Rule 1931. Family Court Rules.

(a) **[Actions] Matters** Governed by **[These Rules] Pa.R.Civ.P. 1901 *et seq.*:**

(1) Divorce, Annulment, Dissolution of Marriage.

(i) Equitable Distribution.

(ii) Alimony/Alimony *Pendente Lite*.

(iii) Counsel Fees, Costs, and Expenses.

(2) Child Custody.

(i) Legal Custody.

(ii) Physical Custody.

(iii) Partial Custody**[/Visitation]**.

(3) Support.

(i) Child Support.

(ii) Spousal Support.

(iii) Modification and Enforcement.

(4) Paternity.

(5) Protection From Abuse.

(6) Protection of Victims of Sexual Violence or Intimidation.

(7) Mediation.

(8) Arbitration.

[(b) Commencement of Action.

(1) Unified Family Court Docketing. All actions under these Family Court Rules which involve identical parties shall be entered on the court's docket under the same primary case number.

Additional letters or numbers may be added parenthetically to specify the type of action, judge assigned or other identifying information.

(2) Custody Agreements. If, at a support proceeding, it appears that resolution of custody issues will facilitate compliance with the child support order, the conference officer or hearing officer may provide the parties with a form custody complaint and form custody agreement, along with information as to where to file the completed documents, the filing fee, and how to contact the lawyers referral service. The support conference officer or hearing officer shall not participate in custody negotiations, preparation of the forms, or provide legal advice.

(c) Consolidation of Family Court Matters.

(1) General Rule. Two or more actions under these Family Court Rules involving the same parties and common questions of law and/or fact shall be consolidated for hearing or trial unless the court determines that it is inappropriate or impractical to do so.

(2) Trial Continuity. Trials before a judge or hearings before a hearing officer shall be scheduled to be heard on consecutive days or within a ten-day period. If not completed within the time allotted, the trial or hearing shall be concluded within 90 days of the date of the commencement of the trial or hearing, unless a shorter time frame is required by statute or another procedural rule.

(3) Prompt Decisions.

(i) Except as provided in subdivision (c)(3)(ii), in any matter brought under these Family Court Rules, a decision by a conference officer, hearing officer, or judge shall be entered, filed, and served upon counsel for the parties, or any party not represented by counsel, not later than 30 days after the conference, hearing, or trial concludes, unless a shorter time frame is required by statute or another procedural rule.

(ii) The time for entering and filing a decision may be extended if, within 30 days of the conclusion of the conference, hearing, or trial, the court extends the date

for such decision by order entered of record showing good cause for the extension. In no event shall an extension delay entry of the decision more than 60 days after the conclusion of the conference, hearing, or trial.

(d) Continuing Education for Family Court Personnel.

(1) Program Development. Courses of instruction that include, at a minimum, the following topics shall be developed or approved by the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC):

(i) The substantive law and procedural aspects of the areas of law governed by these Family Court Rules;

(ii) Domestic violence;

(iii) Child development;

(iv) Family dynamics;

(v) Addictions and treatments;

(vi) Asset valuation;

(vii) Community resources.

(2) Initial Training. Within one year of assignment to cases governed by these Family Court Rules, each hearing officer, conciliator, mediator, and other court personnel designated by the president or administrative judge of each judicial district shall successfully complete the coursework developed or approved by the AOPC.

(3) Continuing Education. Each hearing officer, conciliator, mediator, and other court personnel designated by the president or administrative judge who is assigned to cases governed by these Family Court Rules shall successfully complete six hours of continuing education developed or approved by the AOPC each calendar year following the calendar year in which the initial training was completed.

(4) Compliance. The AOPC shall monitor compliance with the educational requirements of this rule.]

(b)-(d) Rescinded.

Comment: Initially adopted as a pilot program within four judicial districts, this rule was amended in 2026 to rescind subdivisions (b)-(d) and conclude the pilot program.

Historical Commentary

The following commentary is historical in nature and represents statements of the Committee at the time of rulemaking:

Explanatory Comment—2002

This new rule is suspended in all judicial districts except the First (Philadelphia), Fifth (Allegheny County), Twenty-third (Berks County) and Forty-fifth (Lackawanna County) Judicial Districts until further order of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.