

# Family Terms + Basics Route

A short public-use guide for translating court language, identifying the next paper that matters, and gathering only the basics before the next help door.

## Start in this order

- Translate the word that is blocking you.
- Put the next notice, order, or deadline on top.
- Gather only the names, dates, papers, and questions that matter for the next doorway.
- Use the larger Family Hub after the basics are under control.

## Common terms in plain English

- **Guardian ad Litem (GAL)** - A court-appointed person who is supposed to look into the child's situation and report back to the court.
- **Family Law Magistrate** - A judicial officer who handles many family-law matters, especially procedure-heavy issues such as child support and some hearings.
- **Interim hearing / temporary order** - The short-term hearing or order that controls what happens before the final case is resolved.
- **Parenting plan** - The written structure for time, exchanges, decisions, and day-to-day parenting logistics.
- **Protection from Abuse (PFA)** - A civil safety process that should be treated differently from ordinary custody disagreement.
- **Service** - The official delivery of papers in the way the rules require.
- **Docket / case number** - The running case record and the identifier that helps a clerk or office find the matter quickly.
- **Motion** - A formal request asking the court to do something.
- **Order / judgment** - The written direction or major ruling from the court.
- **Child-support review / modification** - A request to revisit the support terms because circumstances changed or a review is happening.

## Gather the basics first

- Full adult names and child names if handy.
- Safe callback number and email.
- County or court location if known.
- Case number or docket number if there is one.

- The next deadline, hearing date, or notice date.
- The most recent order, judgment, or notice you have.
- A short timeline and three questions you need answered first.

*Public information only. Not legal advice.*