

Rule 17. Pretrial Conference

(a) Requirement. There shall be a pretrial conference in each contested case. The time for the pretrial conference shall be set by the judicial officer during the shelter care hearing or initial hearing or at the conclusion of the mediation hearing. Attorneys who enter the case after that time shall be notified of the time of the pretrial conference at the time of their first contact with the court.

(b) Meeting prior to the pretrial conference. Prior to the filing of the pretrial statement, the attorneys who will conduct the trial for each of the parties and any unrepresented parties shall meet in person. A meeting held immediately after the mediation hearing may satisfy this requirement. The participants in the meeting shall spend sufficient time together to thoroughly discuss the case and shall make a good faith effort to reach agreement on the following matters:

- (1) The formulation and simplification of issues, including the elimination of unsupported claims or defenses;
- (2) The necessity or desirability of amendments to the petition;
- (3) The admission or stipulation of facts and the authenticity of documents;
- (4) The identification of witnesses and documents;
- (5) The settlement of the case;
- (6) The resolution of pending motions;
- (7) The resolution of outstanding discovery issues;
- (8) The need for adopting special procedures for managing potentially difficult or protracted actions that may involve complex issues, multiple parties, difficult legal questions or unusual proof problems; and
- (9) Such other matters as may aid in the disposition of the action.

(c) Pretrial statement. Not later than two days prior to the pretrial conference, the parties shall file with the Court and deliver to the assigned judicial officer a joint pretrial statement which shall include a certification of the date and place of the meeting held pursuant to paragraph (b) of this Rule, shall be in the form prescribed by the Court, and shall also include the following items:

- (1) A list of parties and attorneys;
- (2) Whether service of process has been completed on all parties;
- (3) The statutory basis for a finding of neglect;
- (4) Any dispute over paternity;
- (5) Whether a stipulation has been discussed and rejected;
- (6) Issues not in dispute;
- (7) Issues in dispute;
- (8) Discovery problems that have not been resolved;
- (9) Outstanding motions;
- (10) Names of witnesses, including whether a witness is a fact or expert witness, and the party calling the witness;
- (11) Exhibits and any objections to the admission of specific exhibits as evidence;
- (12) Other evidentiary and legal issues which must be resolved at trial;
- (13) Identification of special accommodations that may be required by parties or witnesses such as sign language interpreters, translators, or wheelchair access;
- (14) Whether any party is incarcerated and, if so, the location and the party's police department identification number, if known;

(15) Any requests for recusal pursuant to D.C. Code § 16-2312(j);

(16) Anticipated length of the trial; and

(17) The signatures of all counsel.

(d) Pretrial order. After the pretrial conference, the Court shall enter an order reciting the action taken. Insofar as possible, the Court shall resolve all pending disputes in the pretrial order. The pretrial order may set limits with respect to the time for opening statement, examination of witnesses, and closing argument, the number of lay and expert witnesses each party may call, and the total amount of time each party may have for presentation of the party's case.

(e) Additional matters. The Court should address additional matters relating to the placement of the child, visitation, services, and matters covered in Rules 7, 10, 12, 14 and 15 if not previously resolved at the shelter care or initial hearing.

(f) Obligation to update. Parties shall have a continuing obligation to update information set forth in the joint pretrial statement and/or provided during the pretrial conference.