MARIN COUNTY JUVENILE COURT

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Dear Parent or Guardian:

PLEASE READ THIS INFORMATION.

1. Why is this matter being investigated?

There have been one or more reports about the safety of your child; a police officer or social worker must investigate to see if your child's safety and protection require official intervention through juvenile court.

2. If my child was taken from me, why?

Your child may have been taken from you and placed in protective custody because a police officer or social worker believes it necessary for the protection of your child. Some of the reasons may be:

a) Your child had inadequate care or supervision;
b) Your child was neglected or abused or molested;
c) Your child was left with someone who could not or would not provide adequate care.

3. If my child is not with me, where is my child?

Your child may be at a county shelter or in a temporary foster home. The social worker will provide additional information or give you a number to call to find out more about the arrangements that have been made for your child's care and about your future contact with your child. To learn more, call your child's social worker.

4. Will my child be returned to me?

It is possible that your child will be returned to you. The social worker assigned to investigate the case will review information about you, your home, and your child and will act according to what appears to be the best way to make sure your child is safe. If your child is not returned to you, your child may be temporarily placed with:

a) Your child's other legal parent (if you are not living together);
b) A relative;
c) A foster or shelter home.

5. What about relatives?

The law requires that you tell the social worker the names, addresses, phone numbers, and other information about your child's other legal parent or other relatives who may be able to care for your child. The social worker will contact them, see if they can provide for your child, and determine if the home will be safe for your child. In this way, your child may not have to go to someone your child and you do not know.

6. What happens now?

If the social worker believes your child is not safe, the social worker will file papers in juvenile court, asking the court to declare your child to be a dependent of the court and to make orders regarding the care, custody, and supervision of your child.

The first paper filed is called a "petition", and it must be filed within two court days (regular work days) of the time your child was taken from you or within a reasonable time if your child remains with you.

You will be notified of the date, time, and place of the first court hearing.

It is very important for you to come to court for this hearing.