



Child Advocacy Training Napkin Visuals

from training manual 6

Paternity

What Types of Legal Parents Are There Under Washington Law?

Every child has a minimum of two parents.

Legal Parent or Parents – The legal parent(s) of the child are the parent(s) whose name or names

appear on the child's birth certificate. The legal parent(s) may also be the biological (or genetic)

parent(s) of the child – but they do not have to be. The legal parents are responsible for providing

proper care of the child and would be parties to a dependency case.

Genetic Parent – Also known as the child's biological parent. This is a person who is biologically the

parent of the child, but may not be the child's legal parent. *See below under Way a Person Can Become

a Child's Legal Parent.

Alleged Genetic Parent – A person who may be the biological parent of the child, but is not yet

considered the child's legal parent.

☒ Formerly, this person was called the “alleged father” and this may be a term you will continue to

hear in your work as a CASA.

Presumed Parent – A person who is presumed to be the legal parent of the child because they are (or

were) married to the biological mother of the child and the child was born during the marriage, or

within 300 days after the marriage legally ended (divorce, annulment, etc.).

☒ When there is a presumed parent for a child, the court must order that it is in the child's best interest to complete genetic testing and potentially terminate the parent-child relationship between that person and the child.

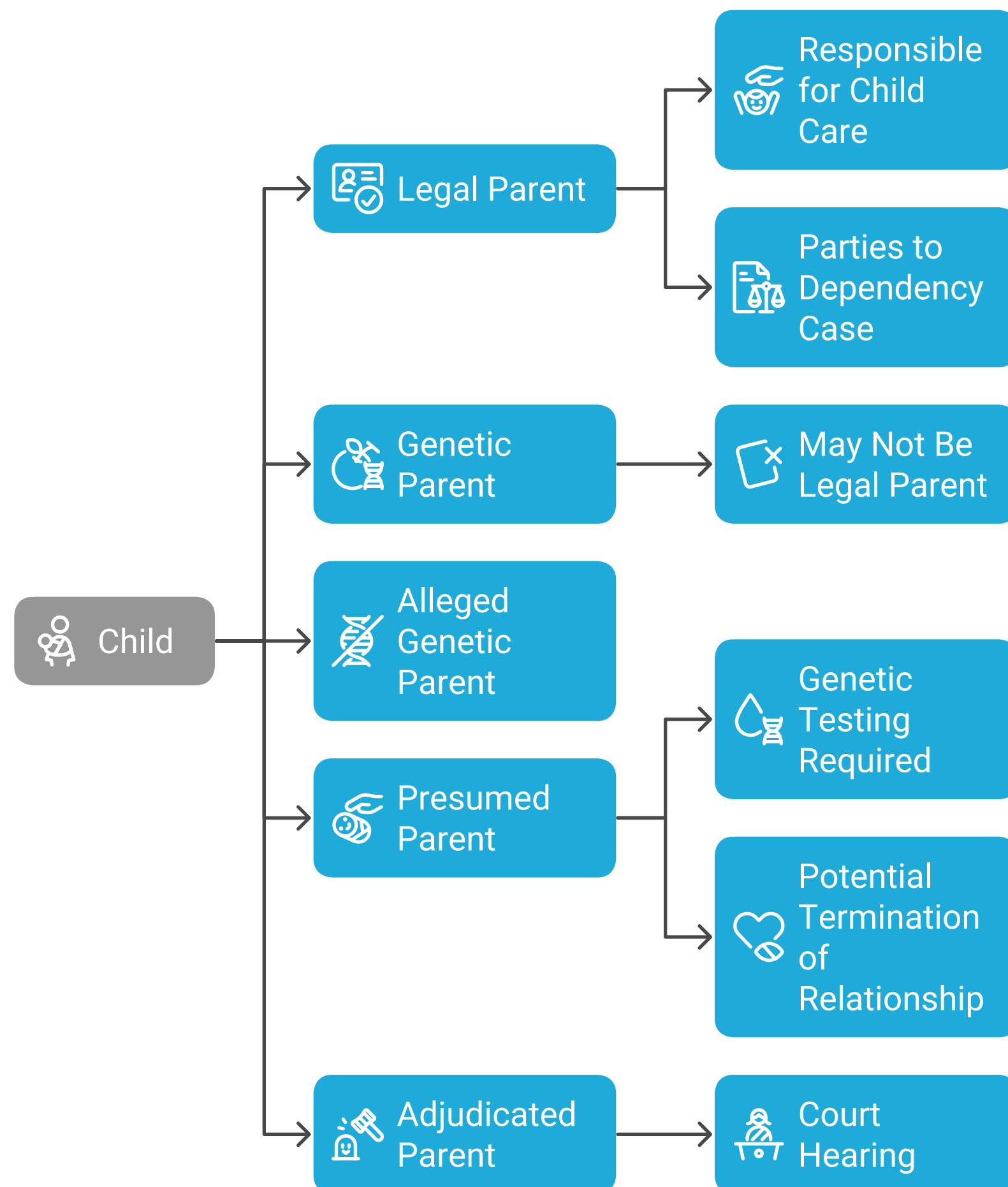
Adjudicated Parent – A person who is determined to be the legal parent of a child after a court hearing.

*See – Adjudication below for information on this process.

Remember: Under Washington State law the legal parents of a child may be of different genders or the

same gender. Legal parents do not have to be biological parents to the child.

Types of Legal Parents in Washington State



Ways a Person Can Become a Child's Legal Parent.

Acknowledgement of Parentage – This is a legal document signed willingly by both the biological mother of the child and the person who wishes to be the child's legal parent. This person does not have to be the biological parent of the child in order to sign this document and become the child's legal parent.

In order for the Acknowledgement of Parentage to be legal there MUST NOT be any of the following:

- 1) A presumed parent other than the person signing the document; or
- 2) Another person who has signed an Acknowledgement of Parentage; or
- 3) Another person who has been found to be the child's adjudicated parent; or
- 4) Another person who is the legal parent of the child.

Once the Acknowledgment of Parentage form has been completed and properly filed with the

Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics[DOH/CHS], the persons who signed

the document will be named as the child's legal parents on the birth certificate.

Legal Parentage Process

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Identify Biological Mother The biological mother of the child is recognized. |
| 2 | Identify Potential Legal Parent A person wishes to become the child's legal parent. |
| 3 | Sign Acknowledgement of Parentage Both parties sign the legal document willingly. |
| 4 | Verify Legal Conditions Ensure no conflicting legal claims exist. |
| 5 | File with Department of Health The document is filed with the state health department. |
| 6 | Update Birth Certificate The birth certificate is updated with legal parents. |

Denial of paternity – This is a legal document signed by the alleged or presumed parent of the child denying they are the biological or legal parent of the child.
It is valid ONLY IF:
1) There is a valid Acknowledgment of Parentage signed by another person; AND
2) The person signing the Denial of Parentage form has not, in the past, signed an Acknowledgment of Parentage, or been found to be the adjudicated parent of the child.
The Denial of Parentage form must be witnessed by a notary public or another individual and filed with DOH/CHS to be legally valid.

Adjudication – This type of legal hearing may take place when an alleged parent does not willingly put their name on the child's birth certificate at the time of the child's birth, or sign an Acknowledgment of Parentage after the child's birth. The biological mother of the child, the child, the Division of Child Support, or the alleged parent may file paperwork to request this type of hearing.
☒ If the judge determines that a person is the legal parent of a child, their name is added to the child's birth certificate and they are legally responsible for providing care and support for the child.

Genetic Testing – Genetic testing is NOT, on its own, a means to become a child's legal parent. If genetic testing determines a person is the biological parent of a child, they must then use one of the methods mentioned above to become the child's legal parent.

Legal Processes for Establishing Parentage



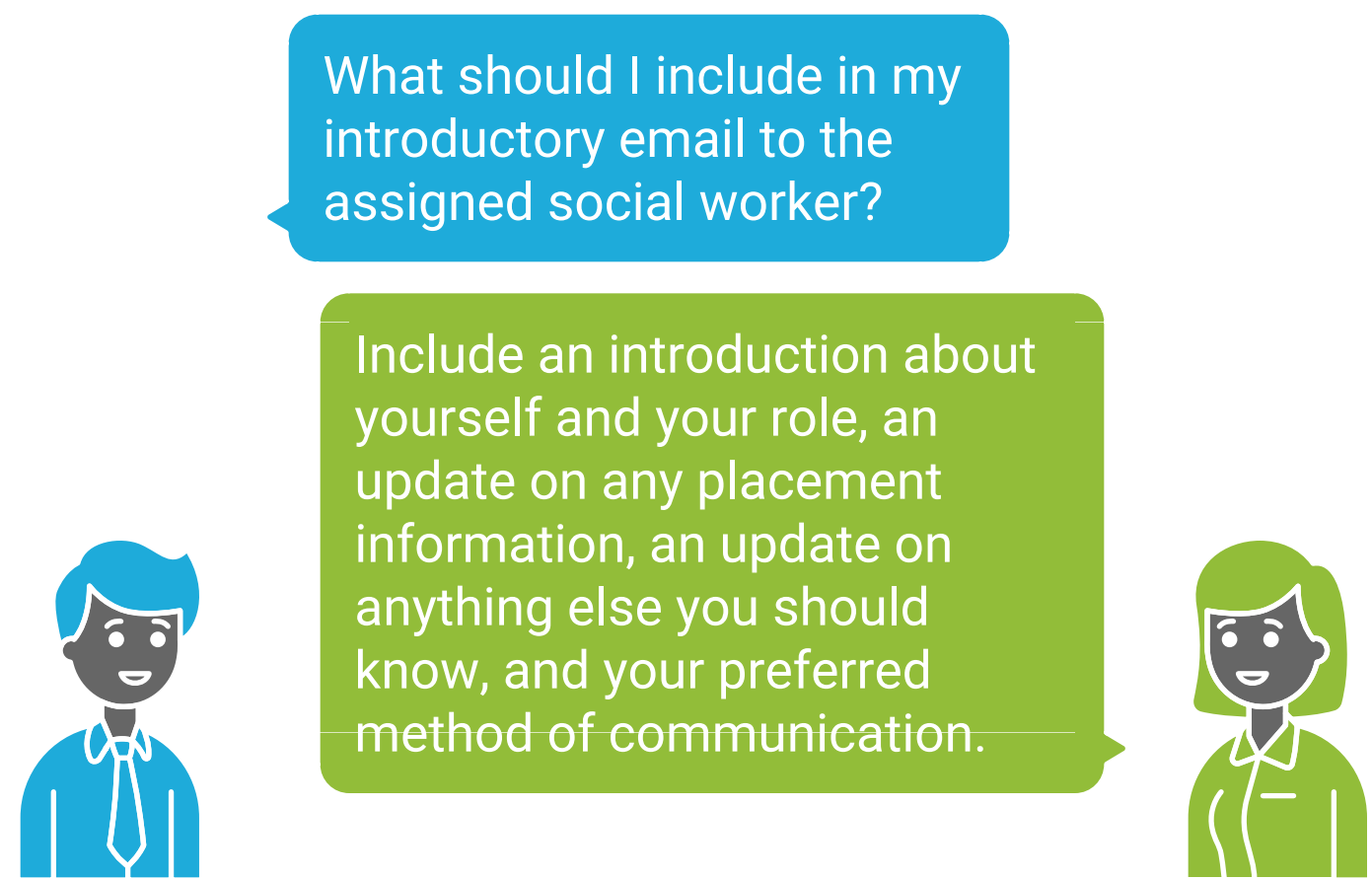
Your first contact – the Social Worker

Take the next few minutes to write your introductory email to the assigned social worker on your case.

Please include the following:

- An introduction about yourself and your role
- Update on any placement information
- Update on anything else you should know
- Your preferred method of communication

Contacting Your Social Worker



Your first contact – other participants

Parents
Parent’s Attorneys
Teachers
Foster Parent
Day Care providers
Relatives
Others? 11

Child Support Network

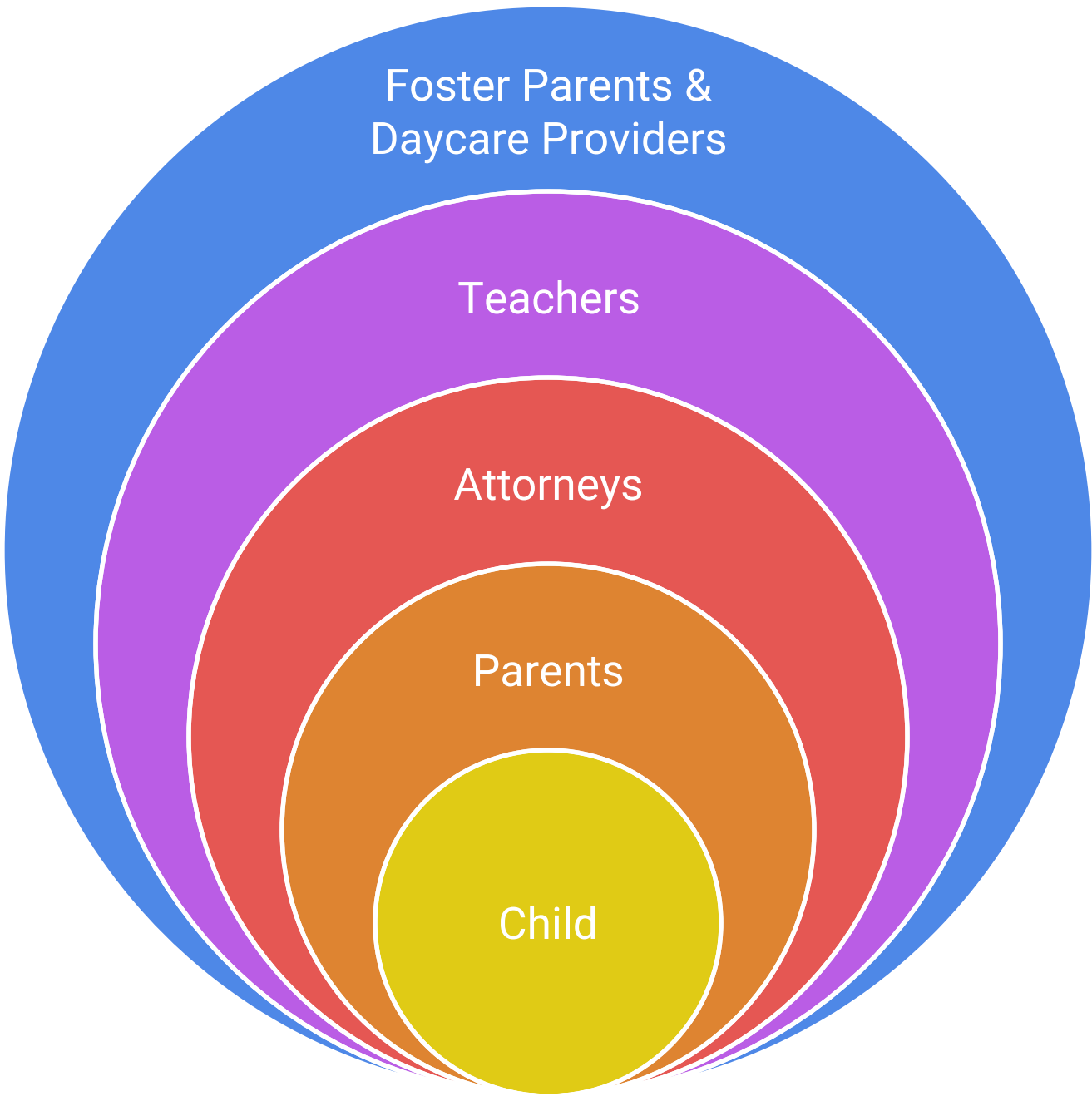
Temporary caregivers
and educators

Educators fostering
growth

Legal representatives
ensuring rights

Primary caregivers
and decision-makers

Central to the support
network



Introducing yourself – Role Play!
Break up into groups of three.
We'll do three rounds, and in each round, ◦ one person will act as the child advocate; ◦ one will serve as an “observer” (to provide feedback to the advocate) ◦ one will role play either ◦ the foster parent ◦ Chris’s 2nd grade teacher ◦ Diane Andrews (Mom to Each person should take a turn doing each role.
Each introduction should take 3 minutes, one minute for feedback, then switch.

Mastering Child Advocacy Introductions

