

Protecting the Fundamental Right to Parent: Staffing Guidance for Attorneys

CASE ASSIGNED TO RPC

Choosing a Representation Model

Positive outcomes and experiences for families can be more equitably achieved when choosing a representation model that best fits the unique needs of clients.

An interdisciplinary team model can help meet **complex case needs**. Knowing when to request a social worker or parent advocate can help the RPC make smart decisions about staffing and ensure the client gets the best legal advocacy possible.

PATH 1

Attorney-Only Representation

Historically, most cases have been staffed by this model.







PATH 2

Interdisciplinary Team Representation

Interdisciplinary teams work together to address root causes of child welfare involvement and strengthen the family.



Activate the interdisciplinary team when:

-  **Client Characteristics**
Identities, experiences, high-needs
-  **Child Welfare Case Attributes**
Separation risk, trauma, EPP, ICWA
-  **Legal Case Complexities**
Contested cases, criminal charges, incarceration
-  **Parental Engagement Needs**
Distrust, Unresponsive, Isolated

OPTION A

Social Worker

-  **Mental Health, Substance Use, Violence, Trauma, and Disability**
-  **Lack of Structural Supports**
-  **Volume 7 Accountability**
-  **Legal Specifics**

OPTION B

Parent Advocate

-  **Social and Structural Inequities**
-  **Previous System-Involvement**
-  **Emotional Support**
-  **Low Engagement or High Conflict Communication**

Promoting Equitable Outcomes in:

- Client-Centered Representation**
- Inclusive & Respectful Advocacy Support**
- Procedural Fairness**

* Sample: Calendar Year 2019, and June to November 2021 (18 months total)
Analyses conducted by www.coloradolab.org