

## COURT PROCEDURE TIPS

**Always be available of your next hearing date.** You can find these dates in Optima under the hearings tab. If you have questions about which hearings you should be attending, talk to your CAM. Whether or not you will be attending the next court hearing, let your GAL team know.

**Talk to important parties before hearings.** This should always include caregivers, parents, case managers and your internal GAL team. Depending on the hearing and what is going on, this may also include therapists, teachers, counselors and daycare workers or other professionals.

**If you have submitted a report, re-review your report.** Because reports are usually completed weeks prior to hearings, it's possible to forget details that were included.

**Make sure you have your attorney's telephone number before the hearing.** This is the best way to communicate during a hearing. If you do need to text your attorney during your hearing, double-check that you are texting the correct person before sending the text.

**Keep staff up to date before the hearing.** The hearing should not be the first time that your GAL attorney is finding out about an issue that needs to be addressed.

**Make sure you have the zoom link before the hearing is scheduled.** It may be hard to get that information once court has started.

**Check your internet connection.**

**Make sure your Zoom name is correct.** Your zoom name should be your entire name. You can add the GAL acronym before or after your name so everyone knows who you are in relation to the case.

**Prepare notes for yourself to have during the hearing...** but be aware that you may be asked to share those notes, so stick to facts

**Be professional.** Have your video on when addressing the court and make sure that you are dressed appropriately. Mute yourself until it is your turn to talk. Your facial expressions should remain neutral. Don't have side conversations during your hearing.

**Remember that every court room is different.** It's best to ask your CAM and/or attorneys any specific questions you may have about your upcoming hearing.