

# How to Choose a Guardian for Your Children

A Parent's Guide to the Most Important Decision in Your Estate Plan

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## Why Naming a Guardian Matters

If something happens to you and your co-parent, who will raise your children? Without a legal guardian nomination, a court will decide — and the court's choice may not align with your wishes. Naming a guardian is the single most important step every parent with minor children must take.

## Key Factors to Consider

**Values and Parenting Style:** Does this person share your values about education, discipline, faith, and lifestyle?

**Emotional Bond:** Do your children already have a relationship with this person?

**Age and Health:** Is the potential guardian young and healthy enough to raise children long-term?

**Financial Stability:** Can they support additional children? (Your estate plan can help with this through trust provisions.)

**Location:** Would your children need to move? Change schools? Leave their community?

**Willingness:** Have you actually asked this person if they are willing and able?

**Existing Family:** Does the guardian already have children? Would adding yours be manageable?

## Common Mistakes Parents Make

- Choosing someone out of obligation (a grandparent, sibling) rather than suitability
- Not naming a backup guardian in case your first choice cannot serve
- Failing to put the nomination in a legally binding document
- Not pairing guardianship with a children's trust to manage finances separately
- Waiting for the "perfect" choice instead of naming someone now and updating later

## Guardian vs. Trustee: An Important Distinction

The person who raises your children (guardian) does not have to be the same person who manages their inheritance (trustee). In fact, separating these roles provides checks and balances. Your estate plan should address both.

Watch our free webinar on Estate Planning for Families with Minor Children at  
[www.woodlegallgroup.com/resources](http://www.woodlegallgroup.com/resources)