



WASHINGTON COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS PRO SE CUSTODY PACKET

NOTICE

ALL PARTIES INVOLVED IN LITIGATION ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL LEGAL ADVICE FROM AN ATTORNEY. Court staff cannot offer any legal advice. The information in this packet is not a substitute for professional legal advice. The Court assumes no responsibility and accepts no liability for actions taken by users of these documents, including reliance on their contents.

If you want to hire an attorney and do not know one, you should call the Bar Association's Lawyer Referral Service (LRS) at 724-225-6710 to schedule a half-hour consultation with a licensed, insured attorney who has experience in the area of law related to your legal matter. The initial half-hour consultation with the attorney is \$50.00 to be paid in advance to the Bar Association; any fees beyond the first half-hour should be discussed and agreed upon by you and the lawyer.

If you meet certain income and other qualifications, you may be able to secure an attorney through Southwestern PA Legal Services at 724-225-6170. Ask if you are eligible for the Bar Association/Bar Foundation "Limited Representation Custody Program," and, if so, you may be referred to an attorney who will represent you at no cost at the initial custody meeting.

If you have questions about domestic violence or believe that you may be the victim of domestic violence, we strongly recommend that you contact the *Washington County Domestic Violence Services* at 724-223-8349.

If you suspect child abuse, please contact *CHILDLINE* at 1-800-932-0313. You can report suspected child abuse 24 hours per day and remain anonymous.

TRIAL DE NOVO &

PRETRIAL CONFERENCE

If you disagree with the Recommended Order of Court following your custody conference, you have twenty (20) days to file a request for a Trial De Novo.

***COMPLETE the Request and drop off in FAMILY COURT JUDGE'S CHAMBERS no later than the 20th day after receipt of the Recommended Order. The Judge's staff will call you when the Order is signed and you will be responsible for copying, filing and serving the other party with a time-stamped copy of the Order. ***

YOU ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO HIRE AN ATTORNEY TO REPRESENT YOU AT THE CUSTODY TRIAL AND ASSIST YOU IN FILING THE REQUEST FOR TRIAL DE NOVO

Local Rule 1915.33

(a) A party may file a Request for Custody Trial De Novo and Pretrial Conference in the Washington County Prothonotary's Office within twenty (20) days after the Recommended Order issued following the Custody Conciliation Conference is mailed or received by the parties, whichever occurs first. The request must be presented to the Family Court Judge to whom the case is assigned for the scheduling of the Pretrial Conference.

(b) A copy of the filed request with the scheduled Pretrial Conference date and time must be served on opposing counsel, or, if the party is a *pro se* litigant, then the request must be served on the party. A copy must be delivered to the Civil Division of the Court Administrator's Office.

(c) A Trial De Novo will be scheduled, barring extenuating circumstances, within ninety (90) days of the request. The Pretrial Conference shall be held during the period between the request for Custody Trial De Novo and the scheduled hearing. Any psychological reports ordered should be obtained during the same period and presented to the Family Law Judge to whom the case is assigned, along with the parties' Pretrial Statements, at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the Pretrial Conference.

L-1915.34 PRETRIAL CHILD CUSTODY CONFERENCE

(a) All parties and any child for whom custody or visitation is sought shall be present at the judicial pretrial custody conference unless said required attendance is waived by way of Court Order. Failure of a party to appear at the judicial pretrial custody conference may result in the entry of a custody/visitation order by the court.

(b) The court will attempt to obtain a consent agreement on any pending custody issues. Any agreement shall be reduced to writing and entered as an order of court. Upon request, the Family Court Judge to whom the case is assigned will meet privately with the parties' counsel in an attempt to better define the issues and settle the custody dispute.

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA**

CIVIL ACTION

	}	
	}	
Plaintiff,	}	
	}	
Vs.	}	No. _____
	}	
	}	
	}	
Defendant.	}	

**ENTRY OF APPEARANCE OF SELF-REPRESENTED PARTY
PURSUANT TO Pa.R.C.P. No. 1930.8**

I, _____, the Plaintiff or Defendant (circle one), represent myself in the within action.

REMOVAL OR WITHDRAWAL OF COUNSEL OF RECORD (If Applicable)

_____ Remove _____, Esquire, as my attorney of record.

_____ Withdraw my appearance for the filing party.

_____, Esq. (Please print) PA ID # _____

Date: _____
_____ Attorney's Signature

I understand that I am under a continuing obligation to provide current contact information to the court, to other self-represented parties, and to attorneys of record.

All pleadings and legal papers can be served on me at the address listed below, which may or may not be my home address pursuant to Rule 1930.8:

Date: _____

Signature of Plaintiff or Defendant

Print Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Telephone number

Fax number

THE PARTY FILING THIS ENTRY OF APPEARANCE MUST PROVIDE NOTICE BY SENDING A COPY TO ALL PARTIES AND ATTORNEYS INCLUDING THE ATTORNEY REMOVED FROM THE CASE.

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, P E N N S Y L V A N I A

CIVIL DIVISION

_____ ,)	No.: _____
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	
vs.)	Type of Pleading:
)	Request for Trial De Novo
)	
_____ ,)	Filed on behalf of:
)	
Defendant.)	
)	
)	_____
)	(Your Name)

Filing Party's Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, P E N N S Y L V A N I A
CIVIL DIVISION

_____,)
)
Plaintiff,)
)
vs.) No. _____)
)
)
_____,)
)
Defendant.)

REQUEST FOR TRIAL DE NOVO

Today, the ____ day of _____, 20____, I, _____
disagree with the Recommended Order issued by the Court on *(date)* _____
and file a Request for a Trial De Novo for the following reasons :

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

(use additional sheets if necessary)

Date

Signature of Petitioner

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

CIVIL DIVISION

_____)	
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	
vs.)	No. _____
)	
_____)	
)	
Defendant.)	

ORDER

AND NOW, this _____ day of _____, 20____, upon the request of _____ for Trial De Novo, a Pretrial Conference in the above-referenced matter is scheduled for the _____ day of _____, 20____, at _____ o'clock ____m. All parties are to be present and Pretrial Statements are due at least forty-eight (48) hours before the conference date. The child for whom custody is sought shall not attend the conference.

The Court further directs all parties to immediately contact Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Services at the C.A.R.E. Center, Inc., 75 East Maiden Street, Suite 100, Washington, PA 15301, phone number (724) 229-3430 or (724) 229-4620. The parties are to enroll in and successfully complete the programs on Parenting, Improved Communication Skills and Conflict Resolution, as well as Individual and Family Counseling. Each party must contact the C.A.R.E. Center and schedule an appointment with that organization before Trial De Novo. In the event that any of the parties fail to schedule an appointment and/or actively participate in the counseling sessions directed by the Court, the offending party may be subject to sanctions upon proper Motion.

BY THE COURT:

_____**J.**

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
CIVIL DIVISION

_____)
)
Plaintiff,)
)
)
)
) No.
)
)
)
_____)
)
Defendant,)

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

I certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania: Case Records of the Appellate and Trial Courts that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

Date: _____ Signature: _____