

Winning Child Custody with Your Child Custody Agreement

By Hera Nelson

How do you win child custody?

Divorced parents could answer that question many different ways. Some would say that if you become the custodial parent then you have won. Others would say that if you get your way in court then you have won.

Winning child custody means something different to every parent because every parent has different expectations and ideas about their custody agreement. Ultimately, the deciding factor if you've won in your child custody case is if you are happy with the child custody agreement that is accepted by the court. So, how can you create a custody agreement that makes you happy and that the court will accept? Here are some suggestions.

The first thing you need to do is come up with what you want out of your child custody agreement. This will take some time, so don't hurry yourself--take the time to do a thorough job. You need to create a workable schedule between you and the child's other parent. This schedule will depend a lot on what type of custody you and your former spouse have decided on. If you have joint custody then you will have a schedule with a lot of switching between parents and almost equal time between the two. If you have the children spend the majority of the time with one parent and the weekends, or alternating weekends with the other parent then you will have one parent with a lot more time than the other.

Now, if you and your ex can't decide who the custodial parent is, or what type of custody situation you want, then you should create a solid schedule with the agreement you want the court to accept. Create a calendar with all of the time the child spends with each parent written in. Be fair to the other parent and come up with a realistic situation--the court will be more likely to accept this type of agreement rather than one that just gives you all of the time.

After you have your basic schedule created, you need to divide up the holidays. Divide the holidays evenly and fairly--meaning, the big holidays are split between parents. Also schedule in any times that vacation may be taken, or any time there are special events where the schedule changes. Along with scheduling the time, you need to figure out the time-share or overnight percentage. This number is helpful for the parents to know and it is also used to calculate child support payments. It is very impressive to the courts if you know this number.

Once the schedule is all created, you want to think about any stipulations or provisions to add to the agreement. Think about the standards you want the other parent to uphold with your children. Do you want to ban drinking in front of the kids? Do you want an itinerary if your former spouse takes them on vacation? Write up anything you want added to the agreement.

All of this can be overwhelming and tiring. You may want to look into purchasing some software to help you create your child custody agreement. There are many of them available, so choose one that will do everything you want. There are some that calculate time-share and overnight percentage and that allow you to put in provisions. The benefit to using software is that you can print your agreement in nice, neat forms that you can take to court.

When your agreement is all set up, you can take it to mediation, court, or present it to your ex. Because you've done so much preparation, it is likely that your views will be heard about the agreement. When discussing it with your former spouse, they may have changes to make. Talk about the changes and incorporate them as you see fit. Then, after you've done all of this work, you'll win your child custody situation because you will be happy with the agreement and able to spend time with your children.