

- You should submit documents and/or recordings between two to five business days in advance of the day of the Screening.

- **Submitting Documents/Recordings.** You may submit your materials with the *FCS Declaration of Mailing or Personal Services form*, **as attachments** (NOT links i.e. Dropbox, Google Docs, Sharefile, YouTube, etc.) to the other party and FCS at the same time through email. In the subject line write: Case Number, Petitioner's & Respondent's last names & Screening Date. The FCS email address for Screening documents is: **fcsscreenings@scscourt.org**

COLLATERAL CONTACTS

If there are people or professionals (i.e. teachers, therapists, doctors) that you would like the screener to interview please plan ahead.

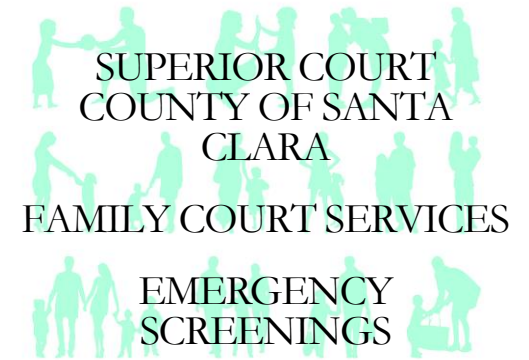
- Tell the people that you want your screener to talk to, that they may get a phone call on your screening day.
- Find out what time is best to call to your collateral contact/witness.
- Sign a *Release of Information* form with professionals so they can talk to FCS.
- Have the names and numbers of your collateral contact/witnesses ready to give your screener.

- Please know that your screener will contact your collateral contact/witnesses at their discretion.

SCREENING CHECK LIST



- Intake sheet & Domestic Violence Questionnaire (if applicable) completed, signed and turned in.
- Diaper bag or other supplies (game, toy, homework, book, snacks) your child(ren) will need for the day at court packed and ready to go.
- Arranged a neutral responsible adult to watch child(ren) all day at court.
- Drug Test Completed? **If** you have been accused of drug abuse, consider taking a hair follicle drug test prior to your screening and sign a *Consent to Release of Information* with the agency to share the results with FCS.
- List of names, phone numbers, and availability of witnesses/professionals.
- Signed *Consents to Release of Information* with professionals that may be interviewed.
- Reminded witnesses/professionals to be on standby for interviews.
- Documents and/or recordings (USB stick for FCS) submitted with *FCS Declaration of Mailing or Personal Services* form.



Important Information

Your screening is set on:

_____, at **8:00 am**
(Arrive earlier to get into the building)

At Family Court Services on the
5th floor of the
Family Justice Center Courthouse
201 N. First St.
San Jose, CA 95113
408-534-5760

This brochure has been prepared by FCS to provide you with valuable information about the screening process. It does not include all applicable information about screenings. Please see Local Rule 2 available on the public website under the Family Division and FCS pages for more information:
www.scscourt.org **Thank you**

WHAT IS A SCREENING?

Screenings are custody investigations limited to the safety and well-being of children, completed by mental health clinicians with expertise in child custody issues.

Judges may order an emergency screening when at least one parent tells the court that their child(ren) are not safe with the other parent. The Judge will provide the parties and Family Court Services (FCS) with a referral that directs the screener as to what safety issue is to be investigated.

A screener is a mental health professional that works for FCS. Your screener will conduct an investigation and provide you and the court with written recommendations for child custody that address the *immediate* safety and well-being of your child/children.

You'll receive the recommendations from your screener on the day of your screening (with a few exceptions). You'll have some time to review the recommendations. If both parties agree to them, it is called a stipulation and the screening is completed.

If you, or the other parent, do not agree to the recommendations, the Judge may make orders after a brief hearing, usually held the same day.



WHAT TO EXPECT

- Plan to be at FCS all day from 8:00am to 5:00pm. The child(ren) must also be brought in by 8:00am regardless of their age.
- Parents are responsible for bringing a third party, over the age of eighteen, to watch the child(ren).
- Remember your children will be at the courthouse almost all day. Please plan to bring what they will need for the day.
- Early in the day there will be a brief meeting to define the scope of the emergency issues.
- Your screener reviews criminal and child welfare records.
- Each party will be interviewed including any child(ren) old enough to speak.
- Some of the interviews will be conducted through video conferencing through Microsoft TEAMS. Please download this free app on your device and **bring the charger for the device.**
- Observations of each parent and child(ren) in a playroom often takes place. Please bring something to engage your child in an activity.
- Screeners may interview teachers, doctors, therapists, or others.



- Written recommendations regarding custody and timeshare will be provided to you at the end of the investigation.
- After receiving the recommendations, a “Meet & Confer” shall occur with both parties to see if there is an agreement with the recommendations.
- There may be a hearing if you and the other party do not agree on the recommendations.

GIVING THE SCREENER DOCUMENTS/RECORDINGS



- **Screener review.** The Screener shall review the Family Court file. If there are additional documents

or recordings of events you would like the Screener to review, then you must provide a copy of everything you give to the Screener to the other party with the *FCS Declaration of Mailing or Personal Services* form (Local form FM-1061 located on the court website: www.scscourt.org) filled out.

- **Keep it brief.** Only 15 single-sided pages, of documents shall be accepted. Give the most important information you want the Screener to consider.
- **Records.** All the recordings together should equal no more than 10 minutes total recording time. **Recordings must be given on a USB Stick to FCS** and no other material (i.e. documents, photos, etc.) can be included on the USB Stick