

Caseworker testimony tips from Matthew Wilzbach

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1. If you have ever been a caseworker, you will end up testifying at a termination hearing.

2. You will be asked questions about things that happened likely 1-2 years ago. **YOU WILL NOT REMEMBER WITHOUT PREPARATION!** Prior to going to court, you need to review your case file and be prepared to answer questions.

3. You will like be allowed to refer to past notes, reports, service plans, etc. **THAT DOES NOT MEAN YOU CAN JUST READ PAST REPORTS WHILE ON THE STAND.** The court does not have time for you to take five minutes to swim through notes to find the answer.

4. If it is a termination hearing, **YOU WILL BE ASKED THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, EVERY TIME:**
 - A. What services were mom and dad asked to do?
 - B. When were those services recommended?
 - C. Did you review the services with mom/dad and, if so, when?
 - D. What referrals for services did you make and when were referrals made?
 - E. **WHAT DID MOM/DAD DO OR NOT DO REGARDING EACH AND EVERY RECOMMENDED SERVICE?**
 - F. If they engaged, when and how specifically did they engage?

5. **YOU CAN MAKE A CHEAT SHEET.** Write out services and compliance or lack thereof. Indicate dates, when, where, how, etc. With permission of the court, you can refer to it to refresh your recollection without having to swim through reports.

6. You have probably devoted months, if not years, to trying to get permanency for the child. Don't blow it on the one-yard line by not being prepared to testify. You know the questions. Be ready with the answers.