

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
JUDICIAL BRANCH
<http://www.courts.state.nh.us>

FIRST APPEARANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Date Attended: _____

Goals of First Appearance

- ✓ Learn about the court process and case management
- ✓ Learn about the Child Impact Program
- ✓ Learn about mandatory financial information sharing
- ✓ Learn about parenting plans
- ✓ Learn about mediation
- ✓ Schedule mediation or next court event

Child Impact Program (CIP)

- ✓ 4 hour class
- ✓ Important to take early in process
- ✓ Helps parents understand impact of divorce/separation on children
- ✓ Helps parents learn how not to put children in the middle of adult issues

Case Manager

- ✓ Can explain forms to people who already agree
- ✓ Cannot mediate or resolve parties' disagreements

Guardian ad Litem (GAL)

- ✓ Appointed only if parties are unable to resolve their issues about their children
- ✓ Must be paid privately
- ✓ Will investigate and tell court what they think is in best interests of the children

Mediation

- ✓ Neutral professional helps parents discuss what is important to them and their children
- ✓ Mediation discussions are confidential
- ✓ Mediator does not give opinion about what parents should do
- ✓ Allows parents to design their future and their children's future
- ✓ Can be used for entire case or just some of it
- ✓ Parties have input on pace of mediation

FIRST APPEARANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Mediation (continued)

- ✓ Lawyers may participate if parties want
- ✓ Lawyers should review agreement before it is signed
- ✓ Costs \$60 per hour, but sliding scale may apply per hour after 5 hours
- ✓ Payment is due at each session
- ✓ If you fail to appear at mediation, you will have to pay for the missed session
- ✓ If eligible, State can pay on front end and parties reimburse later
- ✓ Mediation is not for everyone

Legal Representation

- ✓ New rules allow lawyers to represent you for part of your case
- ✓ See the handout about lawyers in this area who might represent you this way
- ✓ For referrals to lawyers to help with all or part of your case on a full fee or reduced fee basis, call NH Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service at 229-0002
- ✓ Legal advice for people with low incomes may be available through the Legal Advice and Referral Center 1-800-639-5290

Financial Information Sharing

- ✓ Knowing your financial situation is important
- ✓ You must exchange numerous documents within 45 days of notification of this action
- ✓ If you need a copy of Rule 1.25-A, you can print it from the court website or get it from our court staff

Parenting Plans

- ✓ Focus on children's needs
- ✓ Children need both parents
- ✓ Parents should work together on plans if possible
- ✓ Both parents have rights and responsibilities to children
- ✓ Plans should be detailed and may need to change as children mature
- ✓ Parents are in **best** positions to decide what is **best** for their children

Child Support

- ✓ Goes by formula
- ✓ Can see how guidelines work on the Division of Health and Human Service's website at www.dhhs.state.nh.us (the calculator is in the lower right corner of home page)
- ✓ DHHS can help collect support, can help keep track of support payments, and may provide other assistance depending on the case

The next event in my case is a: _____

Date of next event: _____ Time of next event: _____