

# UNDERSTANDING THE ROLES OF THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN A CPS CASE **THE CASEWORKER & DFPS ATTORNEY**

## **WHO IS THE CASEWORKER FOR THIS CASE?**

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Caseworker Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## **WHO IS THE DFPS ATTORNEY FOR THIS CASE?**

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DFPS Attorney Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## **WHAT IS A CASEWORKER?**

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If a child has been hurt or is in danger, then a caseworker is assigned to help keep the child safe at home or find another place for the child to live (like with a relative or foster family). The child will have a caseworker the entire time they are in foster care. The caseworker might change at different times during the case, but the child will always have one.

### **THE CASEWORKER MUST:**

- Help the child and the parents get what they need during the case.
- Find a safe place for the child to live while the parents are getting support.
- Talk to the child, parents, other family members, teachers, and other people who are a part of the child's life to find out what the child and the parents need.
- Connect the child and the parents to services and supports that will help the family so that the child can go home if the home is safe.
- Make sure that the child and the parents have time to visit with each other.
- If there are siblings, make sure that all of them can visit with each other.

### **THE CASEWORKER CANNOT:**

- Do things that are unsafe for the child or that make them feel uncomfortable.
- Keep any secrets from the judge.
- Treat people differently because of what they look like, or other reasons that are unfair.

## WHAT IF I HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE CASEWORKER?

If the caseworker is not helping the child or family get what they need, there are steps you can take. You can try to talk to the caseworker about your problem. If that does not work, you can talk to their supervisor. You can also ask your attorney for help.

If you are concerned the caseworker is not doing their job, you can contact DFPS Internal Affairs at 1-800-720-7777 or [internalaffairs@dfps.texas.gov](mailto:internalaffairs@dfps.texas.gov).

If you are a child in foster care and have a problem with your caseworker, you can contact the Foster Care Ombudsman's Office at 1-844-286-0769 or [www.hhs.texas.gov/foster-care-help](http://www.hhs.texas.gov/foster-care-help). They are open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## WHAT IS A DFPS ATTORNEY?

Just like a child or a parent has their own attorney in court, DFPS also has an attorney. A caseworker and the DFPS attorney work together and represent the state.

## WHAT DOES THE DFPS ATTORNEY DO?

This attorney tells the judge what DFPS is asking the court to order and why. In court, they might call witnesses and ask questions, and make requests to the judge. The DFPS attorney usually sits or stands next to the caseworker in court. Sometimes, the DFPS attorney attends special meetings such as the family team meeting, family group conference, or permanency planning meeting. The DFPS attorney will attend mediation, if there is one.

The DFPS attorney is sometimes called different names, like District Attorney, County Attorney, Regional Attorney or Prosecutor, but all represent DFPS.

## WHAT IF I HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE DFPS ATTORNEY?

If you think the attorney representing DFPS does not understand your case, you can tell your caseworker or their supervisor. You can also ask your own attorney for help.

The State Bar of Texas is in charge of making sure attorney help their clients. If you want to make a formal complaint against the DFPS attorney, you can contact the State Bar at 1-800-932-1900.

