

What to Ask at a Protective Custody Hearing

A checklist for judges, lawyers and caseworkers working with young children

► **Tips:** Ask the parent about the child's routines, special rituals, likes/dislikes, etc.

PLACEMENT	Where is the child placed?	
	What efforts have been made to locate relatives?	
	What does the biological parent think the foster parent should know about the child?	
	How will the foster parent and biological parent communicate about the child's needs?	
	What is being done for concurrent planning?	
	Is the current placement open to permanency?	

PARENTING	What does parenting time look like?	
	Are the Supreme Court Guidelines being followed?	
	Is sibling visitation being provided?	
	How does the parent feel about the current schedule?	
	If there is an agreement for family support? If so, what goals are outlined?	

CHILD'S NEEDS	Have any developmental concerns been identified? If so, what is being done to address them?	
	Is there a need for a Safe Start (CPP) referral?	
	If the child is three years old or younger, has a referral to the Early Development Network (EDN) been made?	
	Is the parent familiar with this type of referral?	
	Does the ESU/school district have relevant information to use or will additional collateral be provided?	
	Will the parent consent to a developmental evaluation, or is a court order necessary?	

► **Tips:** Explain what the EDN referral is. Be sure to give the parent reasons why the evaluation can help their child.

HEALTH CARE	Does the child have a primary care physician? If so, is this a pediatrician or general practitioner?	
	Has the child had a physical since entering foster care? If so, what are the findings?	
	Is the child taking any medications or receiving concurrent therapy? If so, what for and who prescribed them?	

CHILD CARE	Is the child in high-quality care during the day? If so, where, for how long and what is it like?	
	Can foster parents maintain that schedule/transportation?	
	Has the trauma screening tool been completed? If so, what are the findings?	

► **Tips:** Explain to the parent that events leading up to a child's removal and the removal itself are stressful. Help them understand why there may be a mental health assessment and therapy for the child.



NEBRASKA RESOURCE PROJECT FOR VULNERABLE YOUNG CHILDREN