How To Choose Guardians for Your Minor Children

A Worksheet for Parents

The purpose of this worksheet is to help you select the people you would want to have the legal authority to care for your minor children in the event that neither parent was able, temporarily or permanently, either due to incapacity or death. Your attorney can help you with the legal paperwork to formalize this, and this will help you be prepared when you meet with the attorney.

1. First make the long list of people you are considering. This can be parents, friends, siblings or other relations. If you can't think of anyone, make a list of people you do *not* want serving as guardian. This may help narrow the choices.

2. Next, list the qualities you want your child's guardian to have: age, values, location, religion, health status (including smoking, alcohol use), ability to care for a child with medical or special needs, disciplinary approaches, family stability, your child's relationship with that person and other factors that are important to you.

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3. Compare your list in number 2 to the people you named in number 1. Who from the first list has the qualities on the second list?

4. You should now have a shorter list. Next, consider who you would like to serve as primary guardian and who you would like to serve as alternate guardian. You should have at least one alternate guardian. If you have selected a couple to serve as guardians, decide whether you would want one person from the couple serving if the other were unable.

5. If your guardians live more than a couple of hours away, name someone who could temporarily care of your child/children until the permanent guardian arrived.

6. Meet with your attorney to formalize your selections and rest a little easier!

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