Parents Rights and Responsibilities

Parents whose children have been removed from their care have both rights and responsibilities with respect to their child. Below is a summary of some of their most important rights and responsibilities.

I have the right to:

Know why my child was removed and what needs to happen for them to be returned.

Have an attorney who represents my rights and interests in court.

Have my child placed with a relative if a relative can care for my child safely.

Know who my child is placed with and have frequent, meaningful interactions with my child.

Know that efforts are going to be made to place my child in close proximity to my home and to allow my child to continue in their same school.

Be consulted and make decisions on my child's religion, health care and education and participate in my child's care as agreed upon.

Request a Parent Partner when available and appropriate so that I may be supported by someone who has walked in my shoes.

Be informed of services my child receives and medical emergencies my child may have.

I have the responsibility to:

Meet with and stay in contact with my social worker, report any changes to phone number or address, participate in creating my family's and my child's case permanency plan, keep appointments and make agreed upon changes.

Request financial assistance if I can't afford an attorney, discuss the petition with my attorney and stay in contact with my attorney.

Provide my social worker with names of relatives who may care for my child.

Develop a family interaction plan and communicate with my child on a regular basis.

Keep my child's best interest at heart and to try to see things from my child's perspective.

Attend medical appointments and school meetings for my child, share important information about my child's needs and contribute to the financial support of my child as determined by the court.

Engage, participate and follow through with peer support and the Parent Partner Program.

Ask about upcoming appointments that my child may have.

The rights and responsibilities listed above are excerpts from, "A Family's Guide to the Child Welfare System." A collaborative effort among Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development, American Institutes for Research, Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Child Welfare League of America, & National Indian Child Welfare Association (2003)

Comm 462

IOWA Health and Human Services