IN THE CHILD PROTECTION COURT OF SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS FOR ATASCOSA, FRIO, KARNES, LASALLE, AND WILSON COUNTIES

STANDING ORDER	§	**EVIDENTIARY ORDER**
	§	**FOR REMOTE HEARINGS IN**
	§	**AN EFFORT TO CONTAIN**
	§	**THE SPREAD OF COVID-19**
	§	**AND TO PROTECT ALL PARTIES**

ORDERED that:

§1 This order is issued pursuant to the applicable emergency orders of the Supreme Court of Texas and Court of Criminal Appeals, and at the recommendation of the Texas Office of Court Administration, pertaining to preventing the spread of COVID-19. This order shall remain in place through May 8, 2020 or until further notice or order of the Court.

§2 All hearings will be conducted utilizing the Zoom Video Conference system to allow parties to participate either through video conference or via telephone. Notice of the Zoom Video Conference Hearing will be sent from this Court to the Department, Attorneys, and CASA staff for distribution to relevant DFPS staff, parties, and CASA volunteers.

§3 Statutory or progress hearings shall be limited to the issues required by statute at that time. Unless a timely noticed motion has been filed & set or exigent circumstances exist, all other issues will not be heard.

§4 Any pleadings eFiled with the Clerk less than 48 hours before the hearing shall be emailed in .pdf format to Dora Gonzales, Court Coordinator, at Dora.Gonzales@txcourts.gov at least 4 hours before the hearing to allow consideration.

§5 Sworn statements of witnesses may be permitted upon proper notice and foundation. Objections may apply, but pursuant to the emergency orders of the Supreme Court of Texas and the Court of Criminal Appeals, the Court will consider a sworn statement in a light most favorable to the proponent. Attorneys and parties are admonished not to use sworn statements frivolously and to review sworn statements prior to hearings.

§6 Absent a showing of exigent circumstances, all proposed exhibits or sworn statements shall be exchanged not less than three days (as computed and as applicable under Rule 4, Rule 21, and Rule 21a of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure) prior to hearing or trial. Exhibits not meeting this criteria will not be admitted and the court reporter will not maintain these documents in the record. Admitted exhibits shall be marked as identified on the record.

§7 Any proposed exhibits or sworn statements must be marked for identification and emailed to Dora Gonzales at Dora.Gonzales@txcourts.gov by noon on the business day preceding the hearing or trial. The subject of the email should include the style of the case, the cause number, the county, and identified as the appropriate party's exhibits.

§8 Sworn telephonic testimony will be permitted in all cases.

§9 The open courts provision of Texas Law allows all Texans access to court proceedings. Therefore, all hearings and trials shall be available to the public via a Live Stream on YouTube. Information on how to access these hearings will be available through the Texas Office of Court Administration website located at https://www.txcourts.gov/oca/.

Signed this 30th Day of March, 2020.

MELISSA DEGEROLAMI
ASSOCIATE JUDGE