



# Getting There

For this activity, imagine that you are a parent whose child was recently placed into foster care. Your child is in foster care because your partner used and sold drugs in your home in your daughter's presence, and you were found to have failed to protect her from an unsafe environment and to have an alcohol addiction that impacts your ability to safely parent. You lost your drivers' license a few months ago due to a DUI charge, and are not eligible to receive your license back for another year. You take the bus to work Monday through Thursday, where you work from noon to 9pm at a gas station. You were court ordered to attend AA meetings at least four times per week and to find a sponsor. You were also court ordered to take a substance abuse evaluation and enroll in an approved parenting course. Your partner is in jail awaiting trial related to their drug sales. Without their half of the rent, you cannot miss any shifts or you will lose your housing. Safe and stable housing is part of the conditions of return to get your daughter back. Your caseworker scheduled you for a two-hour substance abuse evaluation at your county's behavioral health office on Thursday next week at 1pm and provided you with a free bus pass for the month. The caseworker also gave you a list of approved parenting classes, and all of them occur on evenings when you are working.

Look up any gas station located in/near your town. That gas station is now your workplace for this activity, and your real home address is also your home for this activity. Look up your local bus schedules and have those timetables handy. Now, using that information:

1. Figure out how to get to your 1pm Thursday appointment at your county's behavioral health office by bus or walking. Write the bus times or walking directions here.
  
2. You must miss work on Thursday to attend the behavioral health intake appointment. Figure out how you will make up the lost income and explain your absence to your boss. Write your plan here:

Your visits with your daughter are on Mondays from 9:30-11:30am at the ODHS Child Welfare office in your town, because that timeslot works best for the resource parents and does not technically conflict with your work schedule.

Figure out how to get to your local child welfare office via bus from your home, and from the Child Welfare office to your workplace, on time for your visits and your shift at work.

Write your plan here:

You need to get to four AA meetings per week to comply with court orders. You cannot afford to miss another day at work after you missed one to attend your substance use assessment. You also do not want to leave visits early because the last time you were at court you saw the judge criticizing a parent who had a habit of leaving his visits early.

Look up the locations and times of AA meetings in your community by searching for "AA meetings near me" on a search engine.

Using that information and your bus schedule, figure out how to get to at least four meetings per week given your work and visitation schedule, missing as little visitation as possible.

Write your plan here:

The parenting classes recommended by your caseworker take place on weekday evenings, during your work shifts. You have called your caseworker twice about the scheduling problem and did not receive a phone call back. After that, because of how busy things are, you forgot to follow up with her again. You have court this morning for a short limited review hearing.

As you are sitting in the back of the courtroom waiting to be called up, the judge goes through several cases of other families whose children are in foster care. The father in the case before yours is chastised by the judge for "making excuses" for his lack of attendance at services. Next, the judge calls your case. After you get up to the front of the courtroom with another new attorney you just met a few minutes ago, the judge asks if you have started a parenting class yet. You know your new attorney does not yet understand your circumstances. But your attorney and the judge both know that it has been three months since you were court ordered to take a parenting class and that your caseworker already gave you a list of approved classes in your Action Agreement, which you agreed to and signed.

The judge asks you if you have started a parenting class yet.

Your brand new attorney looks at you, unable to answer for you because they do not know whether you have started a parenting class or not.

What do you do or say?

You are at your first 6-month CRB review. Since your last court hearing, you were fired from the gas station after you missed too many shifts at work to attend visits, court, and classes. Because you were unable to pay rent, you lost your apartment. You are now homeless, so you are attending the review by phone using a free phone your caseworker gave you. During the opening statement at this review, the lead reviewer reminds parties that in order to avoid cross-talk, everyone should stay on mute until they are asked a question. After all you have been through in the last 6 months, you are scared to speak up except to answer specific questions the board asks you. Your attorney is not at the review with you today because they were double-booked and had to be in trial in another case.

1. What kinds of questions do you hope the CRB board members will ask you at this review?
  2. What do you hope the board members ask ODHS?
  3. What do you hope the board recommends for the Court or ODHS to do next?

Use the next page if needed to write your response.

