

## **MY CASE HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR A “CASE DATE” HEARING. WHAT WILL HAPPEN THEN?**

A “Case Date” is a new type of court event in family cases. It is designed to help cases proceed efficiently and effectively.

### **Purposes of a Case Date**

You may be familiar with the previous “family short calendar” process. Under that process, on a given day of the week dozens of pending cases were called into court to address specific motions that had recently been filed. Due to the volume of cases, the time the court could spend on each case was limited. Parties and attorneys sometimes had to wait in court for lengthy periods for their cases to be called.

For the foreseeable future, public health concerns preclude calling large numbers of parties and attorneys into court on the same day. But even before the pandemic, the Judicial Branch was making plans to replace the short calendar process with new methods intended to better serve Connecticut’s families. The Case Date is a primary feature of the first phase of this new process. A Case Date provides the parties with designated court time of greater length than was typically available at short calendar.

Unlike short calendar, which generally limited the court to addressing the particular motions listed on the calendar that day, a Case Date is intended to allow the court to take a broader view of the case. This may include addressing all pending motions in the case, to the extent the court deems it appropriate. Court action may include approving agreements on motions, holding a brief hearing on a motion or motions for which there is no agreement, or making a referral to Family Services for further work with the parties to address the outstanding issues.

Of course, on the Case Date a matter might reach a full resolution and result in a judgment or other final orders by agreement. The chance for an extended discussion with Family Services, followed by a hearing before a judge, may be enough time to resolve the entire case. If the matter does not resolve fully on the Case Date, the court will typically issue a scheduling order for the balance of the case, including the scheduling of a further hearing or trial as needed.

### **How a Case Date Works**

On your Case Date you will participate remotely in two events, each approximately 45 minutes long. First, you will call a Family Services conference line at a specific time to have a telephone conference with the other party and a Family Relations Counselor. Attorneys for the parties may also participate. The purpose of the conference call is to discuss the case as a whole, not just a particular motion or motions, exploring areas of agreement and identifying issues in dispute.

Shortly after the telephone conference with Family Services, the parties and their attorneys will join a video hearing with a judge. The Family Relations Counselor who conducted the conference with the parties will join the subsequent video hearing for the first few minutes, to relate to the judge the status of the matter.

## **Conclusion**

The Case Date system is designed to help the parties reach a full agreement resolving their issues expeditiously when that is possible. When it is not, the Case Date is intended to allow the court to identify and address the main issues that prevent a prompt resolution, and to chart a course for addressing all the disputed issues fairly and efficiently, without the need for repeated trips to court for hearings on individual motions.

Like most family court proceedings, Case Dates will be conducted remotely until further notice.