

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN JUDGES

October 14, 2017

Panel Presentation

Judge Peggy H. Walker

Serving Children and Reducing Trauma

- ▣ Ex parte orders
 - Is there imminent harm to justify the abrupt change?
 - Is there collaborating evidence other than the party's testimony seeking the order?
 - Where is removal least disruptive and least harmful?
 - Who will explain what is happening to the child?
 - Who will speak for the child?

Safe At Home

- ▣ What are the alternatives to removal?
 - Can the parent and child enter treatment together?
 - Can the parent and child be safe and supported through a Temporary Protective Order?
 - Can the child be placed with a noncustodial parent?
 - Can the child be placed with a relative?
 - Can the child be placed with a third party with whom the child has a relationship?

Transitions

- ▣ Explain to the child what is happening
- ▣ Allow the parent to tell the child goodbye, reassure the child and identify a transitional object or picture to keep the connection with the parent
- ▣ Assure the child as to future contact with the parent
- ▣ Order age appropriate frequent short visits

Transitions

- ▣ Expand visits as progress is made to day visits, one night overnight, full weekends overnight, weekdays added to weekend to give the child time to feel safe and to prepare for return of custody

Courtroom

- ▣ Where do children wait?
- ▣ Is it child friendly?
- ▣ Where do they sit in the courtroom?
- ▣ Who brings them in and out to keep them safe and to reduce drama arising from others that may be present?
- ▣ Who speaks for the child?

Reading Room & Therapy Dogs





