

LAW OFFICES OF BRANDT & DEHNCKE, PLLC

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Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday & 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Friday

Attorney **Susan M. Dehncke** has been retained to handle your case and will handle your initial contact with our firm. Due to the potential length of this case, it is very possible her partner may have to appear on your behalf at one or more of the various hearings. Be aware that the attorneys at the Law Offices of Brandt & Dehncke, PLLC, are experienced in child protective proceedings, will be familiar with your file and will act in your best interest.

PLEASE NOTE: Of the utmost importance to your case is the fact that we keep in regular contact. You must keep us advised of the following: A permanent mailing address and permanent telephone numbers (i.e., relatives, friends, etc.). Should any of this information change while your case is in progress, it is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**, not ours, to see that our records are accurate.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESPONDENT.

1) **YOUR RIGHT TO SILENCE:** As a Respondent in a child protective proceeding, **you DO NOT have to talk to the Department of Human Services, police or the Prosecutor about this matter.** If you do, under most circumstances, your statement can be used in Court to help convict you, and probably will. If you have talked to Protective Services, a police officer, detective or prosecuting official before we meet, be prepared to tell us as much about that conversation as possible. **DO NOT KEEP THIS INFORMATION FROM US. If you have remained silent, do not talk to anyone about the accusations until you confirm with us.** This also means NOT talking about the incident to your spouse, parents, friends, etc. They could be forced to be a witness against you.

2) **YOUR RIGHT TO SPEAK FREELY WITH YOUR ATTORNEY.** We call this privileged communication. It means all that we talk about as an attorney with her client is absolutely confidential and cannot be used against you.

PRIOR CONVICTIONS OR PENDING CHARGES.

It is very important for us to know if you have ever been arrested for, convicted of, or are presently facing criminal charges. If this is the case, at your first appointment, we need to know: What the charge was or is; where it happened; and when it happened.

COURT PROCEEDINGS.

Lastly, it may help you to know what the stages are in an abuse and neglect case. This case is not a criminal case. You may face separate criminal charges. The focus of this case is whether the Court will take jurisdiction of your child or children. If the Court takes jurisdiction, the Judge will decide where the child lives, how visits will occur and what services the family must participate in. The Court could also eventually decide to terminate your parental rights.

1. *Petition Filed.* The Department of Human Services files a Petition outlining their case.
2. *First Preliminary Hearing.* During this hearing there is a review of the Petition by Referee Bates and an appointment of attorneys.
Second Preliminary Hearing. This Court hearing is to set the case for Trial, dismiss the case or enter a plea.
3. *Trial.* At the Trial, both sides must present evidence and the Court decides whether to take jurisdiction of the children.
4. *Dispositional Hearing.* At this hearing the Department of Human Services presents the plan for the case and the Court issues orders about services and placements.
5. *Review Hearings.* These hearings are for everyone to report to the Judge regarding progress.

Susan M. Dehncke
Brandt & Dehncke, PLLC