

Cobb County Estate Planning Lawyer Reveals 4 Easy Steps to Name Guardians for Your Kids

By: Steve Worrall, Marietta estate planning lawyer and family law attorney

As a Marietta and metro Atlanta estate planning lawyer, I know one of the most important decisions a parent can make is determining who will care for their kids if something tragic happened to them. I also know it's very easy for parents to get stuck during this critical decision making process. Do you choose this person for financial reasons? Religion? A certain parenting philosophy? Do you care if the couple you chose stays married or eventually gets a divorce? Then what?

While it's great to put a lot of thought into who you would want to raise your kids, indecision and ultimately *inaction* is a very dangerous place to be, especially with young children at home. It's important to remember that SOMEONE will determine what happens to your kids....so it might as well be you! The alternative is a judge who knows nothing about you, your family or what truly is in the best interest of your children.

So to avoid having a judge make life-changing decisions on your child's behalf, I would like to share four easy steps that will help you finally take action and choose the right guardians for your kids:

1. Sit down and brainstorm all the people who could possibly raise your kids if you were killed or incapacitated in an accident. Don't limit your choices to family either. Think outside the box and write down everyone who even remotely fits the bill.
2. Determine who you would NEVER want to raise your kids in your absence. You'll need to tell the court who you DON'T want raising your kids so they can protect your family should that named individual (s) contest your wishes and seek custody of your kids following your death or incapacity. (This can be kept private and only revealed if the need arises)
3. Weigh your values. Make another column and write down what is important to you and/or your spouse. Do you value education? Religious or spiritual training? The ability to live in a certain community? Being raised in a two-parent family? Whatever your values may be, write them down, prioritize them and eventually rank the top three.
4. Match your top choices to your top values. This will give you a clear picture of who you can trust to raise your children with the values you hold near and dear to your heart.

And of course, the last (and arguably the most important step) is to legally document your choice of guardians so there's no question as to who you want to raise your kids if something happens to you!

To ensure you legally get the documentation you need for naming guardians for your kids—or if you'd further like to create a comprehensive estate plan that will ensure your children, assets and wishes are protected something the unexpected happen to you, please give me, your neighborhood Marietta estate planning lawyer a call at 770-425-6060 to schedule a no-charge Peace of Mind Planning Session (normally \$750 value) with the mention of this article. These appointments are limited to 8 per month so call today!