
TO DOCUMENT BEFORE COURT

Family Court Documentation Checklist

CANADIAN JUSTICE GRANDMA | *Families Deserve to Be Heard*

Good documentation is clear, factual, dated and organized. This checklist is designed to help families gather information for discussions with their lawyer or for court preparation. Keep originals whenever possible and store sensitive information securely.

BUILD YOUR TIMELINE

■ Chronology / timeline

Record the date, time, location, who was present, what happened, and what happened next.

■ Children's statements

Write the child's exact words where possible. Note when and where the statement was made and who heard it. Avoid adding your own interpretation.

■ Parenting-time issues

Track missed or changed parenting time, refusals, exchanges, significant incidents, and departures from the usual schedule.

SAVE THE EVIDENCE

■ Photos and videos

Keep relevant photographs or videos with the original date and context. Do not alter the original files.

■ Texts, emails and messages

Save complete conversations where possible, including dates, times, sender and recipient.

■ Existing court orders

Keep current orders together and identify the specific paragraphs that relate to the issue before the court.

■ Possible non-compliance

Record the date, what occurred, the court-order provision involved, and the evidence supporting the concern.

RECORD PROFESSIONAL & AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

■ Police involvement

Record occurrence or report numbers, dates, police service, officer names if known, 911 or wellness-check details, and the outcome.

■ Child protection involvement

Keep relevant contacts, reports, safety plans, instructions, meeting notes and correspondence from the applicable child protection agency.

■ Office of the Children's Lawyer (OCL)

Keep disclosure materials, recommendations, correspondence, meeting dates, and other documents you are permitted to retain.

■ Medical information

Organize relevant appointments, injuries, treatment, referrals and medical records you are legally entitled to have.

■ Counselling / therapy information

Keep relevant appointment information, professional recommendations and records you are legally entitled to obtain.

■ School information

Collect relevant attendance records, reports, communications, behavioural or academic changes, and guidance or school-administration involvement.

PREPARE FOR YOUR LAWYER OR COURT

■ Witnesses

List people with first-hand knowledge. Include contact information and a short note describing what they personally saw or heard.

■ Agency / professional contacts

List names, roles, dates of contact and any documented action taken.

■ Financial information

Include only information relevant to an issue before the court, such as support, special expenses, benefits or another financial claim.

■ Evidence index

Number and label documents, screenshots, photographs and records so each item can be located quickly.

■ Questions for your lawyer

Keep a separate list of questions, deadlines and issues you want legal advice about.

■ What you are asking the court to order

Write the specific result being requested and the facts or evidence you believe show why it is in the child's best interests.

A SIMPLE WAY TO LOG EACH EVENT

Date / Time	Event / What Happened	Source / Evidence	Action Taken / Outcome

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTATION TIP

Keep these categories separate: (1) what you personally observed, (2) what a child actually said, (3) what another person reported, and (4) what a professional or agency documented. Avoid assumptions, exaggeration and conclusions that are not supported by the evidence. A useful format is: **Date -> Event -> Source/Evidence -> Action Taken -> Outcome/Impact.**

NOTES / IMPORTANT DATES

Disclaimer: This checklist is for general informational and organizational purposes only. Canadian Justice Grandma is not a law firm and this resource is not legal advice. Family-law procedures and evidentiary requirements vary by jurisdiction and by case. Consider obtaining advice from a qualified legal professional about your circumstances.

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