

What Should an Attorney **DO** in a Child Welfare Case?

SKILLS: COLLABORATIVE SKILLS

Courts, and decision-makers, are unpredictable. For families in the child welfare system, the adversarial process may further erode and damage relationships and issues that were already fraught. Achieving positive outcomes for youth and families outside of the courtroom can lead to greater predictability and lessen tensions. In order to practice quality representation in child welfare cases, attorneys must exhibit strong collaborative skills in a number of areas:

- ❖ Relationship-building with parties and case professionals
- ❖ Diplomacy
- ❖ Consensus-building
- ❖ Compromise
- ❖ Negotiation
- ❖ Formal and informal mediation

Resources:

- ❖ Kelly Browne Olson. "Chapter 26: Family-Centered Decision-Making and Alternative Dispute Resolution", in *Child Welfare Law and Practice: Representing Children, Parents, and State Agencies in Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency Cases* (Donald N. Duquette, Ann M. Haralambie, & Vivek S. Sankaran eds., National Association of Counsel for Children, 3d ed. 2016)