

# Did you know?

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## CHILD REMOVAL - COURT PROCESS

If the ministry has removed your child from your home, and a court date is set, you need to get a lawyer to assist you.

Going to court can be stressful and overwhelming. In addition to having a lawyer help you, it is important to get an advocate to support you in this difficult time.

The court process usually (though not always) is in two stages:

### 1) The presentation stage

The judge will usually make an interim (temporary) custody order at the presentation hearing, dealing with the following issues:

- where your child will stay (in the child's own home or in a foster home)
- whether you can visit, if the child is in foster care. It is important to ask for access (visits) with your child at this time.

### 2) The protection stage

In this court hearing, the issues to be decided by the judge are quite complex, but basically the hearing is about whether or not your child needs protection. The judge will make a custody order about your child.

For further assistance or information you can call the following numbers:

- 1) If you cannot afford a lawyer and need legal aid, you can call the legal aid office in your area. Look for the nearest legal aid office in your area under "**legal services**" in the white pages of the telephone book.
- 2) Lawyer Referral Service at **604-687-3221** or toll free at **1-800-663-1919**.
- 3) You can get an advocate by contacting the BC Association for Community Living at **604-875-1119**.