



CHILD CUSTODY AND RELOCATION AFTER A DIVORCE

At the time a divorce is finalized, the divorce judgment will confer custody of minor children on one or both of the parents. However, circumstances may change after the divorce that require the parties to revisit the custody arrangement. For example, the custodial parent may have a career opportunity and need to relocate hundreds of miles away or even to another state.

How Courts Handle Requests for Changes in Custody

Generally speaking, if a parent wishes to relocate after a divorce, he or she will need permission from the court to do so. That party may request a hearing and ask the court for a new custody order to reflect the residency change. A divorce attorney can assist with the process. While no attorney can guarantee how the judge will rule, family court judges will review the request in light of what serves the child's best interests, not the parent's.

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM THE EMOTIONAL TRAUMA OF DIVORCE

Divorce can be a traumatic event for any child. Parents can do many things to lessen the negative impact of the break-up. A divorce attorney can offer many suggestions, but here are some common strategies.

Be Careful What You Say in Front of the Kids

Children understand far more than their parents might think. Even parents who speak in "code" around their children may not be fooling them. Save heated discussions for times when sensitive ears aren't around.

Pay Close Attention to Behavior Changes

It's natural for children of divorcing parents to have an adjustment period. However, if it seems like a child needs extra care or attention, talk to a professional.

Don't Stop Being a Parent

Above all, divorcing couples must remember that though their marriage is ending, they must learn to co-parent. Children need love, structure, and routine from their parents rather than friendship or gifts.

DEVELOP A SUCCESSFUL SHARED PARENTING PLAN



Developing parenting plans can be complicated. Whatever issues that led to the break up in the first place may also make it difficult for parents to come together to develop a plan for how to co-parent. While a divorce attorney can provide legal expertise, parents must remember that the shared parenting plans should always serve the best interests of the children. That said, a good parenting plan should strive to address some common issues such as the following:

Structured Routine

Children tend to thrive with a predictable schedule. Attempt to keep to a schedule regardless of which parent has custody.

Parenting Logs

Logs can be useful to track eating/sleeping schedules or jot down any other issues that need to be communicated.

School Information

Make a plan for how to exchange information on homework and school activities.

Pick Your Battles

Though emotions run high, decide whether the issue is worth a fight..

