

Child Intervention: Parental Rights and Responsibilities

You have an important part to play when Child Intervention is providing services to your family.

As a parent, there are some things you can always expect, no matter how Child Intervention is involved with your family.

What should I expect?

You can expect to be told what the intervention concerns are regarding your child.

A caseworker will take the time to fully explain these concerns to you. They will answer your questions and explain any decisions made about your child.

You have the right to question any decisions that you don't agree with.

You may also want support from a trusted friend, family member, community agency, and/or First Nations or Métis representative. Your support person can join you at all meetings.

What else can I expect?

- Expect to be treated with respect and dignity.
- Expect to be able to express your opinions, thoughts or worries.
- Expect for you and your child to have regular and timely contact with your caseworker.
- Expect that you can express opinions to your caseworker about where your child should live, if they are removed from your care.
- Expect to have contact with your child if it is safe and in the child's best interests that they be removed from your care.

What are my rights?

- You have the right to question any decisions that you don't agree with.
- If you don't agree with a decision, you have the right to request an Administrative Review. Talk to your caseworker to learn more.
- You have the right to contact a lawyer about your involvement with Child Intervention. Simply call Legal Aid Alberta.
- You have the right to be part of your child's planning and to be in court. Your caseworker will work with you to develop a plan that builds on your strengths as a parent. This includes our involvement being as least intrusive as possible.
- You also have the right to contact the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) about any decision that you believe isn't in your child's best interest.

You may have other rights too

As a parent, you may have additional legal rights. These will depend on things like:

- Are you signing a Custody or Family Enhancement agreement or is your caseworker applying for a court order?
- Is your child staying at home or has it been arranged that they stay elsewhere?
- What specific kinds of services is your child receiving?

Talk to your caseworker to learn more about all of your legal rights and responsibilities.

What are my responsibilities if Child Intervention becomes involved with my family?

You should be directly involved in developing a plan that meets your needs.

This plan should connect you to supports that will help make your home a safer and healthier place.

Let your caseworker know if you don't fully understand the intervention process, service plan, court applications or next steps. They will keep you informed about what is happening. They will also help answer your questions and address your concerns.

You should complete the tasks on the service plan; if you need help, please ask your caseworker.

What if I'm asked to sign an agreement?

If you're asked to sign an Enhancement or a Custody Agreement, you have the right to:

- Get a copy of the agreement,
- Continue being your child's guardian (you will be involved in all major decisions about your child), and
- End the agreement at any time.

What if the caseworker applies for a court order?

If the caseworker applies for a court order:

- You will receive an official notice of the court hearing.
- Ask your caseworker to explain why a court order is needed, how the court process works and what happens next.
- Consult a lawyer for advice or to oppose the application. If you can't afford a lawyer, the Legal Aid Society of Alberta may help.
- Attend any court hearings about you and your child; you should tell the judge what you think about the application.
- Access court supports, such as a court worker or family court facilitator. Please talk with Legal Aid to learn more.

Contact numbers you may need

- Legal Aid Alberta: 1-866-845-3425
- Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA): 1-800-661-3446