



PACIFIC JUSTICE INSTITUTE

TOP 12 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT SOCIAL WORKERS FROM TAKING YOUR CHILDREN

1. **Advise your children not to answer questions at school regarding the family and discipline within the family, unless the parent is there.**
Whenever a teacher has merely a “reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect” of a child, they are required by law to report such “suspensions” to a social worker. In fact, it is not uncommon for school counselors to pull a child from class and question them without ever notifying the child’s parents. With the false assurance that “nothing will happen to them or their parents” if they simply answer the questions, young children are often intimidated and agree with the leading questions by the counselor or social worker, resulting in their permanent removal from their family. Consequently, children should be advised never to talk to any teacher, counselor or social worker without their parents being present. In the alternative, since most states do not require any audio or video taping of the interview, the child should insist on their church’s pastor or youth pastor to be present during questioning to ensure proper reporting by the social worker of the questions and answers.
2. **If not homeschooling, develop a positive relationship with your child’s teachers and school staff to minimize the reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect.** Getting to know your child’s teacher will let them know that you are interested and invested in your child’s academics. It also shows that you are not a passive parent, but that you care very much about what happens at your child’s school. Time permitting, parents who volunteer at school functions or become teacher assistants in the classroom can minimize the risk of being falsely reported to a social worker of abuse.
3. **Become an active member of a church.** Have your children attend Sunday school or youth group so they can develop relationships with positive role models. The members and leaders of a church will be able to speak on your behalf if Child Protective Services (i.e., a social worker agency) ever questions you or your family. Clergy’s attendance with the family at parent/child interviews or hearings sends a signal to the social worker that the parents in question have a definitive part of the community (i.e., their church) behind them.

4. **Never use corporal punishment in public under any circumstances.** While usage of corporate punishment is legal, it **does** increase the risk of losing your child to CPS. If using corporal punishment, limit it to children below the age of ten. Only strike the buttocks with the child wearing clothes. If not with the hand, then only with something with curved edges (e.g., a light paddle). Most social workers have a personal bias against any form of corporal punishment and wrongly presume that parents utilizing it are abusive. Alternatively, parents should be cautious to utilize any form of non-traditional form of discipline that in any way might be deemed to be physically harsh on child (e.g., making the child sleep in the garage one night as punishment).
5. **Never leave your children at home alone under the age of 12.** Different states have different laws and recommendations regarding leaving your children at home. Find out what your states laws are and abide by them to avoid being questioned by CPS. Even if a child is older, their past activities (e.g., illegal drug usage or vandalism) may compel a social worker to provide greater scrutiny to a family that leaves such a child/teenager at home without supervision.
6. **If a baby or infant is not gaining weight or there are health concerns, never have them examined by a public clinic, but by a private pediatrician that you are familiar with.** One such case matter involved an infant who was not holding down milk. A rookie doctor at a community clinic covered his bases by notifying Child Protective Services. Instead of thinking that it may be a health problem and request examination by a pediatrician, CPS cried abuse and removed that baby from his parents. Because of some assertive foster parents who noticed the same problem, the baby was finally properly examined and a medical issue was discovered. However, even after this medical finding was presented to the court, another seven months would pass before CPS finally surrendered the infant to his mother.
7. **Have the children examined by a private physician annually to develop a medical ally should you be accused in the future.** Develop a relationship with your child's physician so that they can speak on your behalf if ever questioned about the child's health or possible physical abuse. This same principal of parental interaction applies if the child is receiving any form of counseling or psychiatric treatment.

8. **If a school district insists that your child be put on Ritalin for ADD or ADHD, have the child examined by a private psychiatrist who can recommend to the contrary, if needed.** Some children legitimately need these medications, but some don't. Often, public school teachers will report an overly active boy to authorities, looking to have the child placed on Ritalin for their own instructional convenience. Other times, school districts will push Ritalin rather than paying for the child to have their needs more properly addressed with a costlier Independent Study Program (ISP). In fact, one study found that roughly 40% of minors taking Ritalin should not be on the drug. Without parental support from a private pediatrician, public schools via social workers often threaten to take a child from a family unless they succumb to the school's controversial Ritalin recommendation.
9. **If homeschooling, be in full compliance with the state requirements to avoid the appearance of educational neglect.** Educational neglect can be grounds in some states for removal of a child. Keep detailed records of your child's academic achievements and test scores and keep them readily available. If a child is enrolled in an independent private school study curriculum, be sure to make the social worker aware of the program and the academic level of your child. If the child is not participating at their recommended level for their age, have on hand an assessment by a physician or therapist of the child's special needs explaining their below average performance.
10. **If your child has gender or sexuality issues, remove them from the public school and preferably home school, and have them immediately begin counseling from a licensed psychologist.** CPS agents in states like California may remove children from families who are not unequivocally accepting of a child's sexual orientation or new gender identity. It is highly recommended that parents contact Pacific Justice Institute *before* any interview they may have with a social worker in these situations. Some, but not all social workers, will remove a child from a family alleging emotional abuse if they find that the parents are not fully supportive of their child's perceived sexual orientation or decision to change their gender. Contact your local clergy for recommendations of a licensed counselor or psychologist who you can trust will provide the appropriate counseling for your child based upon their individual needs.

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11. **Maintain a clean, safe and healthy living environment.** This should include a healthy diet. It is a good idea to take a class or read a book dealing with quality parenting. This is especially true if a child is obese or appears extremely underweight. If a social worker visits your house, try to video your house while they are inspecting it in order to ensure they do not falsely mischaracterize the health and safety of your home. If you have any weapons, make sure they are locked-up and out of reach of minors. Electric sockets should have safety clips if there are children under the age of 8. Smoke and CO2 detectors should also be fully functioning. And of course, the house should be cleaned, picked-up and reasonably orderly before the social worker is allowed in the dwelling.
12. **If CPS calls or knocks on your door, postpone the visit.** Unless there are emergency circumstances, social workers do not have a right to enter your home without a signed warrant by a judge. Instead of letting them in, arrange to have the social worker come into your home on a day and time during the following week. (Note: If your child is not homeschooled, they may preemptively question your child at school.) Before the scheduled interview, have your child examined by a private pediatrician and psychiatrist who can put in writing the absence of a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect. Often times it is necessary to temporarily move out of your home while this is being done to ensure the children are not preemptively interviewed at school. Send the assessments via certified mail to the CPS agent and their supervisor before moving back into the home. If your concerns continue consider moving to another state (e.g: Oklahoma) that has greater due process protection for parental rights.

**For any other questions or concerns please contact
PACIFIC JUSTICE INSTITUTE**

(PJI.org / 916.857.6900)

*Child Protective Services