



# WHAT IS HAPPILY EVER AFTER DIVORCE™?



AT OUR LAW FIRM, WE DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE STIGMA OF DIVORCE. WE SINCERELY DO BELIEVE IN HELPING FAMILIES FIND SOLUTIONS THAT WILL LEGALLY END THEIR MARRIAGE WITHOUT HARMING THEIR FUTURE OR THE FUTURE OF THEIR CHILDREN.

BY PROTECTING AND SECURING A BETTER FUTURE FOR OUR CLIENTS, WE STRIVE TO HELP OUR CLIENTS TURN THEIR DIVORCE INTO A POSITIVE CHANGE IN THEIR LIVES AND LEAD THEM TO FIND THEIR HAPPILY EVER AFTER DIVORCE™.



WE UNDERSTAND DIVORCE IS DIFFICULT FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED. AND OFTEN, CHILDREN ARE AFFECTED THE MOST. OUR ATLANTA DIVORCE ATTORNEYS WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH YOU TO FIND LEGAL SOLUTIONS THAT WILL MINIMIZE THE PAIN AND TRAUMA THAT A CHILD MAY SUFFER DURING AND AFTER DIVORCE.

WE CAN HELP DIVORCING PARENTS DEVELOP CREATIVE AND WORKABLE SOLUTIONS FOR CO-PARENTING AND VISITATION ISSUES. WE WORK WITH DIVORCING SPOUSES TO FIND SOLUTIONS THAT WILL HELP THE FAMILY MINIMIZE WASTED TIME, MONEY AND RESOURCES INSTEAD OF A DRAWN-OUT COURT BATTLE.



# TOP 10 THINGS TO BE MINDFUL OF DURING DIVORCE

**1** KEEP YOUR ATTORNEY APPRISED OF ANY IMPORTANT EVENTS AS THEY HAPPEN AND ALWAYS BE TRUTHFUL ABOUT ALL INFORMATION. YOU DO NOT WANT YOUR ATTORNEY TO BE TAKEN BY SURPRISE.

**3** ALWAYS ASK YOUR ATTORNEY ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE. IT'S IMPORTANT TO FEEL COMFORTABLE THROUGH THIS TOUGH PROCESS.

**5** COMMUNICATE WITH THE OPPOSING PARTY VIA EMAIL, TEXT MESSAGE, OR OTHER TRACEABLE MEANS.

**7** ALWAYS BE MINDFUL OF WHAT YOU SAY AND DO AS IT COULD BE USED IN COURT. ALWAYS BE THE "GOOD GUY."

**9** FOLLOW YOUR ATTORNEY'S ADVICE.

**2** CHANGE YOUR PASSWORDS TO ANY ACCOUNTS TO WHICH YOUR SPOUSE HAS ACCESS. THIS INCLUDES EMAIL, SOCIAL MEDIA, ONLINE ACCOUNTS, BANK ACCOUNTS OR CREDIT CARD ACCOUNTS THAT ARE IN YOUR NAME ONLY.

**4** BE CAREFUL OF ANY SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS, AS THEY CAN BE SEEN BY ANYONE AND CAN BE USED IN COURT.

**6** IF CHILDREN ARE INVOLVED, DO NOT SAY ANYTHING NEGATIVE ABOUT YOUR SPOUSE IN FRONT OF THEM, NO MATTER WHAT. IT ONLY HURTS THE CHILD.

**8** DO NOT DESTROY ANY STATEMENTS, EMAILS OR DOCUMENTS WHILE THE CASE IS ONGOING.

**10** KEEP RECORDS OF VISITATION AND CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS.



# TYPICAL DIVORCE PROCESS

## COMPLAINT/PETITION FOR DIVORCE FILED

THIS IS THE LEGAL DOCUMENT INITIATING THE DIVORCE FILED WITH THE CLERK OF THE COURT IN THE APPROPRIATE COUNTY.

## DISCOVERY PHASE

DISCOVERY OCCURS AS LONG AS NECESSARY UP UNTIL THE FINAL TRIAL. EACH PARTY GATHERS CRITICAL INFORMATION AND EVIDENCE. THERE ARE FOUR TYPES OF DISCOVERY: INTERROGATORIES, REQUEST FOR PRODUCTION, REQUESTS FOR ADMISSION, AND DEPOSITIONS.

## MEDIATION

A NEUTRAL LAW PROFESSIONAL IS HIRED TO FACILITATE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE SPOUSES IN AN EFFORT TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WITHOUT THE NEED FOR A LONG, DRAWN OUT TRIAL.

## LATE CASE EVALUATION OR JUDICIAL HOSTED SETTLEMENT

THIS IS USUALLY SCHEDULED ABOUT 120 DAYS INTO THE PROCEEDINGS IF THE JUDGE BELIEVES A LATE CASE EVALUATION MAY RESULT IN A SETTLEMENT THUS ELIMINATING THE NEED FOR A TRIAL.

## COMPLAINT SERVED TO SPOUSE

THE SUMMONS AND THE COMPLAINT ARE SERVED TO THE DEFENDANT THUS INITIATING THE DIVORCE PROCEEDINGS.

## SPOUSES RESPONSE TO COMPLAINT DUE

THE PERSON SERVED HAS 30 DAYS TO RESPOND TO THE SUMMONS. HE/SHE MUST RESPOND TO THE SPOUSES CLAIMS AND ASSERT HIS/HER OWN DEFENSIVES. THIS CAN BE FILED ON THEIR OWN OR BY AN ATTORNEY.

## TEMPORARY HEARING

THE PURPOSE OF THIS HEARING PROVIDES A TEMPORARY PLAN IN WHICH TO WORK DURING THE DIVORCE PROCEEDING OR OTHER FAMILY LAW MATTER. THIS IS ESPECIALLY HELPFUL WHEN NEITHER PARTY CAN AGREE ON CERTAIN ARRANGEMENTS.

## GOING TO TRIAL

THIS IS USUALLY 6 MONTHS TO A YEAR AFTER THE COMPLAINT FOR DIVORCE IS FILED. AT THIS POINT, NEITHER PARTY HAS BEEN ABLE TO AGREE ON ALL AREAS OF THE DIVORCE DESPITE GOING THROUGH MEDIATION, SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES AND THE SORT. THE TRIAL IS THE FINAL ALTERNATIVE.

**SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT  
AND DIVORCE FINALIZED**



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## DO I NEED AN ATTORNEY?

IT IS GENERALLY A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE AN ATTORNEY TO ENSURE THAT YOU ARE PROTECTED DURING THE DIVORCE. IF CHILDREN ARE INVOLVED, AN ATTORNEY IS REALLY THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE SURE THAT ALL PARTIES INVOLVED ARE PROTECTED AND PROVIDED FOR THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A CHILD AND/OR HAVE FEW ASSETS, YOU MAY STILL WANT TO HIRE AN ATTORNEY TO PROTECT YOUR INTERESTS AND TO ENSURE THAT NO IRREVERSIBLE PROBLEMS ARE CREATED.

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR MY DIVORCE TO BE FINALIZED?

THE LENGTH OF TIME IS HIGHLY DETERMINED BY THE PARTIES INVOLVED. THEY MUST COME TO AN AGREEMENT REGARDING PROPERTY DIVISION, ALIMONY, CHILD SUPPORT, CUSTODY, AND VISITATION. FOR AN UNCONTESTED DIVORCE, IT CAN TAKE BETWEEN TWO AND THREE MONTHS FROM THE DATE BOTH PARTIES SUBMIT THEIR PAPERWORK. HOWEVER, THE LENGTH OF TIME FOR CONTESTED DIVORCES VARIES GREATLY AND DEPENDS ON THE COMPLEXITY OF THE ISSUES AND ON THE WILLINGNESS OF BOTH PARTIES TO REACH SOME SORT OF AGREEMENT.

## WILL I HAVE TO GO TO COURT?

IN MOST CASES, YOU WILL GO TO COURT FOR AT LEAST ONE HEARING. SOME COUNTIES REQUIRE STATUS CONFERENCES TO KEEP THE JUDGE UPDATED ON THE PROGRESS OF YOUR CASE.



## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONTESTED AND UNCONTESTED DIVORCE?

AN UNCONTESTED DIVORCE IS ONE IN WHICH THERE IS NO OPPOSITION TO THE TERMS OF THE SETTLEMENT OR TO THE PETITION SET FORTH AND BOTH PARTIES ARE IN FULL AGREEMENT. THIS ALLOWS BOTH PARTIES TO MOVE ON WITH THEIR LIVES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

A CONTESTED DIVORCE USUALLY TAKES MUCH LONGER DUE TO DISAGREEMENTS WHICH RESULT IN LITIGATION AND TRIAL PROCEEDINGS. ISSUES THAT CAN CAUSE CONTESTED DIVORCE BEYOND SPOUSAL DISAGREEMENT ARE HIGH FINANCIAL STAKES, CHILD CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS AND SUPPORT, OR OTHER COMPLEX ISSUES. THIS CAN BE VERY LENGTHY AND IS HARD ON BOTH PARTIES AS WELL AS THE CHILDREN.

## WHAT IS MEDIATION?

YOU, YOUR SPOUSE, AND YOUR LAWYERS HIRE A NEUTRAL THIRD PARTY LAW PROFESSIONAL TO ACT AS A FACILITATOR IN AN EFFORT TO DISCUSS AND RESOLVE ISSUES IN YOUR DIVORCE WITHOUT GOING TO COURT.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## **AM I ENTITLED TO ALIMONY?**

THIS IS DETERMINED BY THE SPECIFIC NATURE OF YOUR MARRIAGE. COURTS TEND TO STEER CLEAR OF ALIMONY THAT ALLOWS ONE PARTY TO NEVER WORK AGAIN, EXCEPT IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES. ALIMONY IS BASED ON THE PAYEE'S NEED, THE PAYER'S ABILITY TO PAY, AND THE INCOME OF BOTH PARTIES, THEIR LIFESTYLES, LENGTH OF THE MARRIAGE, AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE MARRIAGE.

## **MY SPOUSE OWNS A BUSINESS. HOW DO I DETERMINE HIS OR HER INCOME?**

THERE ARE A LOT OF FACTORS THAT COME INTO PLAY, BUT THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO DETERMINE YOUR SPOUSE'S INCOME. FACTORS SUCH AS THE TYPE OF BUSINESS, HOW MUCH CASH IS HANDLED, THE LEGAL FORM OF THE BUSINESS, AND THE AMOUNT OF MONEY USED FOR PERSONAL EXPENSES ARE ALL CONSIDERED. WE'LL OFTEN USE FORENSIC ACCOUNTANTS TO DETERMINE INCOME WHEN MAKING DECISIONS REGARDING DIVISION OF ASSETS, ALIMONY, AND CHILD SUPPORT.

## **HOW IS CHILD CUSTODY DETERMINED?**

THERE ARE A LOT OF FACTORS CONSIDERED WHEN DETERMINING WHO GETS CUSTODY OF THE CHILD(REN) BUT IT ALL COMES DOWN TO WHAT IS THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD. A FEW OF THE MANY FACTORS CONSIDERED ARE THE LOVE AND BOND BETWEEN THE CHILD AND PARENT, BETWEEN THE CHILD AND OTHER SIBLINGS THEY LIVE WITH, THE ABILITY OF THE PARENT TO PROVIDE FOR THE CHILD'S NEEDS., AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE PARENT ABOUT THE CHILD'S NEEDS.



## **HOW IS CHILD SUPPORT DETERMINED?**

THIS IS DETERMINED BY THE CHILD SUPPORT WORKSHEET THAT IS PROVIDED BY YOUR ATTORNEY AT THE BEGINNING OF YOUR CASE. IT CONSIDERS BOTH PARENTS INCOME, HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS, DAY CARE EXPENSES, SCHOOL EXPENSES, EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND ANY OTHER COSTS SPENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CHILD(REN). THEN A DECISION IS MADE BASED ON THE PAYEE'S INCOME.

## **CAN MY EX-SPOUSE PREVENT ME FROM SEEING THE CHILDREN?**

NO, NOT UNLESS THE COURTS HAVE DECLARED AS SUCH. COURTS BEGIN WITH THE ASSUMPTION THAT FREQUENT CONTACT WITH BOTH PARENTS IS GOOD FOR THE CHILD. IN CIRCUMSTANCES OF NEGLECT OR ABUSE, COURTS MAY ALLOW LIMITED CONTACT BEFORE ORDERING ALL CONTACT BE CUT OFF.



# WHAT TO CONSIDER FOR UNCONTESTED MATTERS?



THE FOLLOWING ARE THINGS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER WHEN YOUR ATTORNEY DRAFTS YOUR SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.

WHAT IS A SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT? THIS IS A DOCUMENT THAT BOTH PARTIES SIGN IN ORDER TO RESOLVE ISSUES RELATING TO THEIR DIVORCE OR OTHER FAMILY LAW MATTERS SUCH AS CHILD CUSTODY, VISITATION, SUPPORT, ALIMONY OR SEPARATION OF PROPERTY. JUDGES STILL HAVE TO SIGN OFF ON YOUR AGREEMENT.

## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

WHO WILL PAY FOR THE FOLLOWING?

- CHILD CARE EXPENSES
- CHILD TAX CREDITS
- CHILD(RENS) CAR & EXPENSES
- OUT-OF-POCKET MEDICAL EXPENSES - HOW WILL YOU SPLIT THEM?
- PRIVATE AND COLLEGE EXPENSES
- WHO WILL BE PRIMARY CUSTODIAN?
- CHILD(RENS) HEALTH INSURANCE

## WHAT TO HAVE PREPARED FOR POSSIBLE CUSTODY ISSUES

- A SCHEDULE FOR EACH DAY OF THE YEAR
- A SCHEDULE FOR EACH HOLIDAY
- A SCHEDULE FOR ANY HOLIDAYS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU



# YOUR CONCIERGE DIVORCE ADVOCATE

## WHAT IS A CONCIERGE DIVORCE ADVOCATE (CDA)?

A PROFESSIONAL DEDICATED SOLELY TO HELPING OUR CLIENTS MAKE THE TRANSITION INTO THEIR NEW LIVES AND TO THEIR OWN “HAPPILY EVER AFTER DIVORCE.”

## WHAT DO THEY DO THAT THE LEGAL TEAM DOESN'T?

DIVORCE BRINGS MANY CHANGES. OUR CDA IS HERE TO HELP WITH NON-LEGAL NEEDS THAT MAY ARISE DURING AND AFTER YOUR DIVORCE.

WE CAN HELP YOU WITH VENDORS THAT WE HAVE VETTED SO YOU HAVE RESOURCES YOU CAN TRUST:

SOME CONCERNS MAY BE:

- FINDING A HANDY MAN
- FINDING CHILDCARE
- FINDING A REALTOR
- FINDING A NEW DOCTOR



THE CDA IS HERE TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE ALL THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, LOGISTICAL AND EMOTIONAL ELEMENTS OF YOUR DIVORCE SO YOU CAN FOCUS ON THE IMPORTANT THINGS DURING THIS TIME OF CHANGE.

## SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT!

IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU WANT SOME HELP FIGURING OUT THE NEXT STEPS, SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE CDA. EMAIL [OFFICE@ATLDIVORCEGROUP.COM](mailto:OFFICE@ATLDIVORCEGROUP.COM) OR CALL 678-203-9893.





# FAMILIES IN TRANSITION SEMINAR

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BOTH PARENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND THIS SEMINAR IN THEIR COUNTY OF RESIDENCE WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THE ORIGINAL COURT ORDER BEING SERVED. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO ATTEND TOGETHER.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE SEMINAR

THIS IS A COURT ORDERED EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR FOR ALL PARTIES INVOLVED IN A DIVORCE PROCESS, SEPARATE MAINTENANCE, PATERNITY, CHANGE OF CUSTODY, VISITATION, LEGITIMATION, AND OTHER DOMESTIC RELATIONS INVOLVING CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18. YOU WILL BE GIVEN A CERTIFICATE UPON COMPLETION THAT YOU WILL NEED TO PRESENT TO THE COURT.

IT IS A FOUR-HOUR SESSION CONDUCTED BY TRAINED COUNSELORS AND THERAPISTS. YOU MUST ATTEND THE ENTIRE SEMINAR TO OBTAIN CREDIT.

## TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

- DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF CHILDHOOD
- NEEDS OF CHILDREN AT DIFFERENT AGES
- AGE APPROPRIATE EXPECTATIONS
- STRESS INDICATORS IN CHILDREN
- DIVORCE AS A GROWTH STAGE
- THE GRIEF PROCESS
- REDUCING STRESS THROUGH A “GOOD DIVORCE”
- CHANGING PARENTAL AND MARITAL ROLES
- FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF CHILD REARING
- CONFLICT MANAGEMENT/DISPUTE RESOLUTION
- VISITATION RECOMMENDATIONS



VISIT YOUR COUNTY’S SUPERIOR COURT WEBSITE TO REGISTER.



# PARENTING SEMINARS IN YOUR COUNTY

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## 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial Approved Parenting Seminar

Serving counties: Douglas, Haralson, Paulding, and Polk counties

<http://www.7jad.com/dps>

## 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial Approved Parenting Seminar

Counties served: Cherokee, Dawson, Fannin, Forsyth, Gilmer, Habersham, Hall, Lumpkin, Pickens, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, and White

<http://www.adr9.com/DIVORCING-PARENTS-SEMINAR.html>

Forsyth will also approve the following on-line seminar (4 hour class)

<https://www.onlineparentingprograms.com/>

## Cobb County Superior Court Parenting Seminar

<https://cobbcounty.org/index.php?>

[option=com\\_content&view=article&id=5702:divorcing-parents-seminar&catid=598&Itemid=2812](https://cobbcounty.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5702:divorcing-parents-seminar&catid=598&Itemid=2812)

## DeKalb County Superior Court Parenting Seminar

<http://www.dekalbsuperiorcourt.com/parenting-seminar/>

## Fayette County Superior Court Parenting Seminar

<http://www.griffinlw.org/>

Fulton County Superior Court Parenting Seminar (has link to online seminar and in person seminar)

<https://www.fultoncourt.org/family/family-fit.php>

## Gwinnett County Superior Court Parenting Seminar

<http://www.gwinnettcourts.com/court-programs/parenting-seminar.aspx>

## Henry County Superior Court Parenting Seminar

<http://www.co.henry.ga.us/SuperiorCourt/FamilyLaw.aspx>



# MEET YOUR ADLG TEAM

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## LEGAL TEAM



Jeanette Soltys  
Litigation Manager



Ashley Pepitone  
Attorney at Law



Kate Farmer  
Attorney at Law



Jessica Chapman  
Of Counsel



Whitney Ganes  
Paralegal



Rachel Buchanana  
Legal Assistant

# MEET YOUR ADLG TEAM

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## OFFICE TEAM



Tara Reichert  
Intake Specialist



Nicole Mazzucca  
Admin/Billing Assistant



Shawna Woods  
Director of Operations



Stacey Zimmermann  
Business Manager



Sara G. Khaki  
Founder/Owner

Visit our website at [www.atlantadivorcelawgroup.com](http://www.atlantadivorcelawgroup.com) to learn more about our team, our firm, and how we can help you.