



PA Child Custody FAQ

Our child custody lawyer in Pennsylvania answers frequently asked questions that we receive from new clients. We understand why there are so many questions, too, because there's a lot of misinformation about child custody. Plus, each state law varies significantly or subtly on child custody. We are here to dispel the misinformation, clarify misunderstandings, and provide the right information so you can make smart, informed decisions about your child and your unique situation.

If you still have questions or want more specific information about your child custody matter, contact [Mark Van Horn Law Office](#) today either by using our [online form](#) or calling us directly at [610-437-2757](#).

What is the most common child custody arrangement in Pennsylvania?

Child custody arrangements vary from family to family and state to state. There are several arrangements that are more popular than others, including legal custody, physical custody, sole custody, joint legal custody, and sole legal custody. Of these, **joint legal custody** is the most common custody arrangement. This is where both parents are involved in the decisions regarding how their child is raised.

If we were never married, do I still need a custody order in Pennsylvania?

The answer to this question depends on your end goal. If you are seeking to establish any rights to the child, including custody, visitation, or child support, paternity does need to be confirmed. Most states hold that when a child is born out of wedlock, the mother has sole custody unless a court has held otherwise in an order.

How is child custody determined in Allentown?

In most states and most situations, when the parents of a child are able to agree on a child custody arrangement, the court will issue an order that confirms the terms of the agreement. When the parties are unable to reach an agreement on their own, they may have to attend mediation or arbitration to see if that helps. When all else fails, the court will hear the matter and issue an order the parties must abide by. The court will consider testimony, the report of a court-appointed guardian that is looking out for the best interest of the child, and other evidence when deciding child custody. The best interest of the child is always the criteria the court uses in these decisions.

What's the difference between legal and physical custody?

When a parent has physical custody, they actually have the physical child placed with them. This is the parent that lives with the child and takes care of their everyday needs.



One parent may have primary physical custody while the other has secondary physical custody.

A parent who has legal custody is the one allowed to make important decisions about the child, including decisions regarding the child's medical care, education, and religious upbringing. Joint legal custody may be awarded to both parents so that they both have input in making these important decisions for their child.

Does custody primarily go to one parent in Pennsylvania?

This is an incorrect assumption many people make. The answer is “no.” The truth is that courts often award other types of custody arrangements, such as joint physical custody, joint legal custody, or a combination of both. Some states do require a primary custodian, though, but that does not mean one parent gets full custody.

The courts always consider the evidence and the best interest of the child to be of paramount concern.

Do I need a child custody lawyer in Allentown?

It's really up to you if you want a child custody lawyer. As for needing one, that depends on what is meant by that. Child custody laws are nuanced yet stringent. Mistakes are not affordable because the custody of your child is at stake.

In many cases, parents mutually agree on child custody arrangements, and so that makes the matter easier. In some of those cases, though, a parent may have felt compelled to agree, and so having a family law attorney advise you on what's fair (or not) is beneficial. In contentious situations, a child custody lawyer is highly recommended. It takes skills, knowledge, and a lot of perseverance to make sure the child custody arrangement approved or ordered by the court is fair and just and reflects what you had anticipated.

Contact our [Child Custody Lawyer](#) in Pennsylvania Today

If you need help with a child custody case, contact [Mark Van Horn Law Office](#). Our child custody attorneys in Pennsylvania will advise you of your rights and guide you through the process.

Click the button below to **schedule your intake session** with our Intake Specialist.

[📞 Schedule Now: 610.437.2757](#)