

# CHECKLIST

## Ensuring Quality Out-of-Court Advocacy

### **Develop a good working attorney-client relationship with your father client.**

- Explain your role in helping him achieve his goals for his child and discuss that he can confide in you.
- Learn about his family, support system, current relationships, and his understanding of the child welfare system, possibly using a genogram.
- Discuss his responsibilities and help him understand how his actions influence case outcomes.

### **Establish an open line of communication with the caseworker.**

- Find out how the agency views your client, influence the caseworker through education and advocacy, and use the relationship as an opportunity to show your client understands his child's needs.
- Use the expertise of social workers in your office to communicate your client's position and needs to the caseworker.
- Do not assume the caseworker is an expert on the issues your client faces. You may have to educate yourself and the social worker on your client's needs relating to substance abuse, mental health, criminal system involvement, etc.
- Share positive stories with the worker about your client's interaction with his child.

### **Participate and prepare for child welfare staffings.**

- Review with your client before the staffing what should or should not be shared.

- Translate acronyms or lingo to your client so he understands what is happening.
- Explain to your client who will attend the staffing and each person's role.
- Be firm when necessary to get needed assistance and to save your client from appearing negative.
- If permitted, encourage your client to bring supportive relatives to the staffing.

Download this and other checklists at [www.fatherhoodqic.org/checklists](http://www.fatherhoodqic.org/checklists)

