitration, or other Alternate Dispute Resolution proceeding;

(5) A list of all non-party, non-impeachment witnesses, their address and current phone numbers. The list must briefly describe each witness' testimony with specificity and provide an estimate as to the time needed for direct and cross examination. Witness List (form FL-321) may be used for this purpose; and

(6) Appraisals or other forensic reports intended to be used at trial.

(b) Contents of the SC or MSC Brief. An SC or MSC Brief, if ordered by the court, must contain the following:

(1) The times and dates of the MSC and the trial, set forth in the caption;

(2) All relevant statistical facts, including the date of marriage, date of separation, length of marriage (in years and months); and the number and ages of minor children;

(3) A recitation of the facts of the case and its procedural history, identifying all previous orders bearing on any matter in dispute;

(4) Each party's specific proposals regarding child custody and child and/or spousal support, together with computer support printouts if applicable;

(5) The proposed division of community assets and community debts;

(6) The amount of any attorneys' fees, experts' fees, or costs being requested.

(c) Sanctions for Failure to Comply with Trial Readiness Requirements Ordered by the Court. The failure, without good cause, to follow these orders may result in sanctions including monetary sanctions under Code of Civil Procedure section 177.5, California Rules of Court, rule 5.14, attorney's fees under Family Code section 271, evidentiary sanctions including exclusion of non-impeachment documents and witnesses not timely disclosed, and may result in vacating existing trial dates.

(Rule 5.14 [as MANDATORY SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES AND PRE-TRIAL ORDERS 7/1/2011, 7/1/2012, 5/17/2013, 7/1/2014, 7/1/2016] amended and effective July 1, 2020)

#### 5.15 TRIAL

(a) Continuance. The trial date cannot be continued by stipulation of the parties. At a hearing before the court, the court may, in its discretion, continue the trial date upon a showing of good cause. (See Cal. Rules of Court, rule 3.1332.)

(b) Pre-trial Filings. The court may, at its discretion, order counsel to comply with all or part of the disclosures and pleadings required for an MSC. (See Local Rule 5.14.)

A party seeking attorneys' fees, experts' fees, or costs must comply with California Rules of Court, rule 5.427.

All exhibits listed in a party's exhibit list exchanged pursuant to the TRC, MSC, or other court order must be pre-marked and exchanged at least five court days prior to the initial date set for trial. Absent a showing of good cause, exhibits not pre-marked and exchanged will not be received in evidence.

Before trial begins, unless otherwise ordered, counsel and self-represented parties must submit to the clerk all pre-marked exhibits and a second "working" copy for the court. Voluminous exhibits should be placed in a binder with appropriate tabs. (See Local Rules 3.52 and 3.53 regarding marking of exhibits for trial.)

(c) Trial Procedure. Counsel should read and be familiar with Local Rules 3.37-3.159 regarding civil trial procedure.

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(Rule 5.15 [7/1/2011] amended and effective May 17, 2013)

5.16 JUDGMENT PROCEDURE

In every case in which the court asks a party to prepare and file a judgment, counsel for the party so ordered must serve the proposed judgment on opposing counsel for approval as to form and file the approved judgment with the court. If the party ordered to prepare the judgment fails to do so, or if the opposing party files objections to the proposed judgment within ten days of service, the opposing party's counsel may prepare and submit a proposed judgment to the court with a proof of service on the other party.

At the time the court orders the judgment prepared, the court will set an order to show cause re: entry of judgment. If the judgment approved as to form is received prior to this hearing, no appearance is necessary. If no judgment is received, sanctions may be imposed.

(a) Bifurcated Status Only Judgments. Parties in action for dissolution may file a bifurcated judgment on the issue of marital status only. The box on the Judicial Council Judgment form (FL-180) must be checked which provides that jurisdiction is reserved over all other issues and all present orders remain in effect.

A Preliminary Declaration of Disclosure with all required attachments must be served on the nonmoving party with the proposed judgment, unless it has been served previously and a proof of service is filed with the court.

(b) Stipulated Judgments on Further Reserved Issues. When all remaining issues have been resolved, a Stipulation for Judgment or Further Judgment Upon Reserved Issues may be submitted to the court without appearance. The proposed judgment must comply with the California Rules of Court. The following forms must be submitted:

- (1) Original and three copies of the judgment. The court will retain the original and one copy;
- (2) If child support has been ordered, the judgment must be accompanied by:
  - a) A Stipulation to Establish or Modify Child Support and Order;
  - b) If appropriate, an Order/Notice to Withhold Income for Child Support;
  - c) If appropriate, a Stay of Service of Earnings Assignment Order;
- (3) An Appearance, Stipulation and Waiver, including a stipulation that the matter may be heard by a commissioner sitting as a judge pro tempore;
- (4) Declaration Regarding Service of the Final Declaration of Disclosure. If the Declaration Regarding Final Declaration of Disclosure is waived, the waiver must be a separate waiver, not included within the judgment;
- (5) Original and two copies of the Notice of Entry of Judgment; and
- (6) Two self-addressed, stamped envelopes, addressed to each counsel.

(Rule 5.16 new and effective July 1, 2011)

5.17 DEFAULT OR UNCONTESTED JUDGMENT BY AFFIDAVIT

The following forms must be submitted to obtain a default or uncontested judgment:

- (1) Declaration for Default or Uncontested Dissolution;
- (2) Request for Default or Appearance, Stipulation and Waiver form, whichever applies;
- (3) Declaration Regarding Service of Declaration of Disclosure (Preliminary and/or Final, as necessary);

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- one copy;
- (4) Original and three copies of the judgment. The court will retain the original and
  - (5) Original and two copies of the Notice of Entry of Judgment; and
  - (6) Two self-addressed, stamped envelopes, with the court's address as the return address.

As appropriate, the following forms are also required:

- (1) Current Income and Expense Declaration;
- (2) Stipulation to Establish Or Modify Child Support and Order;
- (3) Earnings Assignment Order; and
- (4) Property Declaration.

All forms must be completely filled out. A party may not request orders in the judgment that were not requested in the petition.

Unless there is a written agreement to the contrary, the following issues will require a court hearing:

- (1) Request to terminate the court's jurisdiction over spousal support in a marriage of ten years or longer;
- (2) Request for no visitation or for supervised visitation; and
- (3) Request for a specific amount of spousal support.

Filing fees will not be required from a defaulting party that has signed a judgment. The signature of the defaulting party must be notarized.

(Rule 5.17 [7/1/2011] amended and effective January 1, 2024)

#### 5.18 ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (“ADR”) OF NON-CUSTODY DISPUTES

(a) Arbitration and Mediation. Pursuant to Family Code section 2554, the court may order parties to arbitration. In lieu of arbitration, the parties may elect mediation, pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 1141.10.

(b) Mediator Qualifications. The qualifications necessary to serve on the family law mediation panel are found in Appendix 5.A to the Local Rules.

(Rule 5.18 [7/1/2011] amended and effective May 17, 2013)

#### 5.19 FAMILY COURT SERVICES

(a) Order to Participate in Court-Connected Mediation Related to Child Custody and Visitation.

Court-connected mediation (hereafter, “mediation”) assists parents in reaching a parenting plan agreement on the custody and visitation of their children. Parental agreement is a preferred method of determining custody and visitation. Family Court Services is a unit of the court that employs professional child custody mediators available to assist parents with custody and visitation mediation.

A party seeking an initial or modified child custody and/or child visitation court order (whether presented by request for order, request for domestic violence restraining order, or petition for parentage, marital dissolution or support and custody) shall participate in mediation.

There are two ways to satisfy the participation requirement: (1) by participating in a mediation session with a Family Court Services Specialist or (2) by reaching a full agreement at the Family Law On-Line Dispute Resolution website <https://losangelescafam.modria.com/>. However, parents who do not reach an agreement, or only reach a partial agreement, with the Family Law On-line Dispute

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Resolution program must attend their scheduled mediation appointment with a Family Court Services Specialist.

Usually the mediation involves the parents participating together at the same time. But a party in a domestic violence restraining order case may request a mediation which will not involve the parents participating together at the same time.

The parent seeking the custody and/or visitation order will receive an Order to Participate in Mediation and must serve a copy of the order on the other party or parties.

Parents involved in an existing family law case may also voluntarily seek assistance in creating or modifying a child custody and/or visitation parenting plan from Family Court Services by requesting a voluntary mediation appointment.

(b) Orientation to Mediation.

(1) The court provides a mandatory mediation orientation entitled “Our Children First”. The orientation provides an explanation of the mediation process, the effects on children of parental separation and conflict, and information and referrals about domestic violence. The court offers the Our Children First orientation program online at [www.lacourt.org](http://www.lacourt.org). It may also be viewed at the Family Court Services office at the courthouse.

(2) Each parent must complete the orientation before attending mediation. Parents will receive a certificate of completion which the parent must file with the Clerk of the Court as proof of completion.

(3) Parties in domestic violence restraining order cases may complete the orientation program but are not required to do so.

(4) The court may impose a monetary penalty on any party required but failing to complete the orientation.

(5) A parent’s failure to complete the orientation will not prevent the Family Court Services Specialist from proceeding with mediation and will not prevent a judicial officer from making custody and visitation orders.

(c) Mediation Session and Parenting Plan Agreements.

(1) Mediation proceedings are confidential. What the parties say to each other and to the Family Court Services Specialist in the mediation may not be revealed to the judicial officer presiding over the case. But the fact that a mediation took place, the time and place of that session, and the identities of participants are not confidential. The fact that an agreement was or was not reached and the contents of any signed agreement resulting from mediation also are not confidential.

(2) Family Court Services personnel may not be compelled to testify in court or deposition concerning any communications or observations made in connection with mediations.

(3) The Family Court Specialist will assist the parties in writing their parenting plan agreements, if any, reached in the mediation. A party has five calendar days within which to cancel any agreement reached in the mediation proceedings. Upon expiration of this five-day period, the parenting plan agreement will be submitted to the assigned judicial officer for approval. The Parenting Plan Agreement will usually become an enforceable order of the court once signed by the judicial officer. The judicial officer may, however, require the parents to appear at a hearing to discuss the parenting plan before making it a court order.

(d) Child Custody Evaluations.

(1) The Child Custody Evaluation Unit of Family Court Services may conduct a child custody evaluation, including a parenting plan assessment or a child interview, on order of the court. Any written report or recommendation from the Child Custody Evaluation Unit of Family Court

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Services is confidential. Family Court Services staff must not disclose information or produce records in violation of this rule to persons other than participants and their counsel.

(2) The court shall assess a fee in accordance with Government Code section 70671(d) and Family Code section 3112 for child custody evaluation services provided by the court. The name and address of any person who becomes delinquent in paying said fee and the amount owed may be disclosed by the court for collections proceedings.

(e) Ex Parte Communication and Exemptions to Confidentiality.

(1) A Family Court Services Specialist shall not have *ex parte* communication with a judicial officer regarding information obtained as part of a mediation or child custody evaluation except as otherwise indicated in this rule.

(2) The Family Court Services Specialist may meet with the judicial officer hearing a contested custody matter in an in-chambers off the record conference with all parties and counsel if the judicial officer determines that the parties have both consented to such a conference.

(3) At all times, whether conducting a mediation, a child custody evaluation, or providing any other service, Family Court Services Specialists must comply with any law requiring reporting of child abuse. Additionally, nothing in this rule prevents any person from reporting or serving as a witness where a crime has been committed, or is alleged to have been committed, in the person's presence; or from complying with any law requiring reporting of child abuse; or from complying with the duties identified in *Tarasoff v. The Regents of the University of California* (1976) 17 Cal.3d 425 to warn an intended victim of a threat of bodily harm. The fact that any such report was made or exists shall not be deemed confidential.

(4) Nothing in this rule prevents a Family Court Services Specialist from recommending that a child be referred for a child custody evaluation, child interview, or parenting plan assessment, or that an attorney be appointed for a child.

(f) Challenge to Appointment of Family Court Services Specialist and Complaint Process.

(1) A Family Court Services Specialist appointed to perform mediation or a child custody evaluation, including a parenting plan assessment or a child interview, may be challenged for cause if the Family Court Specialist is personally acquainted with a party or the child, or has a conflict of interest relative to a party, attorney or the child, or it appears to the court that the Specialist is otherwise unable to perform the mediator's or evaluator's duties in a fair and impartial manner.

(2) Upon appointment of a Family Court Services Specialist to conduct a Child Custody Evaluation report pursuant to Family Code section 3118, each side is permitted one peremptory challenge. The challenge must be filed and served within ten court days of service of the notification of the assignment. A party filing such challenge shall also serve a copy upon: Administrator, Family Court Services, 111 North Hill Street, Room 241, Los Angeles, California, 90012.

(3) Once a child custody evaluation, including a parenting plan assessment or child interview, has begun, any objection to or challenge of the Family Court Services Specialist may be asserted only by a request for order filed in the family law proceeding.

A complaint regarding a Family Court Service Specialist shall be made in writing and directed to Administrator, Family Court Services, 111 North Hill Street, Room 241, Los Angeles, California, 90012. A written response will be sent to the complainant.

(Rule 5.19 [7/1/2011, 7/1/2014, 1/1/2022] amended and effective July 1, 2022)

## 5.20 PRIVATE CHILD CUSTODY EVALUATIONS

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(a) Qualifications for Appointment. A person not employed by the Family Court Services unit of the Los Angeles Superior Court appointed to conduct a child custody evaluation (“Evaluator”) must complete a Declaration of Private Child Custody Evaluator Regarding Qualifications (Form FL-326) showing compliance with all applicable education, training, and experience requirements. The Evaluator shall file the declaration in the clerk's office no later than ten days after notification of an appointment and before beginning any work on a child custody evaluation.

(b) Disclosures. An Evaluator must disclose to the parties in writing within ten days of appointment any significant personal or professional relationship the Evaluator has or has had with a party, attorney, or law firm involved in the case. The disclosure shall include the nature and extent of any services in the past 24 months for which the Evaluator has been privately compensated by a party, attorney, or law firm involved in the case. Such services include, but is not limited to, serving as an expert witness, consultant, evaluator, parenting plan coordinator, mediator, or therapist.

(c) Peremptory Challenge. When an Evaluator is appointed other than by stipulation, each parent will be permitted one peremptory challenge to the appointed Evaluator. The challenge must be filed with the court within ten court days of the notice of appointment.

(d) Request For Relief From Appointment. An Evaluator may petition the court to be relieved from the appointment. The request shall be granted upon a showing of good cause.

(e) Complaint Regarding Evaluator. A complaint regarding the conduct of a court-appointed Evaluator may be addressed to the appropriate professional licensing board. A party may also seek specific court orders relative to such conduct by bringing a request for order or motion to the court. The court’s decision concerning the removal or retention of a court-appointed Evaluator is independent of any action taken by any applicable professional licensing board. If the Evaluator is listed on the court’s Evaluator List, the judicial officer receiving the complaint may refer the matter to the Supervising Judge of the Family Law Division for further action concerning such listing.

(f) Prohibited *Ex Parte* Communication. An Evaluator must not have *ex parte* communication with parties, counsel, or the court unless permitted under this rule. An *ex parte* communication between the Evaluator and a party, counsel, or other person for the purpose of scheduling appointments or arranging for payment for services is permitted. An *ex parte* communication between the Evaluator and any party, child, or other witness in the course of conducting scheduled interviews as part of an evaluation is permitted.

(g) Evaluator List. Family Court Services maintains a list of Evaluators (“Evaluator List”). This list is provided solely as a public service. The court does not endorse or recommend any Evaluator. The Evaluators are not court employees. The court may appoint a person to conduct a child custody evaluation who is not on the Evaluator List.

(h) Qualification for Inclusion on Evaluator List. An Evaluator may be included on the Evaluator List if he or she meets the Evaluator qualifications set forth in the Family Code and the California Rules of Court, and if he or she completes and meets the requirements of any application required by the court. Upon request by the court, an Evaluator on the Evaluation List must promptly provide documentation demonstrating compliance with these qualifications, including proof of continuing education and training, and the case names, numbers and dates of four completed court-appointed child custody evaluations in which the Evaluator participated in the preceding three years in accordance with California Rules of Court, Rule 5.225.

An Evaluator on the Evaluator List must notify in writing the Administrator of Family Court Services within fourteen calendar days of (1) his or her clinical license being revoked or suspended; (2) an accusation of misconduct presented to the licensing board; or (3) any misdemeanor or felony

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charge. Such notification shall be addressed to: Administrator, Family Court Services, Los Angeles County Superior Court, 111 North Hill Street, Room 241, Los Angeles, California, 90012.

(i) Completion of Report by Evaluator on the Evaluation List. An Evaluator on the Evaluator List ordered to conduct an evaluation must complete the evaluation and provide the report to those persons as directed by the court or as provided by stipulation within fourteen weeks of the appointment unless good cause is shown for an extension. An Evaluator seeking an extension must file a written request with the judicial officer who made the appointment and send a copy of the request to both parties. The request must specify the length of the requested extension and describe the circumstances constituting good cause.

(j) Removal from Evaluator List. The court may remove any person from the Evaluator List with or without cause upon written notification to the Evaluator. Any court-conducted investigations and conclusions concerning an Evaluator will be confidential and not be maintained as a public record.

(Rule 5.20 [7/1/2011, 5/17/2013, 1/1/2014, 7/1/2015] amended and effective January 1, 2022)

#### 5.21 COMPLAINTS REGARDING MINOR'S COUNSEL

Complaints regarding the conduct and procedures employed by counsel appointed for a child pursuant to Family Code section 3150 *et seq.* will be handled by the judicial officer to whom the case is assigned. Complaints may also be made to the State Bar of California. Pursuant to noticed motion, application, or order to show cause, the judicial officer must determine what action should be taken, if any.

(Rule 5.21 new and effective July 1, 2011)

#### 5.22 MINOR'S CONTRACT PROCEDURE

(a) Use of Mandatory Forms. A petitioner must use the mandatory forms, as applicable, denominated as Petition to Approve Contract(s) of Minor(s) (FAM 172), Additional Minors-Attachment B to Petition (FAM 174), Parental Quitclaim-Attachment C to Petition (FAM 175), Waiver of Notice-Attachment D to Petition (FAM 176), Additional Contracts-Attachment E to Petition (FAM 177), Declaration of Lender-Attachment F to Petition (FAM 178), Additional Facts-Attachment G to Petition (FAM 179), Order Approving Contract(s) of Minor(s) (FAM 180), Additional Minors-Attachment A to Order (FAM 181), and Additional Contracts-Attachment B to Order (FAM 182).

(b) Filing Of Petition. A petition for the confirmation of a minor's contract under Family Code section 6750 *et seq.* must be filed in Department 2. The contract for which confirmation is sought must be attached as an exhibit to the petition. The petition must be accompanied by a separately filed proposed order.

(c) Compliance With Family Code Section 6752(d). A proposed order confirming a minor's contract must direct petitioner, through petitioner's counsel, to file a declaration under penalty of perjury evidencing: (1) compliance with Family Code section 6752(b), and (2) that petitioner forwarded a copy of the order to the minor's guardian *ad litem* with a cover letter which included the language under Family Code section 6752(d).

(d) Continuing Jurisdiction. Department 2 has continuing jurisdiction over the petition and any funds blocked pursuant to court order until the funds are released. A petition for withdrawal of funds from blocked account pursuant to Family Code section 6752(b)(7) or section 6752(c)(5), must be supported by adequate declarations setting forth the reason and necessity of the requested action.

(e) Fees. The clerk will assess a fee for processing petitions for withdrawal of funds from blocked minors accounts.

(Rule 5.22 [7/1/2011, 1/1/2012, 7/1/2017, 7/1/2020, 7/1/2021] amended and effective July 1, 2022)



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5.23 DUTIES OF FAMILY LAW FACILITATOR

Pursuant to the provisions of Family Code section 10005(a), duties of the Family Law Facilitator shall include the following:

(a) Meetings. Meeting with litigants to mediate issues of child support, spousal support, and maintenance of health insurance, subject to Family Code section 10012. Actions in which one or both of the parties are self-represented have priority;

(b) Stipulations. Drafting stipulations to include all issues agreed to by the parties, which may include issues other than those specified in Family Code section 10003;

(c) Advice to Court. If the parties are unable to resolve issues with the assistance of the Family Law Facilitator, prior to or at the hearing, and at the request of the court, reviewing the paperwork, examining documents, preparing support schedules, and advising the court whether or not the matter is ready to proceed; and

(d) Preparation of Order. Preparing formal orders consistent with the court's announced order in cases where both parties are self-represented.

(Rule 5.23 new and effective July 1, 2011)

5.24 ACTIONS FOR PARENTAGE, CHILD AND SPOUSAL SUPPORT

(a) The court has designated certain courtrooms within the Family Law Division to handle matters falling under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. section 651 et seq.) ("Title IV-D"). This rule specifies the proceedings to be assigned to the Title IV-D courtrooms. The Los Angeles County Child Support Services Department ("CSSD") is the local child support agency established by the California Department of Child Support Services pursuant to Title IV-D.

(b) The following shall be filed at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse and thereafter assigned to a Title IV-D courtroom: (1) actions or other proceedings filed by CSSD to establish parentage and/or child support; to modify child support; for the determination or collection of arrears; to enforce a child or family support order; or to enforce a spousal support order if CSSD is also enforcing a child or family support order; and (2) actions or other proceedings filed by a party other than CSSD in which CSSD enforces a child or family support order, or enforces a spousal support order if CSSD is also enforcing a child or family support order, and involving only the modification or enforcement of a child or family support order or enforcement of a spousal support order if CSSD is also enforcing a child or family support order, or is for the determination or collection of arrears.

(c) The following shall also be heard in a Title IV-D courtroom: (1) proceedings which, upon proper notice, are transferred by a judicial officer to a Title IV-D courtroom from a family law courtroom in any district; and (2) proceedings set in any family law department in which CSSD files and serves a written request for transfer to a Title IV-D courtroom at least nine court days prior to the scheduled court date. The judicial officer before whom such an action is pending shall rule on the request for transfer and, if granted, set a new hearing date in the Title IV-D courtroom. CSSD is to give notice of the court's ruling to all persons entitled to such notice.

(d) Trial or requests for order proceedings in actions filed by a party other than CSSD but in which CSSD enforces child, spousal or family support and involving both (1) the modification or enforcement of a child, spousal or family support order, or the determination or collection of arrears, and (2) other relief under the Family Code may be scheduled for hearing in the North District (Antelope Valley Courthouse) for the convenience of the parties.

(e) Proceedings incorrectly assigned to a non-Title IV-D courtroom must be transferred by the clerk to a Title IV-D courtroom upon discovery of the error or upon written request from the CSSD.

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The clerk shall forthwith serve notice on all parties, including CSSD, of the transfer and specify the reason and a new hearing date in the Title IV-D courtroom.

(f) Child Custody Requests for Orders in CSSD-initiated or CSSD Enforcement Cases: When a party files a request for an original or modified child custody order in a case otherwise assigned to a Title IV-D courtroom under this rule, the hearing on that request for order shall be set in a family law courtroom in the district appropriate for the parties.

(g) Support and Non-support Forms of Relief Concurrently Sought in CSSD-initiated or CSSD Enforcement Cases: When a party seeks both support and non-support orders in a case otherwise assigned to a Title IV-D courtroom under this rule, the party may: (i) file separate requests for orders directed to the appropriate courtrooms, i.e., one request for order filed in the family law courtroom for relief other than support and another request for order filed in the Title IV-D courtroom for relief involving support issue(s); or (ii) file a single request for order.

If the party files separate requests for orders, the hearing on the request for order involving CSSD-enforced support shall be set in the Title IV-D courtroom and the hearing on the other request for order on the other issue(s) shall be set in the family law courtroom. To the extent practicable, the clerk's office shall coordinate hearing dates for the separate requests for orders so that any requests for custody orders are heard at least two weeks before the hearing on support issues. Family law and Title IV-D courtroom judicial officers may also adjust hearing dates as necessary to facilitate a logical order to the adjudication of the issues presented upon proper notice to all parties, including CSSD.

If the party files a single request for order, the hearing shall initially be set in the family law courtroom where the judicial officer may, at such time the judicial officer deems appropriate and in the judicial officer's discretion, sever the portions of the request that should be heard in the Title IV-D courtroom, and transfer and set those matters for hearing in the Title IV-D courtroom. The clerk shall provide notice to the parties and, as needed, to CSSD of the Title IV-D courtroom hearing date, time, and location. It is the intention of this procedure to preserve potential retroactivity of the request for a support order. The judicial officer may also, in the judicial officer's discretion, order portion(s) of the request for order off-calendar, as appropriate.

If a matter is filed or scheduled to be heard in a Title IV-D courtroom but it appears that some or all the matter should be heard in a family law courtroom, the Title IV-D judicial officer may, in the judicial officer's discretion, transfer all or sever and transfer portions of the request and set those matters for hearing in the family law courtroom. In so doing, the IV-D judicial officer shall arrange for notice to the parties, as needed, and to CSSD if appropriate, of the family law courtroom hearing date, time, and location. It is the intention of this procedure to preserve potential retroactivity of the request for a support order. The judicial officer may also, in the judicial officer's discretion, order all or portions of the request for order off-calendar, as appropriate.

(Rule 5.24 [7/1/2011, 7/1/2020] amended and effective January 1, 2022)

#### 5.25 DECLARATION/STATEMENT OF PROVIDER OF SUPERVISED VISITATION

Pursuant to Penal Code section 11166.5(d), all providers of supervised visitation who receive payment for their services must complete and file a declaration/statement as provided on court Form H272. The provider must attach a copy of proof of attendance at a training program to the form.

(Rule 5.25 new and effective July 1, 2011)

#### 5.26 COLLABORATIVE LAW PROCESS

(a) Purpose. The court strongly encourages parties to use the collaborative law process (Fam. Code § 2013) and other consensual dispute resolution processes to reach agreements that promote the

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best interests of the entire family and particularly their children. To facilitate that process, the court will accept Stipulations to Proceed Collaboratively.

(b) Stipulation to Proceed Collaboratively.

(1) In addition to the Stipulation and Proposed Order to Proceed Collaboratively, the parties must file and serve a Notice of Stipulation and Order (FAM 198);

(2) Attorneys and law firms representing the parties in the collaborative law process, or any attorneys acting in association with them, may not represent either party as counsel of record in any phase of future contested proceedings (including post-judgment) between the same parties;

(3) Mental health professionals, accountants, financial professionals, and other consultants and experts jointly retained during the collaborative law process may not, in any phase of future contested proceedings (including post-judgment) between the same parties, a) assist either party or b) testify (except as required by law);

(4) Except for executed declarations of disclosure required under Family Code sections 2104 and 2105, the collaborative law process is a confidential “Mediation” under Evidence Code section 1115 and protected under Evidence Code sections 1115 through 1128. Mediation confidentiality applies to all notes, work papers, summaries, and reports that parties’ jointly retained consultants and experts prepared during the collaborative process. Mediation confidentiality commences upon the execution of the stipulation to proceed collaboratively; and

(5) Filing the stipulation constitutes:

(A) A waiver and acceptance of service by respondent within the meaning of Family Code section 233 if the Petition has not already been served on Respondent; and

(B) A general appearance if a Response to the Petition has not previously been filed.

(c) Timing of Collaborative Law Process. Parties may elect to proceed collaboratively upon the commencement of an action or at any time before or after the entry of judgment.

(d) Filing of the Collaborative Law Petition. If the parties agree to proceed collaboratively at the time the Petition is filed, the Petitioner must file the Petition as a self-represented party and identify the action as a “Collaborative Law Case” below the case number in the case caption on all pleadings and documents filed during the collaborative process. The address of record for either party may be “care of” the parties’ collaborative counsel even though such counsel is not appearing of record.

(e) Assignment of Collaborative Law Cases. The court clerk shall assign or reassign all Collaborative Law cases to Department 2 of the Los Angeles Superior Court during the collaborative process. This rule applies regardless of the district in which the case was initially filed. The court clerk will give notice of reassignment, if any, to the parties. For purposes of Code of Civil Procedure section 170.6, the assignment to Department 2 is a Master Calendar assignment as defined in Local Rules 2.4 and 2.5.

(f) Effect of Collaborative Case on Pending Matters. Upon the filing of the stipulation to proceed collaboratively, all of the following will occur without further court order:

(1) All scheduled hearings are off calendar. However, the parties may stipulate to stay any request for support orders to maintain jurisdiction to make such orders retroactive;

(2) All other appearances and court deadlines are vacated;

(3) All outstanding discovery and discovery-related deadlines are stayed;

(4) The case is not subject to Local Rule 5.12 during the collaborative process; and

(5) The time periods in Code of Civil Procedure section 583.420 for discretionary dismissal are stayed during the collaborative process.

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(g) Termination of Collaborative Law Process. Proceeding collaboratively is voluntary. A party may unilaterally terminate the Stipulation to Proceed Collaboratively by providing written notice of termination to the opposing party and filing a proof of service of the notice of termination. The party or parties must use the Notice of Termination of Collaborative Law Case and Order (FAM 199).

(h) Effect of Terminating Collaborative Process.

(1) If the parties terminate the Collaborative process, the court clerk will reassign the case as follows:

(A) If the case was initially filed as a collaborative case, to the family law department in the same manner as if had been initially filed;

(B) If the case was initially filed in the Central District, it will remain in the Central District. If it was initially filed in another district it will be reassigned to that district; and

(C) If the parties elected to proceed collaboratively in a pending case, to the department to which it was previously assigned.

(2) The court clerk will give notice of reassignment to all parties.

(3) The family law department to which a case is reassigned shall promptly schedule a status conference pursuant to Local Rule 5.12.

(Rule 5.26 [7/1/2011, 7/1/2018] amended and effective July 1, 2020)

5.27 FILING AND ESTABLISHMENT OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP PURSUANT TO A GESTATIONAL SURROGACY (Fam. Code, §§7620 and 7960)

(a) Filing Petition. Notwithstanding Local Rule 5.24, a party seeking to establish a parent-child relationship pursuant to gestational surrogacy must file the petition in the Central District, Stanley Mosk Courthouse.

(b) Petition and Supporting Papers. The petition (FL 200) must be filed with the following documents.

(1) Petitioner's Documents:

(A) LA County Gestational Surrogacy Cover Sheet – completed and signed (FAM-104);

(B) Family Law Case Cover Sheet (FAM-020);

(C) Summons (FL-210);

(D) Stipulation for Entry of Judgment Re: Establishment of Parental Relationship (FL-240);

(E) Appearance, Stipulations, and Waivers (Petitioner(s)) (FL-130);

(F) Declaration for Default or Uncontested Judgment (Petitioner(s)) (FL-230);

(G) Advisement and Waiver of Rights Re: Establishment of Parental Relationship (Petitioner(s)) (FL-235);

(H) Declaration Under Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (Petitioner(s)) (FL-105);

(I) Judgment (FL-250);

(J) Judgment (long form);

(K) Notice of Entry of Judgment (FL-190);

(L) Copy of Gestational Carrier Agreement, Executed and Notarized (lodged as Exhibit to Petition);

(M) Declaration of IVF Doctor;

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- (N) Declaration(s) of Petitioner(s); and
- (O) Declaration of Attorney for Petitioner(s) including as an exhibit Criminal Background Check for Petitioner.

(2) Respondent's Documents:

- (A) Response to Petition to Establish Parental Relationship (FL-220);
- (B) Appearance, Stipulations, and Waivers (Respondent(s)) (FL-130);
- (C) Declaration for Default or Uncontested Judgment (Respondent(s)) (FL-230);
- (D) Advisement and Waiver of Rights Re: Establishment of Parental Relationship (Respondent(s)) (FL-235);
- (E) Declaration Under Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (Respondent(s)) (FL-105);
- (F) Declaration of Respondent(s); and
- (G) Declaration of Attorney for Respondent(s).

(c) Format of Documents. Petitioner's documents must be tabbed and labeled as 1, 2, 3, etc. Respondent's documents must be tabbed and labeled as A, B, C, etc. Petitioner and Respondent must each provide an index of filed documents.

(Rule 5.27 new and effective July 1, 2018)

#### 5.28 APPOINTMENT OF PRIVATELY COMPENSATED TEMPORARY JUDGE

A party seeking the appointment of a privately compensated temporary judge must use the Stipulation and Order for Appointment of Privately Compensated Temporary Judge (FAM 200).

(Rule 5.28 new and effective July 1, 2020)