

Courtroom Do's and Don'ts

DO:

Keep all court appointments and be on time.

Rest and get enough sleep.

Prepare clothing the night before your court appearance.

Be clean and neatly groomed. Comb or brush your hair in a simple, neat style.

Dress appropriately. Wear clean, pressed clothing. Young men should wear clean, pressed pants and shirts, dress shoes and socks. Girls should wear a dress, or blouse and skirt.

Look directly at the judge or the person you are speaking to. Maintain a respectful demeanor.

Speak clearly, so that your answers can be heard. Keep your hands away from your face when you speak.

Use courteous and appropriate language, such as "Yes, Your Honor," and "No, Your Honor."

Answer all the questions put to you by the court personnel. If you don't understand the question, ask the person to repeat it, or ask your attorney for advice on how to answer.

Discuss family or other problems the night before your court appointment.

Leave cell phones and other electronics in your vehicle. Most courts will not allow them to be brought in anyway.

DON'T:

Do not miss a court appointment. If you do not show up or are late, a bench warrant can be issued for your arrest. If you have a good reason for not coming, notify your attorney immediately.

Do not stay out late the night before your court appearance.

Do not have to look for something to wear at the last minute.

Do not wear your hair in an "outrageous" style. Do not wear shorts, tank tops, flip flops, or anything showing offensive language. Avoid wearing sneakers with no socks. Do not wear gold jewelry or caps in your teeth.

Males: Do not wear hats, earrings or nose rings. Females: Do not wear low-cut blouses, mini skirts or tight fitting clothes.

Do not look down or away from the person who is speaking to you in court. Do not mumble, chew gum or shout in the courtroom.

Do not curse, or use slang words.

Do not refuse to answer any questions.

Do not leave home angry with your parents or yourself.



(Special thanks to New York City Department of Juvenile Justice.)