



Missouri Divorce Lawyers at Cardinal Law Highlight Key Child Custody Considerations

STEELVILLE, MO, UNITED STATES, August 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For parents going through a divorce, the idea of "winning" a divorce or custody case can easily become focused on proving what the other parent did wrong. Cardinal Law is highlighting a different approach: understanding what Missouri courts actually consider when making decisions involving children and parenting time.

In a Missouri custody case, the court's primary concern is not determining which parent won the disagreements that led to the divorce. Instead, custody decisions are based on the best interests of the child.

The [Missouri divorce lawyers](#) at Cardinal Law note that one important development in the state's custody law involves the presumption regarding equal parenting time.

Under Section 452.375 of the Missouri Revised Statutes, there is a rebuttable presumption that equal or approximately equal parenting time with each parent is in the best interests of the child. This provision was enacted through Senate Bill 35 and became effective in August 2023.

A rebuttable presumption does not mean that every Missouri divorce involving children automatically results in a 50/50 parenting schedule. The presumption may be rebutted based on evidence and the circumstances of the individual case.

What Missouri Courts Consider in a Custody Case

Missouri law identifies several factors courts consider when determining the best interests of a child.

These considerations include the parents' wishes and proposed parenting plans, the child's relationships with parents and other significant individuals, the child's adjustment to home, school and community, and other circumstances affecting the child's welfare.

Courts also consider which parent is more likely to allow the child frequent, continuing and meaningful contact with the other parent.

Cardinal Law encourages parents to understand that behavior surrounding a custody dispute

can matter. Keeping children out of conflicts between parents and avoiding unnecessary disputes can help parents remain focused on the issues that affect their children.

A Detailed Parenting Plan Can Matter

Parenting plans are an important component of Missouri custody proceedings.

A detailed parenting plan can establish parenting schedules, exchange locations and times, holidays, school breaks, vacations and other recurring situations.

Specific provisions can help reduce uncertainty when parents disagree later. Instead of relying on broad language regarding holiday visitation or exchanges, a parenting plan can clearly establish when, where and how parenting time will occur.

Understanding the Missouri Divorce Process

Missouri dissolution proceedings also have specific procedural requirements.

Generally, at least one spouse must have lived in Missouri for 90 days before filing for dissolution. Missouri also has a 30-day waiting period after the petition is filed before a final judgment of dissolution may be entered.

When minor children are involved, parenting plans and child support calculations can become important parts of the proceeding. Missouri courts use Form 14 to calculate the presumed amount of child support based on applicable financial and parenting information.

Parents dealing with custody, parenting time, child support or divorce proceedings may choose to seek guidance from a [Missouri family law](#) firm, particularly when a hearing is approaching, safety concerns exist or assistance is needed preparing a parenting plan.

What Does It Mean to "Win" a Divorce Case?

For parents, successfully navigating a Missouri divorce or custody case may involve looking beyond short-term disagreements and focusing on the parenting arrangement that serves the child's best interests.

Every family is different, and the outcome of a custody case depends on the individual facts and circumstances involved.

About Cardinal Law

Cardinal Law provides legal services to clients throughout Missouri, including family law,

personal injury, criminal defense, estate planning, bankruptcy, employment and traffic matters. The firm serves clients throughout Crawford, Franklin, Phelps, Dent and Pulaski Counties, including Cuba, Steelville, Bourbon, Sullivan, Union, Rolla, St. James, Salem, Waynesville and St. Robert.

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