

GUIDELINES FOR COURTROOM BEHAVIOR

1. Be on time for your hearing or trial. Allow extra time to find parking. You will not be able to leave the courthouse to feed the meter. Sometimes hearings can take longer than expected, so plan for extra time on your meter.
2. Dress neatly.
3. No food or drinks are allowed in the courtroom.
4. It is not advisable to bring your children. Ask someone to watch them for you.
5. Report to the courtroom you are assigned to.
6. Review your paperwork before the hearing or trial. Be familiar with your papers. You may use written notes or an outline during the trial. Stick to the facts. Do not ramble when offering evidence to support your side of the story.
7. Have your exhibits labeled, copied and organized. Remember, you will need at least two photo copies of any document or picture you plan to give to the judge.
8. When the judge asks you to speak, stand up and face the judge.
9. The hearing or trial will proceed as follows:
 - a. The judge will ask you and the other person to make an opening statement. This should be a brief statement that tells the judge what you are asking for. You can refer to your proposed order of child support, parenting plan and trial or hearing brief. The plaintiff or moving party speaks first, then the defendant or non-moving party.
 - b. After opening statements, the plaintiff or moving party calls his or her witnesses to testify. After each witness has testified, the defendant or non-moving party may ask questions of the witness (cross examination). The plaintiff or moving party may **ask** questions on redirect. The defendant or non-moving party then puts on his or her witnesses and the process is repeated. There are very specific rules of evidence which apply.
10. When the judge asks you questions, be direct. If you don't know an answer say so. Do not be afraid to admit that you do not know something.
11. Take your time when answering questions. Give the answer as much thought as you need to understand it and formulate your answer. You may be ordered to explain your answer.
12. Be respectful and courteous with the court. Always address the judge as "Your Honor". Do not interrupt. If something needs to be **clarified**, wait until it is your turn to speak or ask to speak again.

13. Be sincere. Do not be sarcastic or argue with the court or the other person. Stay calm. Maintain your composure, even if the person testifying is hurting your feelings or lying. Do not huff, roll your eyes or throw your pencil.
14. If you are stating dates, times and places, etc. be exact. If you cannot be exact, make it understood that you are only estimating.
15. Speak clearly and distinctly, using words, phrases and terminology that you understand. Keep your hands away from your mouth and speak loudly enough so the judge can easily hear you. Proceedings in Alaska are recorded, so it is important that you speak loudly and clearly enough for the recording equipment.
16. Remain courteous to the judge after the ruling. Ask the judge who will write up the order. The judge must sign the order before it becomes effective. Make sure you understand what is going to happen next before you leave the courtroom.
17. You may bring a friend for moral support. That person must remain silent.
18. Avoid laughing or talking about the case in the hallway or restrooms of the courthouse in such a way that people, lawyers or witnesses involved in the case may see you or hear you.
19. These are the rules that apply to attorneys and you must follow them as well.
20. BE SURE the court has your current mailing address and phone number. If safety is a concern, you can ask for the information to be made confidential.