

## How to ask for a Court Order For custody and parenting time

### 1. Fill out your court forms

Fill out the Request for Order ([Form FL-300](#)). You can use the Information Sheet for Request for Order ([Form FL-300-INFO](#)) for information. Ask your [family law facilitator](#) if you need to check the boxes for "Court Order" and item 4 on FL-300.

You can also fill out the Child Custody and Visitation (Parenting Time) Application Attachment ([Form FL-311](#)). It is an optional form (you do not have to use it), but you may find it helpful in making sure you do not leave anything out of your request. It contains a lot of detail about schedules for visits and holidays, as well as other details that can help you as you try to do what is best for your children.

If you have prepared a parenting plan or proposal for the custody and visitation orders you would like the judge to make, attach that too. Make sure you use the right case number for your custody case.

Note: A Request for Order (Form FL-300) does not necessarily mean the other side has to show up to the court hearing. In some cases, you may want or need the other side to come to court. To find out more about how to make sure they come to court or whether it would be helpful in your case, click to learn about [Notices to Attend a Hearing and Subpoenas](#).

### 2. Have your forms reviewed

If your court's [family law facilitator](#) or [self-help center](#) helps people with custody and visitation cases, ask him or her to review your paperwork. The facilitator can make sure you filled it out properly before you move ahead with your case.

You can also hire your own lawyer to review your papers or to get legal advice, either with your entire case, or just the parts of it that you may need more help with (called "limited scope representation" or "unbundling"). Click for [help finding a lawyer](#). Click to learn more about "[limited scope representation](#)."

### 3. Make at least 2 copies of all your forms

One copy will be for you; another copy will be for your child's other parent. The original is for the court.

### 4. File your forms with the court clerk

Turn in your forms to the court clerk. He or she will keep the original and return the copies to you, stamped "Filed." You will have to pay a filing fee. If you cannot afford the fee, you can [ask for a fee waiver](#).

### 5. Get your court date or mediation date

The clerk will probably give you a court date. You may have to meet with the mediator before the court date or go to a mediation orientation. Ask the clerk if you are not sure.

### 6. Serve your papers on the other parent

Have someone (NOT you) serve the other parent with a copy of your papers and a blank Responsive Declaration to Request for Order ([Form FL-320](#)) before your court date. Look at the front of Form FL-300 to see if the court ordered you to serve any other documents. Click for [more information about "service."](#)

- If you filed a Request for Order ([Form FL-300](#)) with the box for "Court Order" and Item 4 checked, your papers MUST be served in person at least 16 court days before your court date.
- If you filed a Request for Order ([Form FL-300](#)) with NO check marks on the box for "Court Order" nor on Item 4, you can probably serve the other parent (and the LCSA if involved) by mail. But if you serve by mail, you must do it at least 16 court days before the hearing plus 5 calendar days for mailing. Ask the [family law facilitator](#) or [self-help center](#) if you are not sure if you can serve your papers by mail.

### 7. Complete the Parenting after Separation online course

Parties are expected to complete the course prior to their court date if requesting custody and parenting time orders. The website is: [www.familieschange.ca.gov](http://www.familieschange.ca.gov)