

Know Your Rights: A Parent's Guide to Dealing with Alabama DHR

SECTION 1: When DHR Shows Up Without a Warrant

You are not required to let DHR into your home unless they present a valid court order or emergency removal authorization. Under the Fourth Amendment and Alabama Code § 12-15-133, DHR must have a court order to remove a child unless there is an immediate danger.

What You Should Do:

- Stay calm
- Step outside
- Ask for ID
- Ask for a warrant
- Record the encounter

What to Watch Out For:

- 'We just need to look around'
- 'Let us talk to your child real quick'
- 'It'll look bad if you don't cooperate'

SECTION 2: Your Right to Remain Silent

You do not have to speak to DHR without legal representation. You have a constitutional right to remain silent.

What You Should Do:

- Be polite but firm
- Don't explain or justify
- Don't sign anything without a lawyer

Say: 'I would be happy to speak with you once I've spoken to an attorney. I'm not answering any questions at this time.'

SECTION 3: The 'Emergency' Loophole

DHR can only bypass a court order if there is a real and immediate threat to the child's safety. Minor allegations are not enough.

What to Do:

- Ask for documentation
- Ask for specifics
- Record everything

If a child is removed, a shelter care hearing must happen within 72 hours.

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SECTION 4: Protecting Your Child's Voice

DHR often tries to interview children alone. Parents can push back.

What to Do:

- Teach your child to say, 'I want my parent here.'
- Notify schools in writing
- Ask for legal presence during interviews

Watch out for leading questions, isolation tactics, and emotional manipulation.

SECTION 5: Document Everything

If it's not written down, it may not be believed. Create a paper trail.

Document:

- Dates, times, names
- Everything DHR says and does
- Copies of signed papers

Start a timeline and take photos/screenshots of all communications and home conditions.

SECTION 6: Immediate Next Steps

1. Call an attorney
2. Don't sign anything without legal advice
3. Save every piece of paper
4. Start a timeline
5. Find support at FamiliesVsDHR.org or [@FamiliesVsHoustonCountyDHR](https://www.facebook.com/FamiliesVsHoustonCountyDHR)

You Are Not Alone: Resources & Support

You Are Not Alone.

Helpful Links:

- Website: www.FamiliesVsDHR.org
- Facebook: [@FamiliesVsHoustonCountyDHR](https://www.facebook.com/FamiliesVsHoustonCountyDHR)

Recommended Actions:

- Print this guide
- Share with family
- Bring to court
- Sign up for alerts on the site

Use this space to write important info:

- DHR Worker Name(s):

- Case Number:

- Court Dates:

- Attorney:

- Support Team: