



What is FIRST Court?

FIRST (Family Involved Rehabilitation & Services Track) Court is a problem solving, therapeutic court being implemented by Judge Crnkovich in abuse/neglect cases in Douglas County.

Starting January 1, 2017, a small percentage of cases are being randomly assigned at the beginning of the case to be included in FIRST Court.

Parent participation in FIRST Court is not voluntary and the case will remain in the FIRST Court track for its entirety. Attorneys who have expressed interest in being involved in a therapeutic approach are being assigned to FIRST Court cases.

How is it different?

FIRST Court is different from the traditional process in several ways, including:

- **Family Finding** (a program that helps engage family and kin to provide support to you and your children) initiated at the beginning of each case
- **CASA** appointed to every case
- **Mediation** before case settlement
- **Monthly Court Team Meetings** held, resulting in a court order
- Caseworkers and attorneys receive **Reflective Consultation**
- A **Snapshot Court Report** sent by caseworkers before each Court Team Meeting



How does it work?

After adjudication, the Court Team Meeting will be held in Judge Crnkovich's courtroom and will last approximately one hour. All parties, including the judge, will be present. The parent is encouraged to invite supportive people to attend. Parties are also encouraged to invite individuals who can provide helpful information, including therapists, school personnel and others. The Court Team Meeting will generally include the following steps:

- **An overview of the rules**
- A **Self-Assessment sheet** completed by the parents that reports on how they feel they are doing on accomplishing the goals
- An **informal discussion** about services, the progress made and next steps
- A discussion about the **child's participation** in the next Court Team Meeting
- An agreement on the **three most important steps** to be addressed by the parent in the next month.

The goals of FIRST Court are:

✦ To increase contact

between the parties in order to

increase trust and
improve relationships

✦ To bring families into the court
more frequently in order to include
and engage the parents more during
the hearing.



FIRST
COURT
FAMILY INVOLVED REHABILITATION
& SERVICES TRACK



Understanding FIRST Court

*An engaging, team-based
approach to
abuse and neglect cases*

