

# 4 Considerations When Selecting Guardians for Children

Guardianship is one of the most difficult estate planning decisions. It's one that many parents procrastinate making, often because there's no clear choice. However, failing to designate a guardian can leave the decision up to a court. It's far better to state your preference than to rely on a judge to do so. Additionally, you can update your will at any time if you change your mind. Here are some considerations when selecting guardians for children.

## 1 – Existing Relationship

It's always best to start out with a list of people who have existing relationships with you and your children. This is why family members and close friends typically top the list. During times of emotional distress, children find comfort in familiar faces and settings. Being around people they know and love will be extremely important after losing their parents.

## 2 – Quality of Life

Quality of life is another consideration when selecting guardians for children. Think about the person's lifestyle and circumstances. How might your children fit in to his/her daily routine? What sacrifices might he/she be willing to make for the sake of your children? If there are other members of that household, do your children get along with them? What activities do they participate in (i.e. sports, exercise, vacations)? A guardian's lifestyle needs not match your current lifestyle, but it should be one that you feel comfortable with.

## 3 – Personal Values

Today's political and social climate highlights the importance of personal beliefs and values. Most people want their children to be brought up a certain way. Finding a guardian with similar perspectives can provide comfort and peace of mind. There are

actually many ways to look at personal values. It can include parenting style, political beliefs, religious practices, social affiliations, personal habits (such as smoking and drinking), or thoughts on social/economic topics. Again, a guardian's values need not exactly match your own. You may simply want to avoid glaring differences.

## **4 – Physical Location**

The physical location of potential guardians is worth evaluating as well. If someone is out-of-state or in another country, how will moving impact your children. For some, it could be traumatic to lose parents and be taken away from their friends and home. For others, a new home can eliminate constant reminders of what was lost. Think about your children and what might be best for them.

## **Other Considerations When Selecting Guardians for Children**

These are just a few key considerations when selecting guardians for children. There are countless other factors and [qualities of a good guardian](#), depending on your personal circumstances. If you have children with special needs, you might lean towards someone with medical knowledge or time to tend to those needs. Likewise, the age and health of potential guardians may be important too. Also consider whether someone actually wants to be a guardian. Ultimately, remember that there may be no perfect person to take on such a huge responsibility. Your goal should be to select the best available option and to know that your children will be cared for by someone that you have chosen.