

## WHEN YOU WANT AN OP AGAINST THE OTHER PARENT: **Ways to Feel Safer About the Kids**

### FIRST:

Is the other parent's name on the birth certificate or have you been to court to prove who the parent is?

Yes

You can ask for certain things to help you and your kids feel safer. Remember, the judge will be the one who decides.

No

The other parent may have no right to see the kids and cannot be ordered to pay support for them. If you want that to change, please read the flier about the Domestic Relations Division

### NEXT: Have the kids been physically abused?

Yes

You can ask the judge to have the other parent stay away from the kids or ask to put safety measures in place.

No

You can still protect the kids. If you are OK with visits, there are ways make visits safer.

### FINALLY: Have the kids seen you get abused?

Yes

Kids act out in a lot of ways because of this. Feeling safer can help.

No

Even if the kids were not in the room, they probably know about the abuse and can act out, too.

## ***You Can Ask For Things To Help You and Your Kids Feel Safer***

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

#### ***Does the other parent:***

- Hurt the kids?
- Know how to take care of the kids?
- Use the kids to upset or hurt you?
- Make the kids keep track of you and report back?
- Question the kids about you?
- Not let you make decisions about your kids?
- Abuse drugs or alcohol when the kids are there?

#### ***Or maybe:***

- The other parent is fine with the kids
- The other parent watches them for you
- It is safer for everyone when there are visits
- Your kids really want to have visits

### YOU CAN ASK FOR:

- No visits until the OP ends or the other parent does certain things
- Visits with ways to help everyone feel safer
- No decisions about visits until a later court date

***There Are Things You Can Ask for That Help Make Visits Safer for Everyone.***

## ***Some ways to Help Visits Feel Safer for Everyone***

### ***If You...***

### ***You Can Ask for ....***

**Don't** want visits right now but may want them later... →

**Visits** to be “reserved”. That means the judge won't decide anything about visits for now. You can think about it and ask for something different at the next court date.

**Need** exact times and days for visits... →

**Visits** only at certain times and days. It can be hard to figure out these details when you don't want to talk to the other parent. There is help for that at court. (See flier on Expeditor Services)

**Worry** about your own safety when the other parent picks up the kids... →

**Visit** pick-ups and drop-offs that have special ways to keep everyone safe. (See flier on Safe Exchanges & Supervised Visits)

**Know** that it may be unsafe for the other parent to be alone with your kids? →

**Supervised visits** to be done with a person you trust. That person must agree to do it and sign a paper for the court. There are also free services that can do this. (See flier on Safe Exchanges & Supervised Visits)

**Think** the other parent will quiz the kids about you and your activities?

**Worry** that the other parent will hide the kids and not bring them back? →

**The other parent** not to take the kids out of Illinois or hiding them in any way

**Only want** some of your kids to see your abuser and not others? →

**Visits with only some of the kids:** If you only want some kids to visit, make sure you write in your papers why you don't want all of the kids to have visits. Be ready to tell the judge in court.

## ***What About School or Daycare?***

### ***If You...***

### ***You Can Ask for ....***

**Worry** the other parent will take the kids from school or daycare without you knowing... →

**The other parent** not to remove kids from you or school or daycare

**Don't want** the other parent to know where the kids go to school or daycare... →

**The other parent** to be unable to get records from the school or daycare

**Want** the other parent to go to the kids' school or daycare... →

**The other parent** to be able to go to school or daycare if you are not there

## ***Need Money for the Kids?***

The forms have a place to ask for “child support.” If you want the other parent to give you money for the kids, you can ask for it. Even if you only want certain things paid for, you still have to ask for it.

## ***You Decide What to Ask for But the Judge Has the Final Say***

You will fill out papers today that tell the judge why you need an OP. If you want some protections for your kids, make sure you write down why. The judge might ask you more questions in court. Be ready to explain why you and the kids need these safety measures. If the judge wants to give you an OP that does not have the safety measures you need, you can withdraw your petition in the courtroom before the order is entered. That means you will not have an OP.

## ***How Do I Ask for These Things?***

**Anything you want the judge to order must be asked for today.** Some things can't happen until you come back to the next court date, but you still have to ask for them today. You can ask for things to be in place now. Changes can be made later. You can ask for all the things you want but the judge decides what is on your order. The judge might think about what the other parent wants and

- give you EVERYTHING you want OR
- give you NONE of the things you want OR
- put MORE safety in place than you want OR
- give you only SOME of the things you want

## ***Also: OPs have an end date.***

The safety measures in your order will end when the order expires. If you want to keep some of these things in place longer, please read the flier about the Domestic Relations Division

## ***Want to Know More?***

Look at our Frequently Asked Questions page. It can help you with some of the words that you will see on your paperwork and which boxes to check.

### ***Produced by the Domestic Violence Division of the Circuit Court of Cook County***

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