

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR SUMTER COUNTY, FLORIDA**

Administrative Order No. 5 2008-22

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER ESTABLISHING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
FOR UNIFIED FAMILY COURT IN SUMTER COUNTY**

WHEREAS, the legislative policy of §61.001, Florida Statutes (2006), provides that the purpose of chapter 61 (the chapter concerning dissolution of marriage, support, and custody) is: "(a) To preserve the integrity of marriage and to safeguard meaningful family relationships; (b) To promote the amicable settlement of disputes that arise between parties to a marriage; and (c) To mitigate the potential harm to the spouses and their children caused by the process of legal dissolution of marriage." §61.001(2)(a)-(c); and,

WHEREAS, the Florida Supreme Court has adopted the following guiding principles as a foundation for defining and implementing a model family court:

- Children should live in safe and permanent homes;
- The needs and best interests of children should be the primary consideration of any family court;
- All persons, whether children or adults, should be treated with objectivity, sensitivity, dignity and respect;
- Cases involving interrelated family law issues should be consolidated or coordinated to maximize use of court resources, to avoid conflicting decisions, and to minimize inconvenience to the families;
- Family court processes should attempt to address the family's interrelated legal and non-legal problems, empower families through skills development, assist them to resolve their own disputes, provide access to appropriate services, and offer a variety of dispute resolution forums where families can resolve problems without additional emotional trauma;
- Whenever possible, parties and their attorneys should be empowered to select processes for addressing issues in their cases that are compatible with the family's needs, financial circumstances, and legal requirements; and

WHEREAS, the Court's role in family restructuring is to identify services and craft solutions that are appropriate for long-term stability and that minimize the need for subsequent court action; and

WHEREAS, Court services should be available to litigants at a reasonable cost and accessible without economic discrimination; and

WHEREAS, it is recognized that in family court, it is not always the legal issue itself that is time-consuming or complex, but rather it is often the underlying issues such as drug abuse, domestic violence, and family dysfunction that may cause the legal dispute to become time-consuming and complicated; and

WHEREAS, trial courts must coordinate and maximize court resources and establish linkages with community resources; and

WHEREAS, there should be a means of differentiating among cases so that judicial resources are conserved and cases are diverted to non-judicial and quasi-judicial personnel for resolution, when appropriate and consistent with the ends of justice; and

WHEREAS, the Court is responsible for managing cases with due consideration of the needs of the family, the litigants, and the issues presented by the case;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as the Chief Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit, in order to meet the requirements of the Florida Supreme Court, articulated in In re Report of the Family Court Steering Committee, 794 So. 2d 518 (Fla. 2001), and to better serve the needs of the citizens of the State of Florida, it is hereby ORDERED as follows:

I. JURISDICTION

A. There is hereby created a Unified Family Court (UFC) in the Fifth Judicial Circuit in and for Sumter County, Florida, which shall include the following types of cases:

Dissolution of marriage;
Annulment;
Support unconnected with dissolution of marriage;
Paternity;
Child support;
URESА/UIFSA;
Custodial care of and access to children;
Adoption;
Name change of adults and minors;
Declaratory judgment actions related to premarital, marital, or post-marital
agreements;
Civil domestic and repeat, dating and sexual violence injunctions;
Juvenile dependency;
Termination of parental rights;
Juvenile delinquency;
Emancipation of a minor;
CINS/FINS and Truancy;
Guardian Advocate for Drug Dependent Newborns
Modification and enforcement of orders entered in these above-listed
cases;
Abortion.

B. The mission of the UFC in Sumter County shall be a commitment to developing a fully integrated, comprehensive approach to handling all cases involving children and families in a prompt and efficient manner.

C. The UFC is intended to provide an affordable Court system (both to the litigants and to society); a system that provides non-adversarial alternatives and flexibility of alternatives; a system that preserves rather than destroys family relationships; a system that empowers parties to make their own decisions; and a system that facilitates the process chosen by the parties.

D. As a key component of its mission, the UFC shall have broad jurisdiction over all legal problems involving a single family.

II. APPLICABILITY

The provisions of this Administrative Order shall apply to all cases filed in Circuit Court for Sumter County on or after June 16, 2008. To the extent that a provision of any prior administrative order of this circuit is in conflict with a provision of this order, the provisions of this administrative order shall apply.

III. ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR UNIFIED FAMILY COURT

A. Case Management

1. To the extent existing staff and resources can be allocated, the Family Division shall receive case management services and support services to enable the family court judges to assess, differentiate, and monitor resources needed for handling cases, to be able to identify all collateral cases affecting the parties involved, and to monitor the movement of cases through the judicial process.

2. Case management shall include:

- a. Initial review and evaluation of cases, including assignment of cases to court divisions or dockets;
- b. Case monitoring, tracking and coordination;
- c. Service referral, coordination, monitoring, and tracking of court ordered programs; and
- d. Procedures related to time standards and Case Management as addressed in section **VI(K)** of this Order.

B. Domestic Violence and Repeat Violence

The case manager shall work with the judge(s) and the Clerk of Court to identify cases involving domestic violence, repeat violence, dating violence, sexual violence and companion cases, and continue to develop techniques to ensure that said cases are managed in a timely and organized manner.

C. Alternative Dispute Resolution

1. The Fifth Circuit has enacted a separate administrative order to address family cases ordered to mediation.
2. If the court determines that mediation is not appropriate as a result of domestic violence, or any other reason, as determined by the court, the court may waive the mediation requirement.

D. Guardian ad Litem

The court shall utilize, where appropriate, the services of the Guardian ad Litem Program to ensure representation of the best interests of children involved in cases with allegations of abuse, abandonment and/or neglect.

E. Magistrates/Hearing Officers

1. Magistrates and hearing officers may be utilized to assist the judges within the Family Division when it is determined that referral of a case to a magistrate/hearing officer is appropriate.
2. The Fifth Circuit has enacted a separate administrative order to address the specific powers and matters to be heard by the magistrates and hearing officers.

F. Supervised Visitation

A current list of supervised visitation centers shall be maintained by the Case Manager and it will be made available in the Clerk's office.

Parent Education and Family Stabilization

1. Pursuant to §61.21(4), Florida Statutes, all parties to a dissolution of marriage proceeding with minor children or a paternity action that involves issues of parental responsibility shall be required to complete a Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course prior to the entry by the court of a final judgment. The court may excuse a party from attending the parenting course, or from completing the course within the required time, for good cause.
2. All parties to a modification of a final judgment involving shared parental responsibilities or time sharing plans may be required to complete a court-approved parenting course prior to the entry of an order modifying the final judgment.
3. The circuit shall maintain a current list of providers approved by the Department of Children and Families and have said list available in the Court House. In all original actions for Dissolution of Marriage with minor children or paternity actions involving issues of parental responsibility, the Clerk of Court shall attach a copy of ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER #A2008-03 RE: STANDING FAMILY LAW COURT ORDER and the **STANDING FAMILY COURT ORDER (ACTIONS INVOLVING PARENTING ISSUES)** to the original pleading and to all copies to be served upon the opposing party. The party filing the action shall be bound by the Order upon the filing of the case. The Respondent shall be bound by the Order upon receipt of service.

4. All minor children whose parents are involved in a dissolution of marriage or paternity action that involves issues of parental responsibility, shall enroll the minor children in any school program designed to assist children with issues involved in separated families if said program is available at the school in which the children are enrolled.

H. Counseling/Evaluation/Treatment Services

The circuit shall utilize the services of mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence service providers, when appropriate.

I. Security

The Chief Judge and the Family Law Judge shall collaborate with the relevant security provider to ensure that adequate and sufficient security personnel and equipment are available to ensure that Family Divisions are safe environments. Domestic violence hearings, and any other family hearing with special safety concerns, shall be held in a courtroom, whenever possible. Any person who has reason to believe any matter may pose special safety concerns shall notify security or courtroom personnel immediately.

J. Technology

Sumter County's UFC shall use available technology to access information essential to case management and coordination, to print forms and notices as quickly as possible, to generate statistical reports, to provide public access and inter-agency access to records and to allow teleconferencing and/or the appearance of witnesses by electronic means, when provided by law.

IV. OPERATIONAL PROTOCOL, IDENTIFICATION, COORDINATION AND TRANSFER OF UFC CASES

In order to conserve judicial resources, avoid inconsistent court orders, and eliminate multiple appearances on the same issues, the following policies and procedures will be followed, unless otherwise ordered by the court:

A. Related Cases

The petitioner in a family case shall file a UFC Civil Cover Sheet. All parties shall comply with the requirements of Rule 2.085(d), Florida Rules of Judicial Administration.

B. Coordination of Related Cases

Upon discovery of the existence of one or more pending related case involving the same parties, or their children, in which one or more judges has been assigned, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon by the presiding judges, dependency, family and domestic and repeat violence companion cases shall be assigned according to the protocols that follow below.

C. Operational Protocol

The operational protocol for handling UFC cases will be followed in conjunction with those protocols established by the Juvenile, Domestic Relations and Domestic Violence

Divisions. However, all protocols of the respective Divisions are subject to revision and modification to effectuate efficient procedures and to ensure that the mandate of the Florida Supreme Court is being followed by this Circuit. Generally, the operational protocol will be as follows:

1. **Definition** - A UFC case is defined as two or more open cases pending in the Juvenile, Domestic Relations, and/or Domestic Violence Divisions among family members with issues concerning the same child(ren). UFC cases shall be coordinated, heard and determined in a manner that will minimize the number of times and places that a family has to appear in court and will minimize the possibility of conflicting determinations of the same or related case.

2. **Identification** - UFC Cases will be identified by:

- A. the Family Court Case Manager,
- B. Judges and court staff, and
- C. Attorneys/litigants

3. **Notification** - The Case Manager shall be notified upon the identification of these related cases by any of the three methods indicated above in IVA2(a-c) and will take the appropriate actions as delineated in Sections IVB - IVE of this Administrative Order.

4. **Transfer Order** - The Case Manager will prepare an Order of Reassignment to have the case assigned to UFC.

5. **Resources** - In order to avoid duplication and maximize the efficient use of resources, all reports, evaluations, memoranda and orders pertaining to UFC cases shall be shared by the judges assigned to such cases, and shall be made available to all counsel and the parties for purposes of hearings, dispositions and resolution of the matters before the Court. To the extent that any issues of confidentiality may apply, all legal requirements shall be observed.

6. **Closed Cases/Post Judgment Matters** - When all issues of a UFC case have been finally resolved, the file will be closed and remain in the UFC for all post judgment matters.

D. Domestic Relations/Juvenile UFC Cases

The Case Manager will review the potential UFC cases and will take the following actions:

1. **Dependency/TPR Case filed where there is an open Domestic Relations case.** Both the Domestic Relations and the Dependency/TPR case will be transferred to the UFC. Any subsequent filings by the parties, (i.e., child support, domestic violence, etc.) will be automatically transferred to the UFC. The Dependency Court docket will control as long as the Dependency/TPR case is open.

2. Dependency/TPR case filed where there is closed Domestic Relations case. The Case Manager will review the closed Domestic Relations case and forward the Domestic Relations file including all pleadings, settlement agreements, final orders and other relevant documents to the Dependency Judge. Neither case will be considered a UFC case unless both become active.

3. Domestic Relations case filed where there is an open Dependency case. The Domestic Relations case will be transferred to the UFC. Any subsequent filings by the parties, (i.e., child support, domestic violence, etc.) will be automatically transferred to the Judge presiding over both cases. The Dependency Court calendar will control.

4. Domestic Relations case filed where there is closed Dependency case. The Case Manager will review the closed dependency case and forward the dependency file with all pleadings, settlement agreements, final orders and other relevant documents to the Domestic Relations Judge. Neither case will be considered a UFC case unless both become active.

5. Juvenile Delinquency case filed where there is an open Domestic Relations Case or a Domestic Relations case is filed where there is an open Juvenile Delinquency case. The Juvenile Delinquency Court calendar will control in either event and both cases will be assigned to UFC.

E. Domestic Relations / Domestic Violence UFC Cases

The following types of cases shall be specifically assigned in the following manner:

1. Petition for Injunction Filed Where There is an Open Domestic Relations Case. The case shall be set for Permanent Injunction hearing on the Injunction docket and transferred to UFC. After the hearing on the Petition is held, the Injunction file will remain part of UFC with the Domestic Relations case and the Domestic Relations docket will thereafter control the case.

2. Petition for Injunction Filed Where There is a Closed Domestic Relations Case. The Case Manager will review the closed Domestic Relations case and forward the Domestic Relations file including all pleadings, settlement agreements, final orders and other relevant documents to the Injunction Court judge. Neither case will be considered a UFC case unless both become active.

3. Domestic Relations Case Filed Subsequent to Entry of Temporary Injunction But Prior to Entry of Permanent Injunction. After the hearing on the Injunction Petition is held, the Injunction file will remain part of UFC with the Domestic Relations case and the Domestic Relations docket will thereafter control the case.

4. Motions for Modification/Extension of Permanent Injunction Filed Where There is an Open Domestic Relations Case. Both cases shall be assigned to UFC until the Motion is resolved. The Injunction Court calendar shall control until that

point. If necessary, a fifteen (15) day extension of the Temporary Injunction should be entered to preserve jurisdiction over the case prior to hearing.

5. Motions for Modification/Extension/Vacating of Permanent Injunction Filed Where There is a Closed Domestic Relations Case and the Domestic Violence Judge Entered The Permanent Injunction. The Motion shall be set for hearing on the Injunction Court docket to preserve consistency of case disposition and judicial economy. If necessary, a fifteen (15) day extension of the Temporary Injunction should be entered to preserve jurisdiction over the case prior to hearing. The Case Manager will review the closed Domestic Relations case and forward the Domestic Relations file including all pleadings, settlement agreements, final orders and other relevant documents to the Injunction Court judge. Neither case will be considered a UFC case unless both become active.

F. Juvenile Dependency/Delinquency UFC Cases.

In order to create administrative coordination between the delinquency and dependency courts, where a juvenile has case(s) in both jurisdictions of the Juvenile Court Division, and to ensure that multiple determinations concerning a juvenile are complementary to, and do not conflict with one another, the Juvenile Court Division shall develop an adequate and effective case management system to identify these UFC cases (where at least one of the delinquency and/or dependency case(s) are currently active) and have the Family Court Case Manager make appropriate divisional assignments to the UFC to handle these matters.

G. Domestic Violence and Juvenile Division Cases

1. This section shall apply to those cases wherein a matter is pending only in the Domestic Violence and Juvenile Divisions. This section does not apply to those cases wherein a case is also pending in the Domestic Relations Division.

2. The following types of cases shall be specifically assigned in the following manner:

a. Petition for Injunction Filed Where There is an Open Juvenile Delinquency or Dependency Case. The case shall be set for hearing on the Injunction Court Docket and transferred to the UFC. After the hearing on the Injunction Petition is held, the Injunction file will remain part of UFC with the Delinquency or Dependency case. Where there is only a Dependency Case, the Dependency Court docket will thereafter control the calendaring of the case. Where there is both a Dependency and a Delinquency case, the Delinquency docket will thereafter control the case.

b. Petition for Injunction Filed Where There is a Closed Juvenile Case. The case shall be set for final hearing on the Injunction Court docket and transferred to the Juvenile Division Judge only upon motion and good cause shown.

c. Motions for Transfer to the Juvenile Division. These motions shall be filed in the Juvenile Delinquency or Dependency file and set for hearing on that docket. The motion shall be ruled upon prior to the scheduled Permanent Injunction hearing. A two week extension of the Temporary Injunction may be granted to allow time for a determination to be made as to the efficiency of the request to transfer the Domestic Violence Injunction case. The original Motion for Transfer shall be filed with the Clerk of the Court, bearing the Injunction and Juvenile Division case numbers, with courtesy copies of the motion to be sent to the Judge.

3. When it is decided that it is unnecessary or impractical to assign all of the cases to the UFC docket, the Case Manager shall continue to monitor the progress and status of related cases.

V. PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FAMILY AND UNIFIED FAMILY COURT CASES

The following procedural requirements shall apply to all family cases except Juvenile Dependency and/or Juvenile Delinquency cases.

A. Standing Family Court Order

In all original actions for Dissolution of Marriage, other than Simplified Petition, the Clerk of Court shall attach a copy of the ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER #S2008-03 RE: STANDING FAMILY LAW COURT ORDER and the **STANDING FAMILY COURT ORDER (ACTIONS INVOLVING PARENTING ISSUES)** to the original pleading and to all copies to be served upon the opposing party. The Petitioner shall be bound by the ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER #S2008-03 RE: STANDING FAMILY LAW COURT ORDER and the **STANDING FAMILY COURT ORDER (ACTIONS INVOLVING PARENTING ISSUES)** upon the filing of the case. The Respondent shall be bound by the Standing ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER #S2008-03 RE: STANDING FAMILY LAW COURT ORDER and the **STANDING FAMILY COURT ORDER (ACTIONS INVOLVING PARENTING ISSUES)** upon service of the initial pleading. The ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER #S2008-03 RE: STANDING FAMILY LAW COURT ORDER and the **STANDING FAMILY COURT ORDER (ACTIONS INVOLVING PARENTING ISSUES)** shall specifically address each of the following areas:

- a. Relocation of children
- b. Child Support
- c. Treatment of children
- d. Sales, encumbrances, transfers or damage of assets
- e. Prohibition against harassment
- f. Concealment or destruction of family records
- g. Insurance policies
- h. Additional debt
- i. Application of the Standing Order

B. Motions

1. All motions shall be filed with the Clerk prior to contacting the judge.

2. In all cases in which the a time sharing plan for minor children is an issue at a temporary relief hearing, the parties shall mediate this issue along with child support and any other related issues prior to the hearing. This mediation shall be done on an expedited basis so as to not delay the temporary hearing. If either party takes any action to hinder the prompt mediation of these issues the court may impose sanctions. Upon written motion, with good cause shown, any party may apply to the court to waive this required mediation. Any such motion to waive mediation shall be signed by the litigant requesting the waiver as well as the litigant's attorney, if represented by counsel.

3. Emergency motions must recite sufficient facts to justify the granting of relief on an emergency basis. A copy of the emergency motion must be provided to the judge/magistrate's office and the opposing party or their attorney. The judge/magistrate will review the motion and if determined to be an emergency the judge/magistrate's office will notify the moving party of the date and time of the hearing. The moving party will be responsible to provide notice to the other side.

4. All stipulated motions shall be signed by all attorneys or pro se parties. The original motion shall be filed with the Clerk. A copy of the stipulated motion, original order with sufficient copies for all parties, pre-addressed stamped envelopes for all attorneys or pro se parties, and a cover letter showing copies to all parties shall be submitted to the Judge or Magistrate.

5. All attorneys and parties who intend to appear at any hearing shall meet at the courthouse fifteen (15) minutes prior to any hearing and shall attempt to resolve the matter before it is called.

6. All Motions to Compel Discovery shall comply with the requirements of Rule 12.380, Fla.Fam.L.R.P. As required by the rule, the motion must include a certification that the movant, in good faith, has conferred or attempted to confer with the person or party failing to make the discovery in an effort to secure the information or material without court action.

C. Notice of Hearing

Except in Title IV-D actions, all notices of hearing must include a certificate signed by the attorney or pro se litigant that they have made a good faith attempt to resolve the matter without the necessity of a hearing. Should the court determine that there has not been a good faith attempt to resolve the matter, the court may impose sanctions against the moving party or his/her attorney.

D. Cancellation of Trial or Hearings

1. Only the party noticing a matter for hearing may cancel the hearing.

2. Trials or hearings scheduled by court order may not be cancelled by the parties.

E. Mediation

1. Unless otherwise determined by the court, any party who seeks to schedule a trial or hearing on any contested issue, other than contempt, enforcement, injunctions against domestic or repeat violence, or Title IV-D actions, which will take more than one (1) hour, shall first participate in mediation. All parties and mediators will comply with the Florida Statutes, Florida Rules of Family Procedure and Florida Rules of Mediation, as well as the requirements listed in Fifth Circuit administrative order regarding mediation of family law cases.

2. If either party fails to appear at the mediation session, or if after mediating in good faith, an agreement cannot be reached, the mediator shall file the original mediation report with the Clerk of Court, with copies to the judge/magistrate, and all parties, or their counsel of record, within five (5) days after the mediation scheduled conference.

3. If an agreement is reached, the mediator shall submit a Stipulated Order Approving Mediation Agreement or a Stipulated Final Order of Modification of Final Judgment.

4. Any mediation agreement in which child support is at issue must include a completed child support guidelines worksheet.

5. Upon written motion, with good cause shown, any party may request that the court waive the mediation requirement. The motion, or joint motion, shall be signed by the litigant(s) requesting the waiver and their attorney, if represented by counsel.

6. Mediation, by agreement of the parties, which has taken place within three (3) months prior to the filing of the original action or modification, will satisfy the requirements of this section, if the mediator certified that the mediation resulted in an impasse.

7. The circuit shall make available a list of certified family mediators.

F. Ex parte Orders to Compel Discovery

When a Motion to Compel Discovery alleges a complete failure to timely respond or object to discovery, and there has been no request for extension of time to respond, an Ex Parte Order may be entered requiring compliance with the original discovery demand within ten (10) days from the entry of the order. All Motions to Compel Discovery shall comply with the requirements of Rule 12.380, Fla.Fam.L.R.P. As required by the rule, the motion must include a certification that the movant, in good faith, has conferred or attempted to confer with the person or party failing to make the discovery in an effort to secure the information or material without court action. The moving party shall serve a copy of the motion and proposed order to the opposing parties or attorneys of record and shall furnish the Court with a copy of the motion, a proposed order with sufficient copies, and pre-addressed stamped envelopes for all parties. The Court will reserve on attorney's fees, if fees are prayed for in the Motion, until final disposition of the case.

G. Proposed Orders and Judgments

1. Copies of all orders and judgments entered in family law cases shall be mailed to counsel and self represented parties, even if default has been entered, unless service was by publication and there is no mailing address listed for the Respondent in the court file. The party preparing the order or judgment shall provide opposing counsel or self represented party a copy of the proposed order or judgment five (5) days prior to submission to the court. The proposed order or judgment shall be accompanied by sufficient copies and stamped, pre-addressed envelopes for all parties or counsel of record as well as proof that it was submitted to the opposing party(ies)/counsel.

2. Every proposed order or judgment shall be submitted by the party designated by the court, for signature within ten (10) days after the decision. In the event the designated party fails to submit a proposed order within said ten (10) days, the opposing party may submit a proposed order within five (5) days after the initial ten (10) day period. Failure to comply with this procedure may result in sanctions.

3. The title of every order submitted shall contain the subject matter of the motion or pleading ruled upon and the commencement shall state the date on which the matter was heard. All orders and judgments submitted to the court shall be on plain letter size paper. Any submission of an order or judgment by a party shall be accompanied by a cover letter stating that the party has read it, sent a copy, including the cover letter, to the opposing party in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 of this section, and that it is submitted in good faith in accordance with the findings and decision of the court.

4. In the event there is an objection to a proposed order or judgment, the objecting party must notify the Court and the other party within five (5) days of receipt of the proposed order or judgment. Within five (5) days thereafter, both parties must submit their proposed orders or judgments to the Court by e-mail to Ddean@circuit5.org and provide a copy to the opposing party simultaneously. If an alternative proposed order or judgment is not received by the Court within five (5) days of the Court being notified of an objection, the Court will consider the objection withdrawn.

H. Time Standards and Case Management

1. Time standards have been established for the completion of domestic relations cases. The standards are:

Uncontested Dissolution of Marriage Cases - 90 days (filing to final disposition) **Fla. R. Jud. Admin. 2.085(e)(1)(c)**

Contested Dissolution of Marriage Cases - 180 days (filing to final disposition) **Fla. R. Jud. Admin. 2.085(e)(1)(c)**.

Detention Petition—within 24 hours of being taken into custody; may be held no more than 21 days **§985.255 Fla. Stat.**

Petition for Delinquency— if in custody, arraignment within 48 hours of filing; if not in custody, trial within 90 days of the date taken into custody or the date of service of the summons that was issued with the Petition **Fla. R. Juv. P. 8.090**

Shelter Petition—within 24 hours of the child being taken into custody **Fla. R. Juv. P. 8.305**

Dependency Petition—arraignment within 28 days of shelter; disposition within 15 days of admission; adjudicatory hearing within 30 days after arraignment **§39.506 (1) Fla. Stat.**

Dependency Disposition—15 days after admission, consent or finding of dependency **§39.506 (1) Fla. Stat.**

Permanency—within 12 months of removal of the child or within 12 months of the date case plan was accepted, whichever is earlier **§39.621 Fla. Stat.**

Substantial Compliance with Dependency Case Plan—within 9 months of the date the child was removed or adjudicated dependent, whichever was earlier. **§39.806(1)(e)(1)**

Petition for Ex Parte Injunction for Protection—15 days from issuance of Ex Parte Injunction

2. It is the policy of the Fifth Judicial Circuit to adhere to these time standards in all family cases.

I. Professional Courtesy

1. Governing Authority

The UFC in and for Sumter County hereby adopts the Standards for Professional Courtesy outlined in the Bounds of Advocacy and Goals for Family Lawyers in Florida (May 2004). All parties and attorneys of record must conduct themselves in accordance with the guidelines contained therein.

2. Coordination with Opposing Party

a. In order to preclude unnecessary motions for continuance and protective orders, and prevent unnecessary backlog of the court's calendar, it is required that counsel or pro se litigants attempt to coordinate all hearings, depositions, and mediation, prior to scheduling or filing of notices for such matters.

b. Any notice scheduling a hearing, trial, deposition or mediation filed by a party shall be considered a representation that the party has coordinated the date with the opposing party.


c. If the date has not been coordinated with the opposing party, the following language shall appear on the notice: "The above hearing/trial/deposition/mediation date has not been coordinated with the opposing party because . . ."

VI. Periodic Evaluation of Unified Family Court


1. The Office of the Clerk of Court, with the assistance of the Court Information Technology Services (CITeS), will be responsible for establishing statistical tracking and measurement methodologies for those cases assigned to the UFC.
2. The Unified Family Court shall be evaluated by the Chief Judge, or his/her designee(s), every quarter to determine its effectiveness in implementing this Circuit's goal of addressing family law matters in a comprehensive, coordinated manner. Such evaluation shall consist of, but not be limited to: (i) a review and analysis of statistical data provided by the Administrative Case Coordinator, in conjunction with CITeS, detailing the amount and types of UFC cases handled during the quarter and (ii) anecdotal documentation of UFC cases provided by participants in the cases (i.e., judiciary, attorneys, litigants, etc.).

THIS ORDER SHALL TAKE EFFECT upon execution and shall remain in effect until further order of this Court. The Clerk of the Court is hereby directed to file a copy of this Administrative Order in Case No. 08-____ (Court Administration).

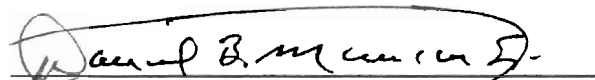
DONE and ORDERED in Chambers at Bushnell, Sumter County, Florida this 31 day of July 2008.


Hon. William H. Hallman, Circuit Judge
Administrative Judge, Sumter County

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers at Ocala, Marion County, Florida on this 5 day of August, 2008.


Hon. SUE ROBBINS, Circuit Judge
Administrative Family Law Judge, 5th Circuit

DONE and ORDERED in Chambers at Brooksville, Hernando County, Florida this 15th day of August, 2008.


HON. DANIEL B. MERRITT, Sr., Circuit Judge
Chief Judge, 5th Judicial Circuit Court