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**Attorney Checklist – Representing Children in Abuse & Neglect Cases**

**Upon Appointment**

* + Get copy of petition(s) with attached social studies/affidavits.
  + Have releases signed by child's guardian to speak with service providers, if needed (notice of appointment acts as a release in many cases).
  + Contact DCF social worker to ask for information regarding the child. If you call the worker twice without a call back, call the supervisor. Ask about:
    - Foster care contact info about where the child is now;
    - Other family resources for the child where s/he could potentially stay;
    - Siblings: if yes, find out where they are & how old they are;
    - Special medical needs;
    - Depending on age, where child attends school/daycare;
    - Whether child is a special education student/has an IEP;
    - Plan for the child/family;
    - Services the child is receiving or needs;
    - Services being asked of the parent - ask for a copy of the treatment plan, if there is one;
    - Names & contact of child's service providers, e.g. pediatrician, therapist, teacher, etc.
  + Contact child's service providers with any questions and request relevant records.
  + Call the child's placement and schedule an appointment to meet the child.
  + Meet the child.Give him/her your card & take his/her picture for the file.
  + Determine the child's position and what is in his/her best interest (may be different).
  + Contact DCF social worker with any follow up, following your meeting of the child.
  + Attend court hearings/conferences. Report child's position to court.
    - Remember to bring relevant Court Activity forms to take notes.
  + File motions on child's behalf as necessary, e.g. to increase/decrease parental visitation, request a parent-child interactional or psychological evaluation, request sibling visits, etc.

**Ongoing**

* + Visit child every 4-6 weeks, and as needed. Make sure to tell Ann when you have seen a child, so that she can keep the visitation schedule current.
  + Return phone calls from child, caregiver, and other parties.
  + Stay updated of child's circumstances, e.g. grades, behavior, progress in therapy, frequency of visitation with parents and siblings, relationships with parents and caregivers, etc.
  + Maintain contact with child's service providers and DCF social worker.

**Administrative**

* + Maintain phone and address list in file and on Legal Files.
  + Document all case activity for each case, including date, time, name of person contacted, amount of time spent, and amount of travel time.
  + Email supervising attorney about all phone conversations. Put copy in the Notes section of file.
  + Document home visits with the child. Put a copy of the notes in the Notes section of file, and email a copy to the supervising attorney.
  + Document court conferences and hearings, especially the judge's findings.