



May Term 2025

VERMONT SUPREME COURT

Administrative Directive No. 26 adopted on January 13, 2009 is abrogated and replaced with the following:

FAMILY CASE DISPOSITION GUIDELINES FOR JUVENILE DOCKET

The management of the flow of cases in the family division is the responsibility of the judiciary. In carrying out that responsibility, the judiciary must balance the rights and interests of individual litigants, the limited resources of the judicial branch and other participants in the justice system, and the interests of the citizens of this state in having an effective, fair, and efficient system of justice.

- A. The State Court Administrator and Chief Superior Judge are directed, within available resources, to:
 1. Assist family courts in implementing caseflow management plans that incorporate case processing time guidelines established pursuant to this directive;
 2. Gather information from family courts on compliance with case disposition guidelines; and
 3. Assess the effectiveness of management plans in achieving the guidelines established by this directive.
- B. Family courts are directed to:
 1. Maintain current caseflow management plans consistent with case processing time guidelines established in this directive;
 2. Collect and maintain accurate caseflow management data;
 3. Cooperate with the Administrative Judge for Trial Courts and Court Administrator's Office in assessing caseflow management plans implemented pursuant to this directive.

The following amended time guidelines for juvenile docket case processing are provided as goals for the administration of court caseloads. These guidelines do not supersede procedural requirements in court rules or statutes for specific cases or supersede reporting requirements in court rules or statutes.

**Milestone Standards for CHINS Cases:
Children in Custody of DCF or Non-Parent**

Juvenile Events/Milestones	Standard
Removal / Emergency Care Order (ECO) to Disposition	120 days
Removal to Temporary Care Hearing 33 V.S.A. § 5307(a)	3 days
Temporary Care Order to Merits Adjudication 33 V.S.A. § 5313(b)	60 days
Merits Adjudication to Disposition Order 33 V.S.A. § 5317(a)	35 days
Disposition Order to Post-disposition Review (if reunification is goal) 33 V.S.A. § 5320	60 days
Removal / ECO to first Permanency Hearing 33 V.S.A. § 5321	360 days
Removal / ECO to first Permanency Hearing if child is under 6 and Permanency Hearing is expedited to 6 months	180 days
Removal / ECO to Return of Custody Order (plan is reunification)	540 days
Removal /ECO to Permanent Guardianship Order	540 days
Removal /ECO to Adoption (excluding appeal time)	720 days
Removal / ECO to TPR petition filing	360 days
TPR Petition Filing to First TPR Status V.R.F.P. 3(b)	15 days
Filing of TPR petition to TPR decision	150 days
TPR decision to Adoption (if no appeal)	90 days
Affirmed TPR decision to Adoption	60 days
Removal to Court's signed approval of plan for Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement ("APPLA") 33 V.S.A. § 5321(a)(5)	720 days

**Milestone Standards For CHINS Cases:
Children who remain in Custody of Parents
(excludes truancy cases)**

Juvenile Events/Milestones	Standard
Removal or Preliminary Hearing to Disposition	120 days
Removal to Temporary Care Hearing (at which custody is returned to parent)	72 hours (3 days)
Preliminary Hearing to Merits Adjudication 33 V.S.A. § 5313(b)	60 days
Merits Adjudication to Disposition Order	35 days

**Milestone Standards for DELINQUENCY Cases:
Children in Custody of DCF**

(Track from date of removal from home; same as CHINS)

Juvenile Events/Milestones	Standard
Removal to Disposition	120 days
Removal to Temporary Care Hearing	72 hours (3 days)
Temporary Care Order to Merits Adjudication	60 days
Merits Adjudication to Disposition Order	35 days
Disposition Order to Post-disposition Review 33 V.S.A. § 5258	60 days
Removal to first Permanency Hearing (33 V.S.A. § 5258) (same as CHINS)	360 days
Removal to Return of Custody Order (plan is reunification) (same as CHINS)	540 days
Removal to Permanent Guardianship Order (same as CHINS)	540 days
Removal to Adoption (excluding appeal time) (same as CHINS)	460 days
Removal to TPR petition filing	360 days
TPR Petition Filing to First TPR Status V.R.F.P. 3(b)	15 days
Filing of TPR petition to TPR decision	150 days
TPR decision to Adoption (if no appeal)	90 days
Affirmed TPR decision to Adoption	60 days
Removal to Court's signed approval of plan for Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) (same as CHINS)	720 days


**Milestone Standards for DELINQUENCY Cases:
Children who remain in Custody of Parents**

(Track from date of preliminary hearing)

Juvenile Events/Milestones	Standard
Preliminary Hearing to Disposition	95 days
Preliminary Hearing to Merits Adjudication 33 V.S.A. § 5227(b)	60 days
Merits Adjudication to Disposition Order 33 V.S.A. § 5231(a)	35 days
Violation of Probation Filing to Disposition of VOP Complaint	45 days

This amended directive is effective immediately.

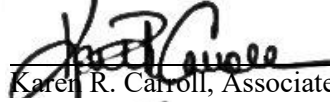
Dated in Chambers at Montpelier, Vermont, this 6th day of May, 2025.



Paul L. Keiber, Chief Justice



Harold E. Eaton, Jr., Associate Justice



Karen R. Carroll, Associate Justice



William D. Cohen, Associate Justice



Nancy J. Staples, Associate Justice