

Tips for Navigating Court

Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse Court in Kentucky

Navigating the court system for dependency, neglect, and abuse can be quite challenging. Here are some helpful tips to guide you through the process.

Dressing Appropriately for Court



Shirts:

- Opt for a full coverage top
- Avoid wearing graphic tees whenever possible

Pants:

- Dress Pants or Slacks
- Khaki Pants
- Dark or Black Jeans (no holes or rips)
- Steer clear of pajama pants or sweatpants



Shoes:

- Dress shoes, athletic shoes, and sandals are suitable options
- Avoid wearing Crocs, slides, or house shoes whenever possible

Pro-Tips

- Keep hair away from your face and eyes
- Opt for minimal jewelry
- Practice proper hygiene to present as your best self

Present yourself as if you are interviewing for a job. It is important to arrive on time and dress in a manner that shows respect to the court and helps ensure the best outcomes for your family.

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Courtroom Etiquette



During this period, emotions may run high, and court proceedings can be quite stressful. It's crucial to strive for a sense of calm. Some individuals involved in the case may make statements about you that are untrue or misleading. Remember, you will have the chance to respond to these claims.



If you need to share a comment, quietly speak to your lawyer or bring a pen and notepad to communicate.

Example: if someone states something you disagree with, notify your attorney rather than reacting right away. Court proceedings have a level of formality, and waiting for your turn demonstrates respect for the court and the process.

Always refer to the Judge as “Your Honor”.

Example: “No, Your Honor.” “Your Honor, the visitation went very well.”

Speak when spoken to or when asked to speak.

Pro-Tips

- Make an effort to attend court in person whenever feasible.
- Silence or turn off all electronic devices.
- Speak with your attorney to avoid any potential self-incrimination.
- If you need to leave the hearing, kindly ask for permission to be excused.
- No individuals, other than the child, should speak directly to the Guardian ad Litem (GAL). Instead, they should communicate any information through their court-appointed attorney. The GAL's primary role is to represent the child's interests, so it is essential to allow the child to share their perspective and understanding of the facts with the GAL.