

A Family Court judge has placed your child in the temporary custody of the Department for Children and Families (DCF) because of concerns about his or her safety and well-being.

The judge will soon be making other decisions about your child's future. This includes determining whether your child can safely return home to you — at this time.

### **If the judge decides your child can return home at this time:**

The judge may issue an order:

- ▶ Requiring you to start or stop doing certain things
- ▶ Restricting the behavior of someone else in your home

#### **Your Rights**

You have the right to:

- ▶ Attend all hearings
- ▶ Have an attorney to represent you

### **If the judge decides your child cannot return home at this time:**

The judge will consider granting temporary custody to someone else. This could include:

- ▶ A non-custodial parent (as long as there is no question that he or she is the child's parent)
- ▶ A relative
- ▶ Another person known to your child (e.g., family friend)

The judge will likely issue an order for family contact. If your child has a non-custodial parent, the judge will look at existing orders for contact in all states. The judge will not change an order unless it's in your child's best interest.

#### **Public Defender**

If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for a public defender. If you need one, ask the family court clerk for an *Application for Public Defender Services*.

### **How You Can Help Us To Help Your Child**

- ▶ Use the attached form to tell us about relatives and friends who might be willing and able to safely care for your child.
- ▶ Let the social worker know if you have concerns about anyone being considered as a caregiver for your child.
- ▶ Let the social worker know if your address or phone number changes.
- ▶ Prepare information to share with the people who will be caring for your child. Include things they should know such as:
  - Any health issues (e.g., allergies and medicines)
  - Important routines
  - Likes and dislikes
  - People who are important to your child and could help
  - Activities your child participates in

## WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT

### **A Case Plan:**

With your input, the worker will write a plan for your child and file it in court within 60 days. In most cases, a team will be put in place to help you work toward the initial case plan goal, which is usually for the child to safely return home. The worker will give you and your lawyer a copy of the plan.

### **Family-Centered Meetings:**

You or the worker may request a meeting to help you assess safety in your family, create a safety plan, and determine the best living situation for your child. Ask your worker for more information.

### **Court Hearings:**

There are several court hearings that happen in a certain order for each child that comes into DCF custody. For more information, ask your family court for *A Guide For Parents In CHINS Cases: What To Expect From Your Lawyer And The Court*. You can also get it online at <https://www.vermontjudiciary.org>.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### **Court Information**

The next court hearing is:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Court: \_\_\_\_\_

Docket #: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Family Services Information**

District Office: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Worker's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Worker's Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Lawyer Information**

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

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

**Please let us know if you need an accommodation because of a disability or an interpreter because of limited English.**



**Your Child is  
in DCF Custody  
Information for  
Custodial Parents**

 **VERMONT**  
DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
FAMILY SERVICES DIVISION

# Form for Custodial Parents:

## Information about a Child in Temporary DCF Custody

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Previous Names: \_\_\_\_\_

### A. Existing Court Orders Regarding Your Child.

Please provide a brief summary of any existing orders below.

Type of Order	Court and Date	What was Ordered
Example: parentage established	Example: Orange County Family Court (VT), 2002	Example: court found that John Jones was the father of the child
Parentage		
Custody		
Child Support		
Visitation		
Other Order (e.g., abuse protection order)		

**IMPORTANT:** Be sure to complete the other side of this form.

## **B. Others Who May Be Able to Temporarily Care For Your Child.**

Please provide information about others (e.g., non-custodial parent, grandparents, other relatives, and friends) who may be able to temporarily care for your child if you are unable to do so. Use an extra sheet of paper if necessary.

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child: \_\_\_\_\_

How well known to child: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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