

QUICK TIPS: NON-PARENT CUSTODY



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QUICK TIPS FOR FILING FOR CUSTODY AS A NON-BIOLOGICAL PARENT

FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER!!!!

- Be on time- for all meetings and court appearances.
- Be organized- have your paperwork tidy, complete and in order.
- Be well groomed.

APPEARANCE MATTERS!!!!

- Always be neat and tidy
- Always be freshly showered/bathed
- Always have your hair combed

When speaking, keep your voice up. Be deferential and respectful to the Court, the Clerks, the Judge, and the Caseworkers.

COURT PROCEEDINGS

To file a custody petition in Family Court, as a non-parent, you must first show EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES. Without this your petition will be dismissed.

Extraordinary Circumstances include:

- Surrender of the child
- Abandonment of the child
- Persistent Neglect
- Unfit parent
- Extended disruption of custody
- Other circumstances that affect the welfare of the child

After Extraordinary circumstances you must *next show* BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD.

Best Interest of the Child means:

- Stability
- Continuity
- Nurturing
- Medical Attention/Health
- Educational Needs
- Financial Ability to Raise the Child
- Compliance with Agencies

Steps to Follow:

1. Petition
2. Service
3. Court Appearance
4. Ready for Trial

*ALWAYS FOLLOW ALL JUDGE'S ORDERS

*HAVE PROOF THAT YOU HAVE FOLLOWED THE ORDERS (Keep a Journal)

PROVE YOUR ALLEGATIONS. HOW?

- Witnesses (Agencies/Others)
- Your Testimony (Speak Loudly /Clearly)
- Reports
- Attorney for the Child/Parents
- Your Past History with the Court
- How You Parented Your Child