

Client Letter: Next Steps in Your CPS Case

[Sample client letter](#) | [Parent representation in a CPS case](#)

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NEXT STEPS IN YOUR CPS CASE

After the hearing on [date], your new caseworker will contact you. The caseworker may give you forms to fill out.

If the court sends you to a specialty court program, a staff member may meet with you or call you later.

Answer calls from numbers you do not know. Check your voicemail every day. The caller might be your caseworker, a service provider, or specialty court staff. They might call only once or twice. It is your job to stay in contact and work on your case.

Court Hearings

Status Hearing

Your Status Hearing will be about 60 days after the case begins. The judge will check that CPS made a service plan and reviewed it with you.

Tell me right away if you think the plan asks you to do something that does not relate to why your child was removed. We may be able to object.

Review Hearings

Review Hearings are usually held about every four months. The first one will be about six months after the case begins.

The judge will check:

- Whether you are doing your services.
- Whether you are fixing the safety problems.
- Whether your child can safely return home.

The law says the court must return a child unless the court finds that the child would still be in danger and that returning home would harm the child. Your child is not sure to come home at a Review Hearing. But children can come home when their parents make progress and fix the safety problems.

What You Should Do

Stay Sober

If CPS is worried about drugs or alcohol, staying sober must be your top goal. You may need to show several months of sobriety before your child can come home.

- Start a 12-step or other support program now.
- Go to meetings often.
- Follow all advice from your treatment provider.

- Do not use alcohol, marijuana, or illegal drugs.

Even legal drug or alcohol use may hurt your case. The judge's main concern is whether your child will be safe with you.

Stay Safe

Do not contact the other parent or any person involved in the events that led to this case. If you need to send an important message, ask me to send it to that person's lawyer.

Leave if the other person comes near you. Even an argument can hurt your case and delay your child's return.

Tell me right away if you may need a protective order.

Be on Time

Go to every visit and arrive on time.

Bring:

- Food or snacks that are right for your child's age.
- Activities to do with your child.
- A change of clothes for your child.

Plan extra travel time, especially if you use public transportation. Do not miss visits.

Tell the Truth

Be honest about your relationships and where you live. If you lie, the judge may think you will not protect your child.

If you live with or date the other parent, both of you must fix the safety problems. If one person does not make progress, the child might not be returned to either of you.

You might have to choose between your partner and your child. Couple's counseling does not replace your own services.

Protect Your Privacy

Do not post about your case on social media. Ask friends and family not to post about you or tag you. Social media posts can hurt your case.

It is best not to begin a new dating relationship during the case. CPS might:

- Check the person's background.
- Ask the person to take a drug test.
- Ask the person to do services.

If you begin a relationship, do not hide it. Answer questions about the person truthfully.

I hope this information is helpful to you. I call my clients a few days before each hearing. Feel free to call me with your questions or concerns. If I don't answer immediately, I am not available. I will return your call within a day or two.