

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLES OF THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN A CPS CASE

JUDGE

WHO IS THE JUDGE?

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Judge _____

WHAT IS A JUDGE?

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A judge makes decisions about child welfare cases. The judge usually sits at the front of the courtroom and sometimes wears a black robe.

WHAT DOES THE JUDGE DO?

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The judge asks questions in court hearings and listens to everyone involved in the case to get more information about what's happening with the parents and children. At the end of a hearing, the judge will make decisions, called orders, based on what they heard in court. For example, a judge might order a scheduled visit between the parents and children or order parenting classes.

The judge also decides if a child will be safe at home with their parents or if they must stay somewhere else. If a judge decides that a child is not safe at home, the judge will make orders about what needs to happen for the child to go back home. The judge will ask if the child's needs are being met, including education, medical care, and other needs, to decide if more orders should be made.

Judges can only talk about a case when everyone involved is together, which is normally only when everyone is in court. A judge cannot accept an email or letter written to them about a case. This rule keeps things fair for everyone involved in the case.

These are some reasons why it is important that everyone involved in the case attends each court hearing and speaks up about what they need and what they want to happen.

THE JUDGE SHOULD:

- Make sure that most parents and all kids in the case get a lawyer as soon as possible.
- Make sure all the attorneys and caseworkers are doing their job.
- Make sure everyone in court is treated with respect.

THE JUDGE CANNOT:

- Treat people differently because of what they look like, or other reasons that are unfair.

WHAT IF I WANT TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THE JUDGE?

If you have concerns about the judge serving on your case, you can tell your lawyer or the judge. If that does not help, you can file a complaint with the State Commission on Judicial Conduct. If you have questions, you can call them at 1-877-228-5750. You can also write a letter and mail it to the State Commission on Judicial Conduct at PO Box 12265, Austin, TX 78711.

