



# Hearing Day Checklist

A Practical Guide for Self-Representing  
Parents

Prepared by Finley James Family Court Assistance  
[www.finleyjames.online](http://www.finleyjames.online)



## Be Fully Prepared for Court

A simple, practical checklist to ensure you have everything you need for your family court hearing. From essential documents to personal preparation, this guide helps self-representing parents feel organised and ready on the day.

### 1. Before Leaving Home

- ☐ Review your hearing notice for time, location, and courtroom number
- ☐ Confirm your transport route and parking (allow for delays)
- ☐ Bring photo ID and court correspondence (e.g. Notice of Hearing, case number)
- ☐ Dress in smart, respectful attire

### 2. Documents to Bring

- ☐ Your application (e.g. C100, Form A, Form E)
- ☐ Any responses or replies (e.g. C7 form or statement in response)
- ☐ Your Position Statement (1–2 pages) — printed in duplicate
- ☐ Chronology of Events — concise, dated, factual
- ☐ Relevant court orders or directions from prior hearings
- ☐ CAFCASS letters/reports or Section 7 Report, if applicable
- ☐ Any evidence or exhibits (texts, emails, letters) relevant to the child's welfare
- ☐ Evidence of dispute resolution attempts (e.g. MIAM certificate)
- ☐ Skeleton Argument (if a High Court hearing or appeal)
- ☐ Bundle (if directed by the court) — ensure it's paginated and tabbed

### 3. Other Essentials

- ☐ Notebook and pens for taking notes
- ☐ Highlighter or sticky tabs for key documents
- ☐ Water bottle (if permitted)
- ☐ Medication or glasses if needed
- ☐ Power bank / charger (if digital notes permitted)

### 4. If You're Bringing a McKenzie Friend

- ☐ Inform the court in advance
- ☐ Ensure they understand:
  - They cannot speak on your behalf unless granted permission
  - Their role is supportive, not adversarial
- ☐ Print or email the court a McKenzie Friend request letter, if not already approved





## 5. Arrival at Court

- ☐ Arrive at least 30–45 minutes early
- ☐ Pass through security screening
- ☐ Locate your courtroom or waiting area
- ☐ Check in with court usher
- ☐ Inform staff if you feel unsafe or need separate seating
- ☐ If CAFCASS or social worker involvement, check if they wish to speak before hearing

## 6. During the Hearing

- ☐ Remain calm and respectful
- ☐ Address the judge correctly:
  - High Court Judge: “My Lord” / “My Lady”
  - District/Circuit Judge: “Sir” / “Madam” or “Judge”
  - Magistrates: “Sir” / “Madam”
- ☐ Only speak when invited
- ☐ Do not interrupt — take notes instead
- ☐ Record:
  - Any directions or orders given
  - Any deadlines
  - Any future hearing dates
  - Any observations or concerns expressed by the judge

## 7. After the Hearing

- ☐ Ensure you understand the outcome — ask for clarification if needed
- ☐ Collect any paperwork handed out
- ☐ Check for deadlines to submit evidence, reports, or statements
- ☐ Update your file or legal journal immediately after the hearing
- ☐ If an order was made, ensure you receive a copy or know when it will be sent
- ☐ If appealing, note the timeframe to lodge an appeal (typically 21 days)

## Optional: Post-Hearing Reflection

- ☐ Review what went well and what didn't
- ☐ Plan next steps based on court directions
- ☐ Consider legal advice or professional support if uncertain

