

So what's going on?

Going to court can be a scary and confusing experience. There are a flood of emotions and feelings and a tidal wave of things coming at you. You may not know what's going on.

Get the information you need

The Nebraska Court Improvement Project created two resources to help kids learn what happens in both child welfare cases (when kids are taken from unsafe homes) and juvenile justice cases (when a kid is in court because someone said they broke a law).

Both books describe who is involved in the things going on, what things might be happening, what rights you have, and who you can contact with questions or problems.



Special thanks to the following for their contributions to the publications.



Nebraska Strengthening Families Act Committee

What Now?

A Guide for Kids in Nebraska's Juvenile Court System

What Now? Child Welfare Guide
What Now? Juvenile Justice Guide



STATE OF
NEBRASKA
JUDICIAL BRANCH
Court Improvement Project

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Child Welfare

The first book covers the Child Welfare process. If the State believes children are not safe in their home, they will file charges against parents. The court will hear the evidence and decide if there was any **abuse** or **neglect** going on. **You have a right to be involved and to be listened to.** This book will show you what you can do to be heard.

Juvenile Justice

The second book covers the Juvenile Justice process. If the State believes a child has broken the law, charges will be filed and a judge will hear the evidence in court. If the judge decides you did break the law, he will hand down a disposition. A disposition may include probation or some other corrective action and a plan to get you back on the right track.

Other Resources & Planning for Your Future

Both books have sections that go over some of the things kids need to think about as they transition into being an adult and pages of resources - people and agencies you can contact for more help. There are lots of things you need to do when you're an adult that don't seem very important to you as a kid. But you do need to learn about those adult things as you grow up.

There are lots of people you will meet along the process. They all want to see you succeed and be the best person you can be. They all want to help you through the process. These books will help you understand those processes and what you can do to help yourself.

Download the Child Welfare PDF

If you have been taken from your home by Children and Family Services because the state thinks your home is unsafe for some reason, you can download the **What Now? Child Welfare Guide**.

What you'll find in this guide:

What exactly is the child welfare process?

- How did this happen?
- Who are all of these people?
- What happens in court?
- When do things happen?

What is a Permanency Plan?

- Permanency Goals
- Possible Placements

What are my rights?

- United States Constitution Bill of Rights
- DHHS Foster Care Rights
- Strengthening Families Act - Recommended Rights

How to I get people to listen to me?

- Be involved
- Attend court
- Complete the Youth Court Questionnaire
- Talk to your GAL and/or attorney
- Other groups or agencies that can help

Planning for your future

Resources for additional help



<https://supremecourt.nebraska.gov/programs-services/court-improvement-project/resources/publications/what-now-child-welfare-guide>

Download the Juvenile Justice PDF

If you have been accused as a juvenile for breaking the law, you can find information in the **What Now? Juvenile Justice Guide**.

What you'll find in this guide:

What exactly is the juvenile justice process?

- How did this happen?
- Who are all of these people?
- What happens in court?
- When do things happen?

What are my rights?

- Justice system rights
- United States Bill of Rights

How do I get people to listen to me?

- Be involved
- Attend court
- Talk to your GAL and/or attorney
- Talk with your Probation Officer
- Talk with your Judge
- Grievance Process
- Other groups or agencies that can help

Planning for your future

Resources for additional help



<https://supremecourt.nebraska.gov/programs-services/court-improvement-project/resources/publications/what-now-juvenile-justice-guide>