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Character Reference Letters

Following are a few suggestions when obtaining character reference letters on behalf of your child. Remember, the prosecutors have a negative, limited image of your child conjured up by the words written in a police report and evidence collected against her. We want to paint your child in a brighter light, highlighting her positive qualities in order to show that, on the occasion that brought her to court, she was not acting according to her true nature.

1. Have the author of the letter state his background including occupation, educational background, civic service, and other similar information.
2. The author should describe her relationship to your child, e.g., relative, counselor, teacher, clergy, family friend, etc.
3. If the author is aware of the child's charges or if you are willing to inform the author of the allegations, a statement of his understanding of those charges. Juvenile cases are generally confidential, so I do not insist that you reveal the circumstances of your child's case. I leave that decision to the family.
4. The author's statement about your child's character using examples or anecdotes that demonstrate that character.
5. The letters may be written "To Whom It May Concern".