



COURT PROCEEDINGS & LEGAL ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

SEE MORE DETAILS IN COMPANION COURT PROCEEDINGS BRIEF.



Teen parents may encounter a variety of legal matters that require them to establish or enforce their rights in court or respond to actions brought against them. Depending on their age, this may be done individually or may require involvement of the parent or legal guardian of the teen parent. Legal issues may include:

- traffic violations, contract disputes, landlord-tenant issues, the need to secure protection orders in domestic violence/dating violence cases.
- most common type of proceeding teen parents are in need of is family law, including to establish paternity or secure child support orders, parenting time plans, or a divorce.

Assert Legal Rights



It is important that teen parents assert their legal rights for a variety of reasons including:

- to obtain court orders necessary to protect themselves or their children,
- to guard against problems in the future,
- to establish clear legal parameters governing parent-child relationships and co-parenting arrangements, or
- to avoid adverse rulings or default judgments.

Navigating the court system and appearing in court can be confusing and intimidating and may result in uncertainty or negative outcomes.

Self Help Resources



Most courts in Colorado have self-help or court-based resource centers that are intended to provide *pro se parties* (i.e. individuals without an attorney) with the documents needed to pursue and/or respond to matters in their court case and help them navigate court processes and procedures.

Information on available resources, as well as information on the court's processes and procedures specific to each Colorado county, can be located on the [Courts by County](#) page on the Colorado Judicial Branch website.

Legal Advocacy Programs



Some nonprofits and teen parent-serving organizations have established in-house legal advocacy programs and many have relationships with attorneys. Legal advocates can work with teen parents to review and complete their forms and provide instruction on how to file documents with the court.

The Colorado Judicial Branch website provides [self-help forms](#) needed for any case, including family cases, housing cases, small claims, and protection orders.

Unbundled Legal Services



Unbundled legal services refer to services provided by an attorney that are limited in scope and provide clients with a flexible and affordable way to get help with their legal needs.

Teen parent service providers may find it helpful to build relationships with attorneys who offer unbundled services to secure help when the additional expertise of an attorney is needed.

It may be preferable or necessary to hire an attorney to handle complex matters, high conflict cases, or to provide full representation in cases in which the power dynamics between the parties is such that self-representation is not in the client's best interest.

