



Parents, Guardians, and Custodians in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases – 3 of 4 Fact Sheet

Introduction

When the Juvenile Court has an abuse or neglect case, the purpose of the court is to keep children safe and help families have safe homes for their children. As a parent, guardian, or custodian, you have certain rights and responsibilities during this process.

Your Rights

You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford to pay for an attorney, the court will appoint one for you.

You have the right to admit or deny the allegations made about you and your family.

You have the right to be notified of all court hearings.

You have the right to be present and participate in all court hearings.

You have the right to understand what you need to do so that you can have your child returned to your home, and the right to get help to do these necessary things. You have the right to an interpreter in court if you cannot hear, speak, or understand English.

You have the right to talk with your caseworker and your attorney. When you call them, they may be busy with someone else or out of the office. You need to leave a message with a phone number where you can be reached or you need to try to call them again.

You have the right to look at court files about your case.

Your Responsibilities

Attend all the court hearings, court ordered services, and meetings. Be on time or early.

Obey court orders and follow your case plan.

Stay in touch with your attorney and your caseworker. Be sure that they always have a current address and telephone number for you.

Tell your attorney if you have serious problems with your caseworker or with any service that is supposed to help you.

Things move very fast in child abuse and neglect cases. Be sure that you know what you are supposed to do and when you are supposed to do it. Then, make sure you do it. This could make the difference in whether your child is returned to you.

See more fact sheet in this series at
arlegalservices.org/fact-sheets.

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The information and statements of law in this fact sheet should not be considered legal advice. This fact sheet is provided as a broad guide to help you understand how certain legal matters are handled in general. Courts may interpret the law differently. Before you take action, talk to an attorney and follow his or her advice. Always do what the court tells you to do.

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