

# Support-First Quick Packet

A short printable packet for a Maine parent or helper under stress. Use one page at a time. Court is not the default first step unless safety, deadlines, or official process require it.

## Use this first

Best for the next 24 hours and next 7 days: safety, basic needs, school/provider support, calm communication, private records, and official/legal doors if necessary.

## Safety and privacy boundary

Public education only. Not legal advice, therapy, diagnosis, or emergency service. Use 911 for immediate danger and 988 for crisis support. Do not send FOCaF child names, private allegations, medical records, sealed records, or confidential family materials. These sheets are for your own private records.

Support-first order: safety, child stability, counseling/support, school/provider coordination, calm communication, own-records organization, and official/legal doors only when needed.

# Next 24 hours

Do the smallest safe thing first. This page is for stabilizing the day, not solving the entire family situation.

- Immediate danger: call 911. Emotional crisis or self-harm concern: call or text 988.
- Food, housing, heat, transportation, childcare, or local support: contact 211 Maine or a local support agency.
- Protect the child's school day, sleep, meals, medications handled by adults, and calm pickup/dropoff rhythm.
- Write down only your own reminders: dates, times, orders/deadlines, school contacts, and questions for a qualified helper.
- Do not use the child as messenger, witness, negotiator, or proof collector.

## Today's safe first step

## One person or official door to contact

# Next 7 days

Pick a short weekly rhythm. Families under pressure need repeatable routines more than perfect plans.

## Child stability

- School attendance and transportation plan
- Bedtime or wind-down routine
- Backpack or belongings checklist
- Quiet decompression time after stressful transitions

## Support calls

- 211 Maine or basic-needs support
- School counselor or teacher check-in
- Counseling, parent coaching, or advocate call
- Legal aid/court self-help only if safety or deadline requires

### This week's must-not-miss dates or deadlines

### What can wait?

# School and provider contact

Give helpers enough information to support the child without dumping a case file or asking them to take sides.

## A short update can be enough

Example: "Our child may be tired during transitions this week. Please let me know if attendance, homework, mood, or routine support becomes a concern."

- Share current routine or school-day need.
- Ask what the teacher/provider needs to support the child.
- Keep adult allegations and confidential records out of routine school emails.
- Use private notes for your own questions and reminders.

## School/provider to contact

## What they need to know for support, not conflict

# Basic needs and support services

Stress gets harder when transportation, housing, childcare, food, or phone access breaks down. Stabilizing basics can protect the child without escalating conflict.

## Ask about

- Food or pantry access
- Housing or utility support
- Transportation or ride options
- Childcare or school-day support

## Before scheduling

- Cost or sliding scale
- Insurance or MaineCare questions
- Telehealth or transportation options
- What to bring to the first appointment

### Support agency/provider name

### Questions to ask

# Calm communication and own records

Short, factual messages reduce conflict and protect children from adult pressure.

## Before sending a message

Pause. Remove insults, threats, labels, and long history. Keep logistics clear. Do not invent facts. Do not paste private child/case details into online tools.

- Use a clear subject: pickup, appointment, school, transportation, belongings.
- State the request or fact in one to three short sentences.
- Ask for confirmation when needed.
- Save your own copy privately. Do not send private records to FOCaF.

## Neutral message draft

# Official/legal doors only when needed

Official/legal help can be necessary. It should not be the default for every stressful family problem, but it should not be delayed when safety, orders, deadlines, or formal process require it.

## Use official/legal help when

- Immediate safety or protection issue
- Court order, deadline, service, or hearing date
- Legal aid/counsel advice is needed
- Official forms or clerk guidance is required

## Still keep support active

- School and routine support
- Counseling or advocate support where safe
- Basic needs assistance
- Private records for your own use

### Private record reminder

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