

## APPENDIX

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### Typical content of a written care order decision by the Norwegian County Social Welfare Board

#### 1. Background

The first section of the decision covers the background of the case. This includes previous history with the child protection services if any; information about the family, parents, and children; age; how long they have lived where they live; any other background information about the family presented to the board; and the grounds for notifications and worry for why the child protection services forwarded the case to the county board. Previous reports and expert testimonies related to the history of the case and family will be included here.

#### 2. Municipality and child protection services

The second section covers the state's arguments and evidence for why the child should be considered removed from its family, and what article(s) of the law they argue comes into effect. Expert testimonies will be cited and included in this section of the decision.

#### 3. Parents

The third section covers the parents' arguments and evidence. This is sometimes split into two headings, one for each parent. This part covers a summary of the parents' testimonies, what, together or separately, they forward as reasons and explanations for why the child should not be removed, or where it should live, how often the parents should get to meet the child, and either an argument for the complete rejection of the child protection services' perspective, or arguments for adjustments and decreased severity of outcome. Any expert testimonies the parents have acquired will be included here.

#### 4. The Child

Not present in all decisions, this section will appear if the child is treated as its own party in the proceedings, and sometimes if there is a spokesperson for the child. It will cover the child's testimony, the child's perspective, experience, and narrative of the family and life situation.

#### 5. The County Board's assessment

This is the section under which the County Board reasons, argues, and concludes in the questions of whether the threshold of the law has been met, if support services has been sufficiently attempted, and if it is in the best interest of the child. It will cover the care needs of the child as revealed during

the proceedings, an assessment of the parenting skills and the support services rendered/attempted. Included are also relevant expert evidence and testimonies that the county board finds relevant for the decision-making process. Here the county board decides on whether a care order is necessary, and subsequently about placement of the child, duration of placement, and visitation (i.e., the number and duration of meetings between the child and the parents).

## Experts and specialist prevalence

Table 1 Knowledge (N=104)

| Code                  | Code description   | N            |
|-----------------------|--|--------------|
| Disciplinary evidence | Expressions of expert and specialist knowledge in CB reasoning/justification.  | 101<br>(97%) |
| Specialists           | Expressions of specialist knowledge (social workers, nurses, teachers, some foster parents) in CB reasoning/justification. | 91<br>(88%)  |
| Experts               | Expressions of expert knowledge (physicians, psychiatrists, and psychologists) in CB reasoning/justification.              | 79<br>(76%)  |

Table 1 shows a high presence of both specialists and experts in the county board's use and evaluation of evidence, with a relatively small difference in the presence the two groups of professions.

Table 2 Specialist and expert evidence thematic presence (n=104)

|  | Experts | Specialists | Total  |
|--|---------|-------------|--------|
| Attachment                             | 9.62%   | 22.12%      | 27.88% |
| Development                            | 28.85%  | 40.38%      | 57.69% |
| Assessing child/parent trustworthiness | 9.62%   | 16.35%      | 21.15% |
| Care context                           | 41.35%  | 71.15%*     | 81.73% |
| Case is an effect                      | 9.62%   | 15.38%      | 19.23% |
| Data basis justifications              | 29.81%  | 39.42%      | 55.77% |
| Functioning                            | 51.92%  | 82.69%*     | 94.23% |
| Stabilisation                          | 48.08%  | 29.81%      | 62.50% |

Sig.: \* = 1%, \*\* = 5%

The software Zigne signifikans<sup>1</sup> was used to test differences between assessments after the coding process. Table 2 shows that specialists are significantly more present in considerations of care context and functioning. However, because of the relatively few differences and the high presence of professional groups, as well as the aim to investigate the use and evaluation of evidence from experts and specialists by judicial decision-makers, I decided to merge the professional groups. This allows a more general analysis of the themes of research-based knowledge and to focus particularly on how the county board uses and evaluates evidence of this kind in the study.

<sup>1</sup> <https://aardal.info/zigne-hva-er-signifikanstesting/>