

Types of Child Custody Cheat Sheet

Legal Custody

- **Description:** Authority to make significant decisions regarding the child's upbringing
- **Examples:** Determining education, religious upbringing, healthcare
- **Alternate names:** Decision-making authority, authority custody

Sole Legal Custody

- **Description:** One parent makes significant decisions regarding the child's upbringing
- **Alternate names:** Full legal custody, primary legal custody
- **Example:** One parent makes decisions on education, healthcare, religion, etc.
- **Pros:** Clear decision-making authority, consistency in upbringing
- **Cons:** Limits input from non-custodial parent, has potential for conflict

Joint Legal Custody

- **Description:** Co-parents share in decision-making
- **Alternate names:** shared legal custody, shared parental decision-making
- **Example:** Both parents collaborate on making significant decisions in the child's life
- **Pros:** Important choices are made with input from both parents
- **Cons:** Conflicts and delays, which can create serious problems in emergencies

Looking for a easier way to track and manage child custody?

[Streamline your parenting schedule, shared expenses, and communication with the #1 court-recommended co-parenting app: OurFamilyWizard.](#)

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Physical Custody

- **Description:** Authority to make significant decisions regarding the child's upbringing
- **Examples:** Primary residence with one parent, shared time between both
- **Alternate names:** Parenting time, time-sharing, visitation

Sole Physical Custody

- **Description:** One parent has primary responsibility for the child's day-to-day care
- **Alternate names:** Full physical custody, primary physical custody, basic shared
- **Example:** Child primarily resides with one parent under a 70/30 or 80/20 schedule
- **Pros:** Stability and routine for the child, clear caregiving responsibility
- **Cons:** Limits time with non-custodial parent, potential for strained relationships.

Joint Physical Custody

- **Description:** Child spends significant time with both parents
- **Alternate names:** Shared physical custody, shared parenting time
- **Example:** 50/50 parenting schedule where the child spends equal time in both homes
- **Pros:** Child maintains strong bonds with both parents, shared caregiving
- **Cons:** Requires effective coordination and cooperation, logistical challenges

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