

CASE SCENARIO

You are appointed to represent a 10 month-old girl, Molly. Molly's mom is 18 year-old Tara, and she is a foster child living in a maternal foster home. Tara also has a son, who is 2 years old (from a different father). Her son was removed from her custody at 3 months old due to neglect and is now voluntarily placed in the permanent custody of his paternal grandmother. Tara is allowed to visit her son and she has taken Molly to see him 4-5 times.

A petition for protective custody has just been filed requesting that the court take supervision of baby Molly, leaving the baby in the custody of her mother as long as she remains at the foster home.

Allegations include neglect due to Tara's leaving Molly at her foster home without making arrangements for someone to care for her, sometimes for days at a time. Tara had not been taking the baby to all of her doctor appointments. Of greatest concern, Tara had instigated a physical altercation with a peer while holding Molly. Molly was not physically harmed, but has become more clingy and weepy since the incident. Tara has been diagnosed with depression and is struggling with school attendance and with poor behavior when she does attend. She's been offered voluntary parenting (for teens) services and home visiting support since Molly was born but has not really availed herself. Molly's father is James, a 17 year old who goes to the same school as Tara. He has been adjudicated delinquent due to aggravated battery. He's alleged to have abandoned his daughter because he has not visited or provided financial support for Molly.