

What to Ask Your Lawyer

Questions to bring to every attorney meeting

STILL DAD

BEFORE YOU HIRE

Ask these before signing anything or paying a retainer.

- How many family law cases do you handle per year?
- What percentage involve contested custody?
- Have you handled cases in this specific county/court?
- Who will actually work on my case: you or an associate?
- What is your hourly rate, and what does it cover?
- How large is the retainer and what happens when it runs out?
- How do you bill: in what increments (6 min, 15 min)?
- Do you charge for emails and short phone calls?
- What's the best way to reach you and what's your response time?
- What's your honest read on cases like mine?
- What would you need from me to strengthen my position?
- What are the most common mistakes fathers make in custody cases?

AT EVERY MEETING

Keep this list in your folder and run through it before you leave.

Your Case

- What is the status of my case right now?
- What is the next filing or deadline and when is it?
- What do I need to do before the next court date?
- Is there anything the other side has filed that I haven't seen?
- Has anything changed that affects my position?

Custody Specifics

- What custody arrangement are we asking for and why?
- What is the judge in this case known to favor?
- What would a guardian ad litem look at in my case?
- What documentation should I be keeping right now?
- Are there any violations of the temporary order I should log?

Costs and Timeline

- How much have I spent so far and what do I have left on retainer?
- What's your estimate to get to a final order?
- Is there a cheaper path that doesn't hurt my case?
- Could mediation resolve any of these issues?
- What does "winning" actually look like in my specific situation?

MEETING LOG

MEETING 1

Date / Attorney / Cost this session

Key takeaways / Next steps

MEETING 2

Date / Attorney / Cost this session

Key takeaways / Next steps

MEETING 3

Date / Attorney / Cost this session

Key takeaways / Next steps

Write down what your lawyer says: do not rely on memory. At the end of every meeting, confirm the next action item in writing.