



Welcome to the
Probate and Family Court
Department of the
Massachusetts Trial Court.

Many Probate and
Family:Law matters

involve complex and
valuable legal rights.

You should always speak with
an attorney before filing any
papers., Please ask court staff
for "Looking For Legal
Assistance?", a list of local
referral services and
legal aid agencies.

BEFORE GOING INTO COURT....

This booklet
contains ten helpful tips
about how to conduct
yourself in court. Please
read them carefully before
entering the courtroom.

This Pamphlet is provided as a service
of the court and does not constitute legal advice
which can only be given to you by your attorney.

1 DRESS IN A WAY THAT SHOWS RESPECT FOR THE COURT	<i>You do not have to buy new clothes for court but halters, worn out jeans and tee-shirts are not appropriate. Don't chew gum, eat or drink in the courtroom.</i>
2 BE ON TIME	<i>If you miss your hearing the judge can make orders that you may not agree with and which may seriously effect you and your children.</i>
3. DO NOT BRING CHILDREN INTO COURT	<i>Plan to ha ve someone watch your children while you are in court. Some courts have free child care for you while you are in court. Space is limited. Call the Registry of Probate in advance about availability.</i>
4. STAND WHEN THE JUDGE ENTERS OR LEAVES THE COURTROOM	<i>The court officer will tell you when to sit and stand. If you, are in doubt, stand when the judge is standing. You can usually sit-down once the judge is seated, unless you are speaking with the judge.</i>
5. STAND AND SPEAK WHEN THE JUDGE TALK TO YOU	<i>Remain standing as long as you and the judge are talking. You may need to stay standing even if the judge talks to the person on the other side of, your case. If in doubt, ask the judge before sitting down.</i>
6. THE JUDGE WILL LET YOU KNOW WHEN TO SPEAK	<i>Never get into an argument or even a discussion with the other side in front of the judge. Always speak directly to the judge, unless the judge allows you to answer formal questions from the other side.</i>
7. SPEAK CLEARLY	<i>You need to speak and not just nod or shake your bead because court proceedings are always recorded Listen carefully to the questions you are asked. Be direct and to the point when answering questions.</i>
8. ALWAYS ADDRESS THE JUDGE AS "YOUR HONOR"	<i>The judge must keep order in the courtroom and will be making important decisions about you and your children. Be respectful and understand that the judge likes to keep the proceedings as orderly as possible. This helps keep the process fair to everyone</i>
9. YOUR CASE MAY BE "TAKEN UNDER ADVISEMENT"	<i>This means that the judge needs time to think about how to decide your case and the court will mail the decision to you once it is made. Make sure that the court has your current mailing address.</i>
10. DO NOT TALK ON YOUR WAY OUT OR EVEN RIGHT OUTSIDE THE DOOR.	<i>Many times another hearing starts as soon as yours ends, and your talking can interfere with the next case</i>

These Guidelines and all Court Rules Apply to Attorneys.

You Must Follow Them As Well.