

Rule 37. Status Conference Prior to Hearing on Motion for Termination of Parent and Child Relationship

(a) Schedule for conference. There shall be a pre-hearing conference on each motion for termination of the parent and child relationship within 30 days following the effectuation of service. The Clerk shall schedule the conference upon completion of service. However, failure to hold a pre-hearing conference within the time specified shall not be grounds for dismissal of the motion.

(b) Purpose. Depending upon the circumstances of the case, the purposes of the pre-hearing conference shall be to:

(1) Review efforts to locate and serve all parties, including the entry of an order with respect to diligent search where needed to locate parties prior to adjudication;

(2) Address any unresolved paternity issue, including the entry of appropriate orders relating to genetic testing;

(3) Address any unresolved discovery matters and any outstanding motions;

(4) Set a date and time for mediation in the case prior to the scheduled hearing date if the parties and the judicial officer agree that mediation of the case is appropriate;

(5) Set a date and time for case conferencing with the judicial officer, parties, counsel and social worker if the parties agree that such a case conference would be useful in streamlining issues for hearing or in reaching a disposition of the case without hearing;

(6) Enter stipulations, including voluntary relinquishments of parental rights, which may be agreed to by the parties;

(7) Identify issues of law and fact for trial;

(8) Develop a list of possible witnesses and a brief summary of their testimony -- with designation of those who will testify as experts based upon statements filed by counsel pursuant to SCR-Civ 16(b)(4);

(9) Identify special accommodations that may be required by parties or witnesses, such as interpreters, or wheelchair access; and

(10) Confirm the date of the hearing on the motion and estimate its length.

(c) Continuing obligation to update. Parties shall have a continuing obligation to update information provided during the pre-hearing conference.