

District Court of Tulsa County

Tulsa County Family Court Program

Second Quarter Report

2010

Report by:
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Tulsa County Family Court

Domestic Judges

FD Docket A

The Honorable Carl Funderburk

Clerk: Nikki Godwin

FD Docket B

The Honorable Wilma Palmer

Clerk: KimberLee Rutledge

FD Docket C

The Honorable Mark Barcus

Clerk: Linda McMurray

FD Docket D

The Honorable William Musseman, Jr.

Clerk: Suzi Collins

FD Docket E

The Honorable Rodney Sparkman

Clerk: Shana Grandstaff

Protective Order Judge

The Honorable Charles Hogshead

Clerk: Kimberly Wiley

Referee

The Honorable Russell Anderson

Clerk: Ash Jones

Family Court Case Coordinator

Nicole W. Kirkland, MSW

Family Resource Coordinator

Cheryl Conklin

DHS Child Support Services

Ross Aston

Tulsa County Family Court Program

Second Quarter 2010

Tulsa County's Family Court Program provided triage for the Family Court Judges by reducing court involvement and providing services and resources to litigants. The following report illustrates the specialized dockets and services in place for Tulsa County.

Parenting Plan Conference Docket

All Dissolution of Marriage, Legal Separation, and Paternity cases involving minor children are scheduled on the PPC docket two to three weeks after the petition is filed. This docket is managed by the Referee.

				Data collected on the PPC Survey.	
Quarter	Dockets	Litigants Docketed	Litigants Present	Pro Se Litigants <small>(One or both sides self-represented)</small>	Children Affected
1 st Quarter	33	1,654 (827 Cases)	998 (60%)	224 (35%)	1,269
2 nd Quarter	31	1,722 (861 Cases)	1,198 (70%)	287 (37%)	1,433

1. Referee:

- a. Helped families understand the effects of divorce and conflict on their children and encouraged families to create a Temporary Order (TO) Agreement;
- b. Pro Se (self-represented) cases without an attorney on both sides were sent to the Family Resource Coordinator (FRC) for mediation services;
- c. Cases with at least one attorney involved, that could not reach an agreement, conferenced with the Referee Judge. If an agreement could not be reached the Referee referred the case to their Assigned Judge to schedule a Temporary Order Hearing;
- d. All cases were given a Scheduling Order that outlined when the Helping Children Cope with Divorce seminar, discovery, and mediation must be completed and were given a 120 day status date.

Quarter	Cases Stricken or Passed	TO Submitted	TO to be Submitted	Conference with Referee	Pro Se cases sent to FRC
1 st Quarter	58%	15%	3%	15%	9%
2 nd Quarter	56%	16%	5%	13%	10%

After conferencing with the Referee:

Quarter	Cases Stricken or Passed	TO Submitted	Referred to TO Hearing
1 st Quarter	27%	69%	4%
2 nd Quarter	22%	65%	13%

2. Family Resource Coordinator:

- a. Provided community resources to all litigants;
- b. Distributed the Parenting Plan Conference Survey to all litigants. Results on page 5;
- c. Worked with Pro Se (self-represented) litigants at the Parenting Plan Conference docket to achieve financial and visitation agreements through mediation (both sides must be Pro Se).

Quarter	Total Mediations	Total Temporary Agreements
1 st Quarter	82	73 (89%)
2 nd Quarter	101	95 (94%)

This resulted in 94% of the self-represented litigants coming to financial and visitation agreements.

3. Family Court Case Coordinator:

- a. Verified services with the Department of Human Services (DHS) on all cases scheduled for the Parenting Plan Conference docket;
- b. Case data submitted to the DHS – Child Support Enforcement office each week.

Quarter	Total Cases Verified	Cases with DHS Services	Disclaimers Signed and Filed
1 st Quarter	505	171 (34%)	334 (66%)
2 nd Quarter	560	198 (35%)	362 (65%)

This resulted in sending 35% of the cases scheduled on the Parenting Plan Conference Docket to DHS for review and signage.

Parenting Plan Conference Survey Totals

2nd Quarter 2010

	Yes	No	N/A	Blank
1. I received a Families in Transition packet at the beginning of my divorce process.	469 60.59%	192 24.81%	97 12.53%	16 2.07%
2. The instructions I received in the Families in Transition packet were useful.	459 59.30%	10 1.29%	279 36.05%	26 3.36%
3. The Judge did a good job of reminding us to keep conflict away from our children.	768 99.22%	0 0.00%	2 0.26%	4 0.52%
4. Did the DVD show how children are affected when parents do not work together?	761 98.32%	5 0.65%	4 0.52%	4 0.52%
5. The Family Resource Coordinator was beneficial.	749 96.77%	2 0.26%	20 2.58%	3 0.39%
6. I learned about community resources that are available to help me.	742 95.87%	9 1.16%	18 2.33%	5 0.65%
7. I am willing to work with my co-parent to develop a plan for parenting our children.	737 95.22%	6 0.78%	21 2.71%	10 1.29%
8. I am willing to agree to a Temporary Order.	699 90.31%	13 1.68%	46 5.94%	16 2.07%
9. I am represented by an attorney.	471 60.85%	287 37.08%	11 1.42%	5 0.65%
10. My relationship with my co-parent may improve because of the information I learned at the PPC.	611 78.94%	82 10.59%	63 8.14%	18 2.33%
11. I plan to use the information I received today to help my children.	757 97.80%	3 0.39%	5 0.65%	9 1.16%
12. Total children affected by Dissolution of Marriage, Legal Separation, or Paternity action.	1,433			

Gender:

Male: 45.35%
Female: 52.97%

Age:

18 and under: 1.29%
19 to 35: 59.82%
36 to 64: 36.69%
65 and up: 0.26%

Race:

African American: 9.56%
Asian: 0.90%
Hispanic: 6.98%
Native American: 9.69%
White: 70.93%
Other: 1.16%

Total Litigants Scheduled on Docket: 1,722

Total Litigants Present on Docket: 1,198

Percent Present at PPC Docket: 70%

Total Surveys Collected: 774

Percent of Surveys Completed: 65%

Helping Children Cope with Divorce Seminar

All Dissolution of Marriage, Legal Separation, or Paternity cases involving minor children are required to take the Helping Children Cope with Divorce seminar.

The goal of this seminar is to help parents manage conflict, learn effective parenting skills, avoid pitfalls and problems, and understand the typical reactions to divorce by developmental age. The following data is from the program evaluation given at the end of each seminar.

2nd Quarter:

Number of parents that attended the seminar: 1,076	
1. Overall, I found the seminar helpful:	84%
2. The information I learned today will help me with my co-parent:	77%
3. The information I learned today will help me understand my children:	82%
4. It would help to attend this program before the divorce was filed:	58%
5. This seminar will help reduce conflict between co-parents:	64%

Agreed-To Docket

All Dissolution of Marriage, Legal Separation, or Paternity cases where both parties agree or do not contest may attend the Agreed-To Docket. The five (5) Domestic Judges rotate the daily Agreed-To docket each week. This docket is held once a day and averages 28 cases per week.

Family Resource Coordinator:

Assisted the Family Court Judges, using a check list to sort Pro Se (self-represented) litigant paperwork before seeing the Judge.

Quarter	Total Pro Se Cases Agree	Total Pro Se Cases Processed to the Judge
1 st Quarter	365	250 (69%)
2 nd Quarter	481	312 (65%)

This resulted in 65% of the cases being processed to the Judge and preventing 35% from seeing the Judge with incorrect or missing paperwork.

High Conflict/Complex Cases

High conflict/complex cases are identified at the Parenting Plan Conference docket by the Referee or at any stage of the dissolution or paternity process by the five (5) Domestic Judges. The Family Court Case Coordinator is assigned to a case by Court Order and only works with cases involving minor children.

The Family Court Case Coordinator:

1. Provided case management, mediation, and resources to high conflict/complex families;
2. Assisted the Family Court Judges by communicating with attorneys and litigants to move high conflict cases to resolution;
3. Decreased conflict, number of court appearances, and time involved with the court:

Quarter	New Cases Ordered	Total Cases Closed	Trial: Decision Filed	Consent Filed	Dismissed	Total Cases Pending	Children Affected
1 st Quarter	10	4	0	4	0	33	86
2 nd Quarter	10	6	0	6	0	37	96

These services helped reduce conflict for 37 families, including 96 minor children. The Family Court Case Coordinator helped reduce conflict by providing the litigants with information and resources, facilitated communication amongst the parties, and kept cases moving forward through docket management.

Protective Order Docket

All Protective Order cases are scheduled on the Protective Order docket. This docket is managed by the Protective Order Judge:

- Assisted the Domestic Judges by ruling on all Protective Order cases;
- The Family Resource Coordinator provided community resources to all litigants;
- Averaged 16 dockets per month.

Quarter	Total Protective Orders Filed
1 st Quarter	1,022
2 nd Quarter	1,229

Court Watch observed 661 Protective Order cases (1st Quarter data only):

- 44% Dismissed
 - 18% Plaintiff failed to appear
 - 17% Plaintiff and Defendant failed to appear
- 18% Granted
 - 28% named children on the PO
- 13% Continued
- 13% Alias EPO Continued
- 5% Consolidated
- 5% Other Action (i.e. Motion)

Self-represented litigants:

- 80% Plaintiff Pro Se
- 67% Defendant Pro Se

The following data was compiled from The Oklahoma State Courts Network (OSCN).

2010 FAMILY COURT DATA

New Filings

1st Quarter 2010
(FD, FP, PO Cases Only)

Judge	Family and Domestic (FD)	Paternity (FP)	Protective Order (PO)	TOTAL NEW FILINGS
FD Docket A	199	20	22	241
FD Docket B	199	19	25	243
FD Docket C	197	18	33	248
FD Docket D	198	18	23	239
FD Docket E	198	19	32	249
TOTAL	991	94	135	1,220

Quarter	New Filings	Cases Closed	Trial: Decision Filed	Consent Filed	Consol.	Dismissed	Months to Closure	Cases Reopened	Total Cases Pending	Months Pending
1 st Quarter	1,220	645 (53%)	14 (1%)	533 (44%)	5 (0%)	117 (10%)	2	12 (1%)	567 (46%)	6

Total Pending Cases

(FD, FP, PO Cases Only)

Judge	Family and Domestic (FD)	Paternity (FP)	Protective Order (PO)	TOTAL PENDING
FD Docket A	2,062	43	30	2,135
FD Docket B	1,093	43	42	1,178
FD Docket C	1,133	44	39	1,216
FD Docket D	1,122	42	43	1,207
FD Docket E	994	45	47	1,086
TOTAL	6,404	217	201	6,822