

If you are not requesting, or are not granted, temporary custody:

- The judge will consider relatives and friends who are willing to assume temporary custody of your child. If no one is available or determined to be appropriate, your child will remain in DCF custody.

Please use the attached form to provide information about the child's grandparents and others who may be able to care for your child. Let the worker know if you have concerns about anyone being considered as a temporary caregiver for your child.

- The judge will likely issue an order for family contact, which may include contact with you. The judge will consider any existing orders and will only change an order if it is in your child's best interest.

STAY INVOLVED!

Your Family Services worker will be submitting a case plan to the court within 60 days. Your continued input is important. Please let the worker know if your address or phone number changes.

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**
*What You
Need To Know*



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, including whether he or she can safely return home to the custodial parent — at this time. If that is not possible, the judge may consider granting temporary custody to you.

If you are requesting temporary custody, you must:

1. Act quickly.

Let the judge know right away that you are seeking temporary custody.

2. Attend the court hearing.

You must be present at court to be granted temporary custody.

Your Rights

- You have the right to attend all hearings; however, they will be held even if you don't attend.
- You have the right to a lawyer. If you cannot afford one, you may be eligible for a public defender. *Ask the family court clerk for an application form.*

3. Settle any issue about parentage.

If there is any question about whether you are the child's parent, you must resolve this issue before moving forward.

4. Present a plan for the safe care of your child.

Be prepared to tell the judge about:

- Your relationship with your child (including reasons you have not had contact if that is the case);
- How you plan to provide a safe, stable, and secure home; and
- How you will support your child's ongoing relationship with the custodial parent.

5. Cooperate with DCF.

The Family Services Division of DCF will assess your ability to safely care for your child and provide this information to the court. We will look at:

- Your relationship with your child and the custodial parent;
- Your ability to work towards the child's return to the custodial parent if that is the plan (called *reunification*); and
- How safe your child will be with you and others in your home.

6. Complete the attached form.

Section C of the attached form gives DCF permission to conduct background checks on all members of your household age 16 and older.

This includes checking:

- The Vermont Child Protection Registry to see whether anyone has been substantiated for abusing or neglecting a child.
- The Vermont Crime Information Center to see whether anyone has a criminal record, in Vermont or any other state.

Please return your completed form to your Family Services worker as soon as possible.

If You Don't Live In Vermont

While DCF cannot evaluate your suitability, the judge may still grant you temporary custody of your child — if he or she believes that you can provide safe, appropriate care.

You must, however, attend the court hearing in Vermont. Sometimes, the judge will ask DCF to request a formal study of your home from an agency in your state (this takes at least 60 days).

Form for Non-Custodial Parents: Information about a Child in Temporary DCF Custody

Child's Name: _____

Your Name: _____

Your Mailing Address: _____

Your Home Phone Number: _____

A. Existing Court Orders Regarding Your Child. Please provide a brief summary below.

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

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

Please provide information about your child's grandparents and others 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: _____

Relationship to child: _____

How well known to child: _____

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

C. Authorization to Conduct Background Checks.

If you want to be considered for temporary custody of your child, please provide information for all household members age 16 and older. Print clearly. Use an extra sheet of paper if necessary.

By signing below, you are authorizing DCF to conduct background checks including, but not limited to, the Vermont Child Protection Registry, the Vermont Crime Information Center, and DCF records.

Information About You			
Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial	Date Of Birth	Place Of Birth	
Any Maiden & Previous Names	Social Security Number	Signature	
Towns & States Where You Previously Lived Or Worked			

Information About Other Household Members			
Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial	Date Of Birth	Place Of Birth	
Any Maiden & Previous Names	Social Security Number	Signature	
Towns & States Where Previously Lived Or Worked			

Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial	Date Of Birth	Place Of Birth
Any Maiden & Previous Names	Social Security Number	Signature
Towns & States Where Previously Lived Or Worked		

Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial	Date Of Birth	Place Of Birth
Any Maiden & Previous Names	Social Security Number	Signature
Towns & States Where Previously Lived Or Worked		

For DCF Use Only:

Type Of Check	Date Checked	Initials	Result
VCIC			
Child Protection Registry			
DCF Records			
Other			