

CUSTODY AND ADOPTION CONSIDERING SUBSTANCE ABUSE



As an experienced litigator, Mindy Snyder has represented clients throughout Bucks, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties, as well as throughout New Jersey in Mercer, Burlington, Camden, Ocean and Atlantic Counties. As part of her practice, Mindy has handled complex trial issues and negotiations in divorce matters, child and spousal support, alimony, equitable distribution, pension issues and adoption matters. She also represents clients in New Jersey for matrimonial issues, criminal matters, motor vehicle violations and municipal court law.

Please contact the office to schedule the free initial consultation. 4 Terry Drive, Suite 4, Newtown, Pa 18940. Call (215)860-8200, or visit online www.Liebmannfamilylaw.com.

With today's ever-changing family dynamics has come major changes in Family Law, especially when it involves the complicated legal and emotional factors surrounding child custody and adoption cases. Keeping up with these issues means that Mindy J. Snyder of Liebmann Family Law must use her more than 30 years of experience to help and guide families through the legal process of child custody and adoption.

As an experienced professional, Mindy is eager to discuss with potential clients their obligations, rights, and entitlements as they go through a domestic matter and answer questions that may be keeping them up at night.

When most of us think of adoption, it evokes images of a couple adopting a newborn, toddler, or older child. But this reality is often replaced by step-parents, grandparents, or other family members requesting to adopt a child as the result of the biological parents succumbing to substance abuse issues or other hardships.

Society has undergone many changes, especially related to non-marriage relationships and marriages after having children. That's why Mindy's practice has expanded to include non-traditional adoptions, which involve loving and kind people, such as grandparents, step-parents, aunts, uncles, and other family members, stepping in when necessary to care for the children in their lives who need them.

The overriding goal of every adoption is to provide and maintain a safe and stable environment for a child, and the Court's goal for adoption and custody issues is to determine the best interest of the child. The Court also has

to determine which parent, or acting parent/guardian, is likely to attend to the daily physical, emotional, developmental, educational, and special needs of the child.

In child custody cases, this previously involved divorcing parents. Recently, however, the adoption caseloads have stemmed from the absence of one or more biological parents and the willingness of another family member to step in and assume the daily responsibilities for the child.

In Pennsylvania, the Grounds for Involuntary Termination of a parent's rights are established by statute. In most situations where the biological parent has not had contact with the child for an extended period (6 months or more before the petition filing), there are usually 2 ways that are legally appropriate to terminate the parent's rights.

The first is if the parent has failed to perform his or her parental duties for 6 months before the petition is filed. The other is if the repeated and continued incapacity, abuse, neglect, or refusal of the parent has caused the child to be without essential parental care and the conditions cannot, or will not, be remedied by that parent.

If a step-parent wants to become the legal parent of a child—with all the same rights, entitlements, and obligations as a biological parent—he or she must legally adopt the child. This is an obligation that is not taken lightly, and, if the adoption proceeds and the step-parent divorces, he or she will still be the parent of the child.

Adoptions can be voluntary or involuntary and involve the termination of the rights of a biological parent. The purpose of the Child Custody statute is to give a child stability. So, if the child has a bond with the biological mother or father, the parties can enter into a contract

for that parent to have contact with the child, such as letters, phone calls, or monthly visits.

What makes adoptions so complex is that they are much more emotional than other aspects of the law. The actual adoption hearing is taking this raw emotion, bringing it to Court, and allowing everyone to open their hearts. When the final hearing takes place, the child along with the adopting parents appear, and the parties have an opportunity to celebrate the adoption.

This is just an outline of the issues that you may confront. For more information on each of these issues, please schedule a consultation with an experienced

family law attorney. Liebmann Family Law, in Newtown, offers a free initial consultation. Making the decision to proceed and choosing an attorney is not easy. You must find someone who knows the law and someone with whom you feel comfortable will protect your interest.

Liebmann Family Law in Newtown was founded in 2008, and is one of a handful of firms in Bucks County that focuses exclusively on family issues: contested and uncontested divorce, child custody and visitation, child support, spousal support and alimony, pre-nuptial and post-nuptial agreements, division

of property, wills and estates, grandparents' rights, and adoption.

The Liebmann Family Law Team includes three full-time attorneys: Jeffrey A. Liebmann, David Sowerbutts, and Mindy Snyder, as well as four legal assistants. Each of the attorneys has more than 30 years of Family Law experience, and are known for their special skills, as well as handling cases with a great deal of care and compassion. The firm has created an atmosphere in which any one of the attorneys can step in and handle any emergency, and each of them has the ability to answer any questions that arise throughout a case.

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