

How to Survive When Your Child is in Custody

CONNECTICUT TASP CONFERENCE

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- Once your kid is in state custody, you get one chance to do it right.

- You have a short amount of time to do this, so you have to do your best.

Getting on the Good Side:

- Get on the good side of your child's foster parents, if your child is not at home with you

- Get on the good side of the caseworker or social worker.
- Don't ask to change your caseworker. They will likely say no, and it just might turn your caseworker against you.

- Don't be critical of the system to the system's face.

Ask for What you need

- You have to figure out what help you need to succeed and ask for it early.

- Find someone to help you identify what you need and ask your lawyer to help you get what you need.
 - Do this early. Reach out to folks
 - Be Realistic in what you ask for.

- Try to find support groups of parents whose kids are in custody and get help from them.

- If there is going to be an evaluation of your ability to parent, ask that the expert who evaluates you knows about people with disabilities

- If you need help in the courtroom, talk to your attorney about if you can ask for this help.

- If there is a good reason to request more time, you can request more time.
 - You may not get more time – realize this early.

Visits

- Don't miss visits.
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- At visitation, use your time to be with your child, not to battle your child's social worker.
 - Don't talk to other Visiting parents at visitation about how bad Child Protective Services is. Find some other place to get support, not in the visitation room. Remember, Child Protection staff are listening and watching.

Do What It Takes

- Demonstrate that you are willing to do what Child Protection wants to keep your kids.

- Go to all the groups and programs that Child Protection says that you need to go to.
 - When Child Protection says you need to do a group, do the group.

- Be willing to dump your abusive boyfriend if you need to in order to keep your kid.

- Even if your husband thinks he doesn't need anger management, tell him he has to go to anger management class.

Choose Your Battles

- You've got to smart about choosing your battles

- Being empowered and asserting your rights will not always help you. Accept that there is a huge loss of control.

General Rules

- Face it: the burden has shifted and now you have to prove you can do it.

- If in the end you lose, know that you gave your child the gift of life.

- Remember who, what, when, where you should be. Stay organized.

- Realize this is time-limited, and you can do anything for a short period of time to keep your kids.