



# Navigating Juvenile Dependency Court

## You Have a Right to:

- An attorney
- Ask for trial at hearings
- File motions which ask for changes to previous court orders, visitation schedule, or case plan
- Present evidence to CPS or at trial
- Your case file
- Attend medical/school appointments for your child if your rights were not limited; attend juvenile criminal courts for your child
- Visit your child absent a “detriment finding”
- Relative placement over strangers (see relative placement primer)

## General Tips

### Documentation

- Write down everything with dates and summaries, including meetings with CPS or service providers, court hearings, visits with your child, phone calls related to case
- Create an email and check it regularly, especially if you have phone issues
- Get a calendar to keep track of all dates
- Get access to your case file through “discovery” before trial or by request to inspect the file
- Ask service providers to provide you their written summaries about your progress

### Attendance

- Do your case plan and especially do not miss visits
- Anytime you will be late or miss a meeting related to the case, notify them as soon as you know you will be late

### Narrative

- Have a “relapse” prevention plan depending on your allegations that shows your understanding of why your kids got removed from you and why it won't happen again, using language from case plan services
- Be very careful what you say around the social worker. Do not lie or overshare. Always focus on your children when talking to them (not on how you feel about the other parent or how you feel about the case)

## Tools for Advocacy

Information (both that you have about your case and that others have on you), attendance, and a relapse prevention plan.