



Child Custody

Resolving issues related to child custody and visitation is often the most disputed issue in divorce proceedings. When a child is involved, the custodial situation can vary greatly depending on the relationship between the parents. At times, one spouse may try to request unreasonable custody arrangements. The family law attorneys at Williams Family Law, P.C., provide a voice of reason during these difficult times by working with our clients to ensure that all decisions are focused upon the best interests of their children.

Our Value: Compassionate Child Custody Solutions in Bucks County

At Williams Family Law, our experienced family law attorneys understand the sensitive nature of matters related to child custody and will handle your legal matters with the utmost care and attention to detail. When disputes arise over child custody or visitation, we will work to help you resolve them amicably. We help clients determine their goals and work through issues that can affect child custody, including: children's schedules and needs, parents' schedules and needs, child support, tuition for college and private school, relocation issues and other related matters.

We are proficient at resolving child custody disputes through negotiation and also offer mediation services. However, when courtroom action is necessary, we are fully prepared. We pride ourselves on our reputation as leaders in the legal profession – particularly with our litigation experience – and attribute much of that success to the wealth of knowledge that we offer to our clients.

Evolution of Awarding Joint Physical Custody

Over the years, there has been a shift away from awarding primary physical custody to the mother in child custody cases. In Pennsylvania, joint physical custody (also called "equal physical custody") is becoming more prevalent as courts recognize the importance for both parents to be actively involved in the lives of their children. However, the court carefully examines all factors under Pennsylvania law. Some factors include the parents' prior involvement in the children's upbringing, the living arrangements at each parent's house and the needs of the children. Ultimately, the goal of the custody arrangement is meant to suit the best interests of the child/children.

Child Custody Arrangements

Shared physical custody schedules create a need for both parents to modify their lives, including their schedules and housing arrangements, in order to maximize quality time with their children. There is an adjustment period as the parents and children get used to the children spending time in two households. It is important that the parents support their children during this difficult time. At Williams Family Law, we can offer suggestions to help with this transition.

Modified Child Custody Arrangements

From time-to-time, a parent may request to modify current custody arrangements due to a significant change in a parent or child's circumstances, such as job loss, disability, parent relocation or permanent change in work schedule. This can cause a conflict when one parent feels that the situation is inequitable.

When deciding the allocation of a child's time, it is critical to keep the child's best interest in mind. The requesting parent must prove that a change in the existing parenting schedule is in the best interest of the child or children. If the parents cannot reach an agreement, the courts will move forward to impose an arrangement.

Our family lawyers can help you with establishing or modifying an existing custody order. Regardless of the circumstance, the family law attorneys at Williams Family Law will always work to reach decisions that are focused upon your children's best interests.

Compliance with Pennsylvania Custody Orders

Upon entering a custody order, the Pennsylvania family courts expect that both parties will comply with the terms of the Pennsylvania order – or a contempt action may be initiated. If a parent is found to be in contempt for failure to comply with the custody order, the other parent may be awarded "make-up" time for any missed visits with their child, in addition to other sanctions, including payment of the other parent's attorney fees.

The Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act ("UCCJEA") regulates which court has jurisdiction to

hear custody cases, as well as methods to enforce custody orders in other counties, states and countries. If a parent believes that modifying a Pennsylvania custody order is in the best interest of their child, the parent should request a modification.

A request to modify a Pennsylvania custody order must be rendered to the family court that entered the most recent custody order, even if the children no longer reside in that county. If the children have moved, the UCCJEA requires the family court that entered the most recent custody order to decide whether it will transfer jurisdiction to the county court where the children are currently residing.

Contact Us Regarding Your Child Custody Matters

If you have questions about child custody or are engaged in a dispute over custody or visitation, the experienced family law attorneys at Williams Family Law are here to help. To discuss your child custody matters with an experienced family law attorney, please contact our office.

News

Salzer Presents at Bucks County Bar Association Annual Bench Bar Conference
September 24, 2018

Shauna Quigley Joins Williams Family Law
August 8, 2018

Williams Family Law Attorneys Named 2018 Super Lawyers
June 4, 2018

Smith, Salzer Serve as Faculty for 2018 Family Law Institute

April 24, 2018 Smith, Salzer Present at PA Bar Family Law Section Winter Meeting

January 29, 2018 Williams Family Law Partner Co-Authors Book on Divorce

August 17, 2017 Jeffrey M. Williams Organizes AAML PA Spring Retreat

April 17, 2017 Williams Family Law Welcomes Attorney Melanie J. Wender

July 18, 2016 Divorce Attorney Jeffrey M. Williams Named Secretary American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers

July 18, 2013 Bucks County Family Law Firm Williams Family Law Ranked as U.S. News & World Report Best Lawyers 2013 'Best Law Firm'

November 2012

Blog

New PA Laws Help Custodial Grandparents

January 14, 2019

Child Support Guidelines Vary Widely State to State

September 26, 2018

How Financial Implications of Divorce Will Change in 2019

September 11, 2018

Attorneys

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Frequently Asked Questions

- How long will I have to pay child support?
- My spouse wants to mediate our divorce matter. Should I agree?

- My children want to live with me and not my spouse. Are they allowed to make that decision?
- Which parent is responsible for paying for the child's health insurance coverage?
- What is a Petition for Modification of Child Support?
- What is the difference between legal custody and physical custody?
- When can a grandparent seek partial physical or supervised custody of a grandchild?
- I have strong feelings about which school I want my child to attend, but my ex-spouse doesn't agree with me. Can I enroll my child in the school of my choice without my ex-spouse's consent?
- I helped to raise my stepchild and now my spouse and I are divorcing. Do I have any custodial rights to my non-biological child?
- I just filed for divorce. Can I move out with my kids immediately?
- My spouse will not consent to a divorce simply to avoid paying alimony. Can the court grant me a divorce without mutual consent?
- My ex-spouse and I share custody of my children. Can we both claim them as dependents on our income tax returns?