

Families and the Law

New Parents



We would like to thank the **Alberta Law Foundation** and the **Department of Justice Canada** for providing operational funding, which makes publications like this possible.

**Alberta LAW
FOUNDATION**



**Department of Justice
Canada**

**Ministère de la Justice
Canada**

Front cover image by cottonbro from Pexels.

Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is for anyone who is expecting a child. It provides information about legal issues during pregnancy, including adoption and abortion. It also explains the rights of the parents at birth and legal issues in raising a child, whether the parents are in a relationship or not.

This booklet is one of six in a series called **Families and the Law**. The other booklets in the series may help you further understand family law in Alberta:

- Separation and Divorce
- Parenting Time & Contact
- Financial Support
- Resolving Family Law Disputes
- Property Division for Married and Unmarried Couples

Becoming a parent is an exciting and sometimes scary journey. And family law in Alberta is complicated. Finding out about the law and your options is a good first step. There are a lot of people and organizations who can help you. See the end of this booklet for a list of resources.

NOTE: This booklet is based on **Alberta** law. The law may be different in other provinces.

The contents of this booklet are provided as general information only. It is not legal advice. If you have a legal problem, you should consult a lawyer.

The information contained in this booklet was correct at the time it was produced. Be aware that there may have been subsequent changes which make the information outdated at the time you are reading it. The Legal Resource Centre of Alberta will not be responsible for any loss arising from reliance on or action taken (or not taken) as a result of this information.

© 2021, Legal Resource Centre of Alberta Ltd., Edmonton, Alberta

Operating as: **Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta**

The Legal Resource Centre of Alberta Ltd, operating as the Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta, is a non-profit organization whose mission is to help people understand the law as it affects their everyday lives. We develop plain language booklets, presentations, and other learning materials to help people recognize and respond to their legal rights and responsibilities. We have a variety of programs, and provide legal information and referrals on many legal topics.

For more information, please visit www.cplea.ca.

Centre for
Public
cplea
Legal Education
Alberta



**Edmonton Community
Legal Centre**

Contents

4 Pregnancy and the Law

- 4 Consent for Medical Treatment
- 4 Working While Pregnant
- 5 Father's Rights During Pregnancy
- 5 Adoption
- 7 Abortion

8 Birth and the Law

- 8 Naming the Baby
- 9 Who is a Parent?
- 12 Who is a Guardian?

17 Raising Your Child and the Law

- 17 Government Intervention
- 19 Living Together
- 21 Living Apart

26 Resources

LOOK FOR THE FOLLOWING SYMBOLS TO FIND:



Additional resources and **useful links** where you can find more information.



Definitions of some of the common terms used throughout the document.



Tips and things to consider that may apply to your situation.

Pregnancy and the Law

Being pregnant can be an exciting and overwhelming experience. Depending on your personal situation, you may be thinking about what options you have. Generally, you have three choices if you are pregnant:

- 1. Have the baby and raise the child.**
- 2. Have the baby and place the baby for adoption.**
- 3. Have an abortion.**

Consent for Medical Treatment

There is no law that says how old you have to be to make your own decisions about medical treatment. **You can make your own medical decisions if you understand:**

- your situation
- the information that you are given about treatment, and
- the consequences of a decision for or against medical treatment.

It is usually up to the doctor to decide if you can make your own decisions about medical treatment. This includes decisions about birth control, ultrasounds, medical treatments during pregnancy and abortion.

If you are a minor (under the age of 18 years), look for the “Minor Tip” boxes throughout this booklet for information specific to minors.

Minor Tip

You do not need parental or guardian consent for medical treatment if your doctor believes you can make your own decisions about medical treatment.

Working While Pregnant

Your employer cannot discriminate against you or fire you for being pregnant. Both the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act* prohibit an employer from discriminating against an employee on the basis of gender. This includes being pregnant.

Depending on your job, you may need **accommodation** at work, such as not having to lift heavy items. You should talk to your employer about this. Your employer must accommodate you to the point of **undue hardship**.

If you think your employer has discriminated against you because you are pregnant, you can file a complaint with the **Alberta Human Rights Commission**. You can find more information about pregnancy rights and the complaint process on the Commission's website.

Father's Rights During Pregnancy

A biological father has no legal right to be involved with a pregnancy. This means the birth mother can make decisions and does not need to discuss them with the biological father. It is a good idea for the birth mother and biological father to figure out how the father will be involved during the pregnancy. Once the child is born, biological fathers do have rights, including a right to have a relationship with the child.

Adoption

Adoption is when someone other than the parents raises the child and takes on all the legal responsibilities for the child. You can make the decision to place your child for adoption during pregnancy or any time after the child is born. There are many resources available to you both before and after making a decision about adoption.

There are three different kinds of adoptions:

1. Government adoptions

The government arranges the adoption between the birth parents and the adoptive parents.

2. Private adoptions

The government is not involved with the adoption. Birth parents can choose someone on their own (such as a family member), or they can go to a licenced agency for help in making the arrangements. Usually, birth parents choose the adoptive parents in a private adoption.

3. International adoptions

A child is adopted from another country.



Accommodation refers to your employer making reasonable changes to make it possible for you to continue working during your pregnancy, such as modifying workplace policies or your work environment.

Undue hardship is the point where the accommodation becomes onerous for the employer, such as huge financial costs or compromising workplace safety.



You can find more information about pregnancy rights and the complaint process on the **Alberta Human Rights Commission's** website: albertahumanrights.ab.ca



A **guardian** is a person who has legal responsibility to care for and financially support a child, and the authority to make decisions about that child. Unless a court orders otherwise, the child's parents are guardians.

A **biological mother** or birth mother is a person who gives birth to a child.

A **biological father** is a male presumed and considered by law to be the biological father based on certain circumstances. See page 10 for more information.

All of the child's **guardians** have to consent to an adoption. A child's guardians are usually its parents – its **biological mother** and **biological father**.

Minor Tip

Your parents do not have to consent to the adoption as long as you understand the decision you are making and the consequences of placing the child for adoption.

Can I change my mind?

You can change your mind within 10 days of giving your written consent to the adoption. This is "revoking your consent". To do so, you must give written notice of your revocation to the right person at Alberta's Children's Services.

The adoption process is quite complex. You should speak to a lawyer before consenting to an adoption. A judge finalizes the adoption by issuing an adoption order.

An **adoption order** is an order of the court under section 70 of Alberta's *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*. A judge will grant an order to an applicant (the adoptive parent(s)) if the court believes:

- the applicant is able and willing to assume the responsibility of being a parent, and
- it is in the best interests of the child that the applicant adopts the child.

Can I keep in contact with the child after the adoption?

After the adoption, you may be able to have an ongoing relationship with the child or receive updates about the child. It all depends on your situation. Sometimes, you can enter into an agreement with the adoptive parents setting out if contact will occur. You can also use the Ongoing Information Exchange run by Alberta's Post Adoption Registry to exchange photos, letters and cards. You can only exchange information through the Post Adoption Registry if both you (the birth family members) and the adoptive parents agree to take part in the program.

The **Ongoing Information Exchange** is a program run by the Post Adoption Registry that allows adoptive parents and birth family members to keep in contact with each other by exchanging non-identifying photos, letters and cards until the child turns 18. Birth family members may include the birth mother and biological father, grandparents, adult siblings, aunts and uncles and adoptive parents of siblings. Both the adoptive parents and the birth family members must agree to take part in the program.

The **Post Adoption Registry** is a government registry that keeps sealed adoption records for all children adopted in Alberta. It controls what information can be released to birth parents or adopted persons over 18 years of age. For adoptions granted on or after January 1, 2005, an adoptee can request identifying information about their birth parents (names, birth dates and places of birth) plus other non-identifying information. A birth parent can request the same information about the adopted child. The Registry processes all requests for information and can give more details about what information it can and cannot release and to whom.

Abortion

An abortion is a medical procedure to end a pregnancy. Abortions are legal in Canada.

In Alberta, doctors usually perform abortions at specialized abortion clinics and sometimes hospitals. Abortions after 24 weeks of pregnancy are rare. If you have Alberta Health Care, then you will not have to pay for an abortion in Alberta.

A birth mother does not need the biological father's consent before having an abortion.

Minor Tip

You do not need your parents' consent to have an abortion unless your doctor believes you are not mature enough to understand the consequences of having an abortion.



For more information about the **Post Adoption Registry** and the **Ongoing Information Exchange**, visit:
<http://bit.ly/3rfl9Hp>



For more information about abortion, contact a family planning clinic or visit:
<http://bit.ly/3tiidM1>

Birth and the Law

When a child is born, the child and its parents all have rights. This section will discuss naming the child, and figuring out who the child's parents and guardians are.

Naming the Baby

When babies are born, the parents must register the birth under Alberta's *Vital Statistics Act*. If the birth happens in a hospital, then the hospital will have the forms that you must fill out to register the birth. A child must have a first name and a last name.

In Alberta, there are rules about a child's last name:

- If the parents agree, then the child's last name will be the last name they agree to use. This could be the last name of one of the parents or both of the parents. The parents can hyphenate their names (for example, Smith-Jones) or combine them (for example, Smith Jones or SmithJones).
- If the parents do not agree, then the child will be registered with the last names of the parents in alphabetical order and hyphenated (for example, Jones-Smith). Either parent can make a court application to change a child's name if the parents cannot agree.
- If there is only one parent listed on the registration document, then that parent's last name is used.

Vital Statistics can refuse to register a name if it thinks the name might cause confusion, embarrassment, be misleading or is offensive. For example, if you wanted the first name of your child to be "Doctor", Vital Statistics might refuse to register this name as it could be confusing for people.



Only the child's parents can be named on the birth certificate. You should not list someone who is not a parent, such as a new partner.



You can find more information about naming a baby and registering a birth on the Government of Alberta website: <http://bit.ly/2YBmUIU>

Who is a Parent?

It is important to determine who a child's parents are for a few reasons:

- Every parent is obligated to financially support their children, such as paying child support.
- The child can inherit property or receive death benefits when a parent dies.
- Without figuring out **parentage**, the father has no right to any kind of relationship with the child.

A child's parents are usually their birth mother and biological father or their adoptive parents. If the child is born using assisted reproduction, then the law sets out a different process to determine who the parents are.

A person can challenge an assumption that they are the biological father or a parent by applying to court for a **declaration of parentage**. You will need to provide evidence in court, such as a paternity test. If you do not think you are the biological father, you can also refuse to sign the birth certificate.

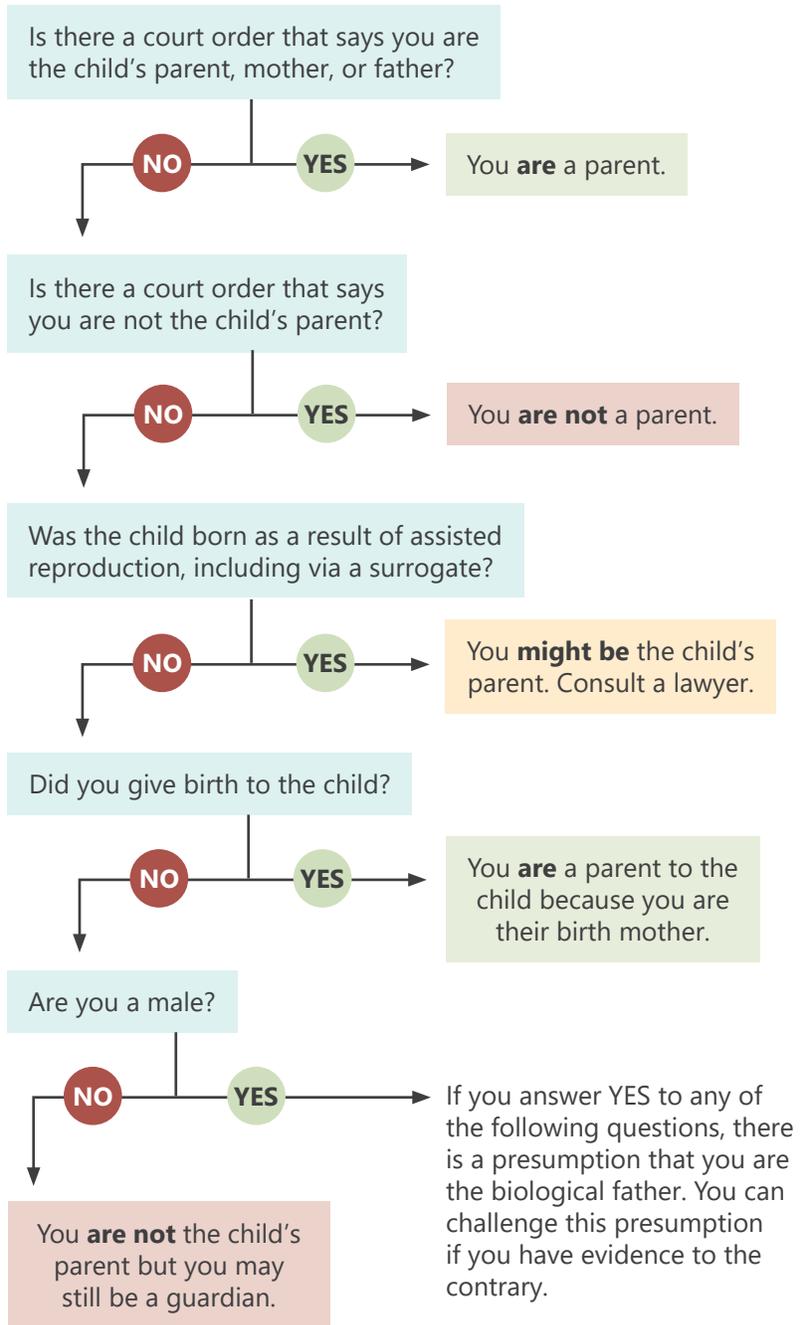


Parentage is the legal process that decides who the parents of the child are.



If you don't know if you are a child's parent, take the test on the next page to learn more.

AM I A PARENT?



Were you married to the birth mother when the child was born?

NO

YES

You **are** a parent.

Were you married to the birth mother and that marriage ended (by divorce, death or annulment) within 300 days of the child's birth?

NO

YES

You **are** a parent.

Did you marry the birth mother after the child's birth, and have acknowledged you are the father?

NO

YES

You **are** a parent.

Did you live with the birth mother for at least 12 consecutive months during which time the child was born, and have you acknowledged you are the child's father?

NO

YES

You **are** a parent.

Did you live with the birth mother for at least 12 consecutive months but stopped living together less than 300 days before the child's birth?

NO

YES

You **are** a parent.

Did you agree to be registered as the child's parent on the birth certificate?

NO

YES

You may still be the biological father but the law does not assume that you are.

You **are** a parent.



If you don't know if you are a child's guardian, take the test on page 14 to learn more.

Who is a Guardian?

Determining who a child's guardians are is also a legal process and is not up to one parent or the other to decide.

Unless the court orders otherwise, a parent is a guardian of the child if the parent has, within one year from becoming aware of the pregnancy or birth of the child:

- acknowledged that they are a parent of the child, and
- demonstrated that they intend to assume the responsibility of being the child's guardian.

This might seem complicated and it is. The court thinks about many things to decide if a parent has "demonstrated an intention to assume the responsibility" of being the child's guardian.

The Responsibilities of Guardianship

Guardians are responsible for the care and well-being of the child, including:

- making daily decisions about the child
- supervising daily activities of the child
- deciding where the child will live
- deciding who the child can have relationships with
- making decisions about the child's education
- making decisions about the child's extra-curricular activities
- deciding the child's cultural and language upbringing
- deciding the child's religious and spiritual upbringing
- deciding if the child should work and other employment matters
- consenting to the child's medical treatments
- granting consent when required
- receiving and responding to any notices that a guardian is entitled to receive
- dealing with any legal proceedings relating to the child
- appointing someone to act on the guardian's behalf in an emergency situation or when the guardian is temporarily absent
- receiving health, education and other information that affects the child
- exercising other powers necessary to carry out the responsibilities of guardianship

If a pregnancy is the result of a sexual assault, the parent committing the assault is not eligible to be a guardian of the child. The court can decide there has been a sexual assault even if charges were not laid, if charges were dismissed or withdrawn, or if the person was not convicted.

The court can also say who a child's guardians are in a **guardianship order**. A guardianship order can name new guardians or take away guardianship rights from a person.

Minor Tip

Your parents do not automatically become the baby's guardian. In order for grandparents to become guardians, they have to apply to the court and give notice to all existing guardians. If all of the existing guardians consent to the grandparents being guardians, then they can make a consent order and present it to a judge for their approval. If the existing guardians do not consent, then that guardian will be able to tell a judge why naming the grandparents as guardians is not in the child's best interest. The judge will decide who should be a guardian based on the best interests of the child.

You can also name guardians in a **Personal Directive** or a **Will**. If you are a guardian to a minor child, you can set out who you would like to become your child's guardian if you lose mental capacity or die. The court can change the guardian if it decides the person you named is not appropriate.

Minor Tip

There is no such thing as **emancipation** in Alberta. Everyone in Alberta under the age of 18 must have a guardian if they are not married or in an adult interdependent relationship. If you are under 18 years of age and have a child, your parents are still your guardians, and you now become a guardian to your own child.

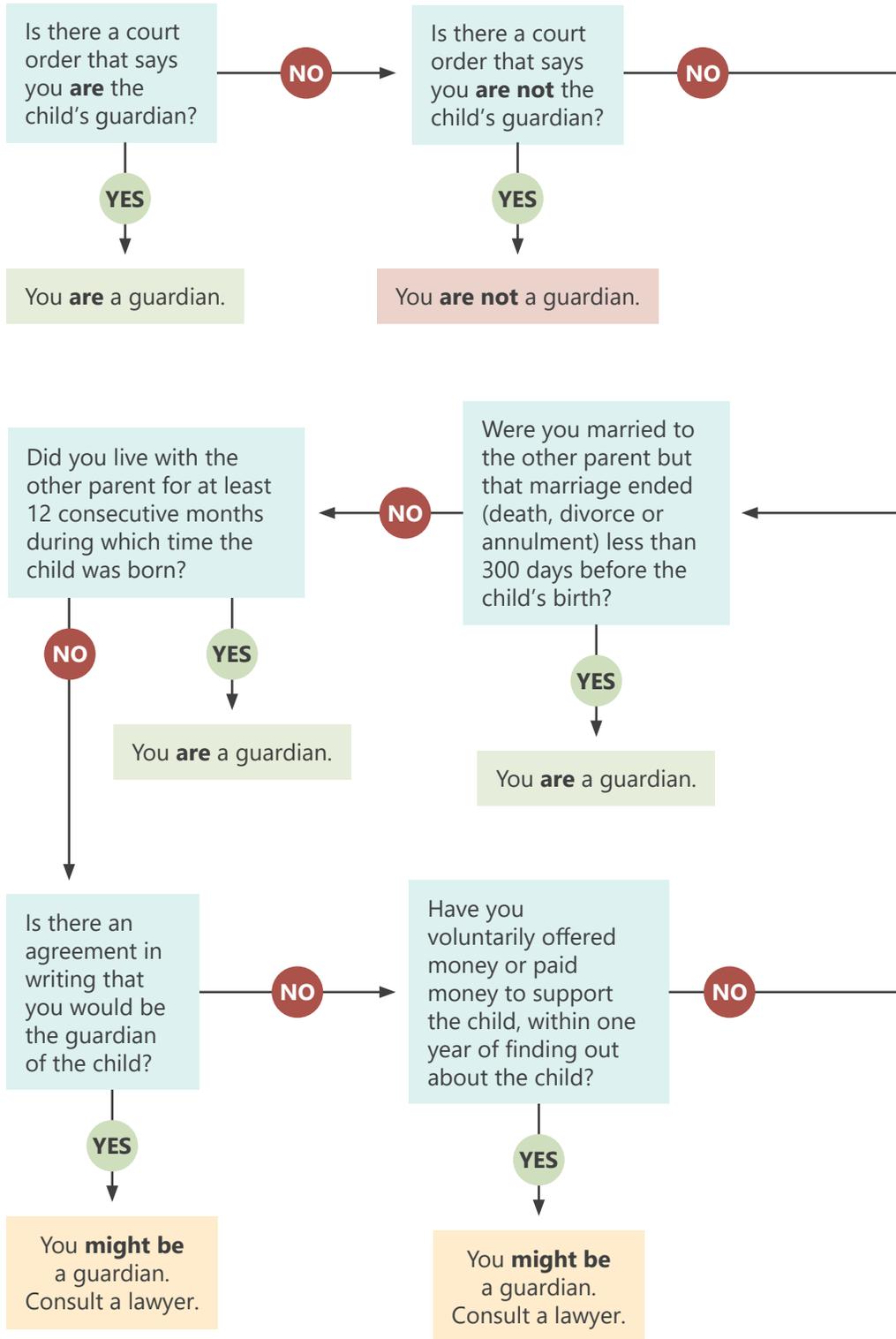


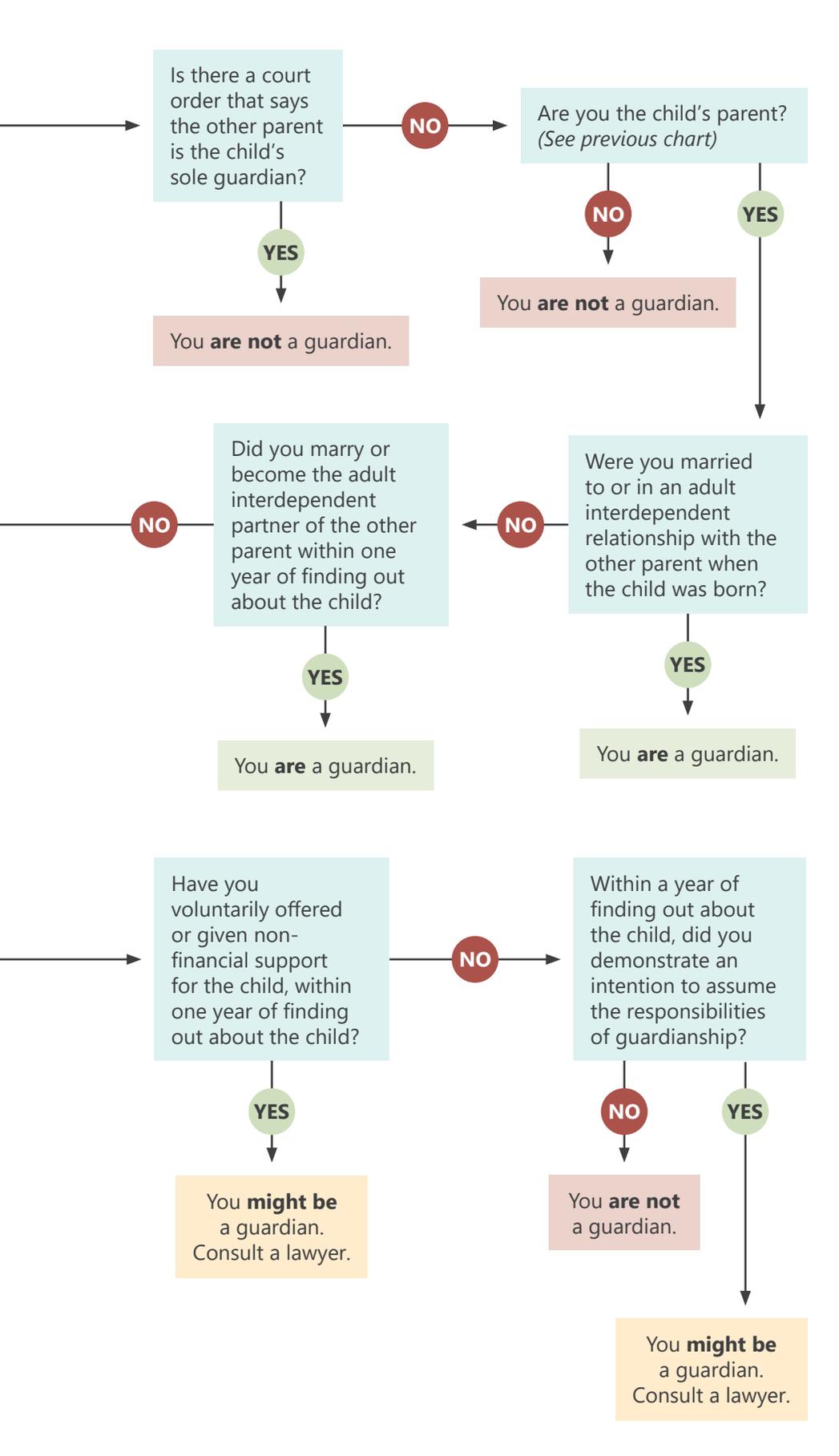
A **Personal Directive** is a written, signed, dated and witnessed document that appoints someone else (your Agent) to look after your personal matters (non-financial only).

A **Will** is a legal statement of how a person wants their property to be dealt with after their death.

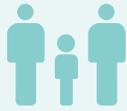
Emancipation means a minor is released from the control, support, and responsibility of a parent or guardian. In Alberta, there is no such thing as an emancipated minor.

AM I A GUARDIAN?





WHAT CAN PARENTAGE AND GUARDIANSHIP LOOK LIKE?



Sarah and Maria were married for a long time before divorcing. They have one child together. Both parents are very involved in the child's life, and the child divides his time equally between the parents. Maria and Sarah work together to make decisions for their child.

Who are the parents?

Sarah and Maria

Who are the guardians?

Sarah and Maria

Who makes decisions for the child?

Sarah and Maria



Kristy and Tom lived together for a year and had a baby. Tom acknowledged that he was the child's father, but he works out of town and only sees the child once or twice a year. Kristy wants to be able to make all the decisions for the child without needing Tom's consent. She applied to change the responsibilities of guardianship. Now she has a court order that says she can make all the decisions for her child and does not need Tom's consent. Tom's only right is to receive information about the child.

Who are the parents?

Kristy and Tom

Who are the guardians?

Kristy and Tom

Who makes decisions for the child?

Kristy



Yolanda and Martin are both 16 years old and had a baby. Yolanda lives with her mom, Wendy, and the baby. Wendy helps with the baby a lot and takes the baby to doctor's appointments and to daycare. They all decide together that it would be a good idea for Wendy to be the baby's guardian too. They get a guardianship order from the court that names Wendy as another guardian.

Who are the parents?

Yolanda and Martin

Who are the guardians?

Yolanda, Martin and Wendy

Who makes decisions for the child?

Yolanda, Martin and Wendy



Ashley and Joshua have a very brief relationship. Ashley gets pregnant and has the child. Joshua does not believe that he is the father or want anything to do with Ashley or the child. He is angry when the paternity test proves that he is the father. Ashley applies for sole guardianship. Joshua does not fight her application so the judge orders sole guardianship. The judge orders Joshua to pay child support.

Who are the parents?

Ashley and Joshua

Who are the guardians?

Ashley

Who makes decisions for the child?

Ashley

Raising Your Child and the Law

Government Intervention

If Children's Services is concerned about the child, they can investigate. There are rules and policies that everyone must follow during this investigation.

After the investigation, Children's Services can decide whether they need to or do not need to help the parents. If Children's Services decide that the child needs protection, they can remove the child from the parents' care. They will schedule a hearing. All decisions must be in the best interests of the child.

If Children's Services is involved, it is very important that the parents talk to a lawyer to protect their rights. If the parents aren't sure where to go for legal help, call Legal Aid Alberta at 1.866.845.3425 to see if you qualify for services based on income.

It is a good idea to keep a journal that sets out what is happening in your child's life. You can do this even if Children's Services is not involved. This journal should include details of time that the child spends with the other guardian. The journal can help if you have a dispute with the other guardian over parenting time or guardianship.



You can read the Enhancement Policy Manual at:
<https://bit.ly/2MODKeq>

My Journal

July 10, 2021

The baby smiled today! Matthew came to visit for a while. He took the baby for a walk in the stroller for about a half hour. I stayed home. I told Matthew about the baby's check up with the doctor next week. He said that he couldn't go and that he won't be able to come back for a week or so.

July 15, 2021

The baby had a checkup today and everything is good. She is very healthy.

July 20, 2021

Matthew texted me this morning to find out if he could come over to visit the baby. I said no, because I already had plans to take the baby for a visit with my Aunt Cindy. Matthew got mad and told me that he was going to come by anyway. I went to Aunt Cindy's at 3:00pm and he still hadn't come. I walked over to Aunt Cindy's with the baby because it was nice outside.

July 21, 2021

I took the baby to a young moms' class with me this morning. Matthew texted me to find out if he could see the baby. I told him to come between 4:00pm and 6:00pm because the baby would be awake then. He sent me a text at 3:00pm saying that he had to go to work so he couldn't come. He asked to come tomorrow. I said yes.

July 22, 2021

Matthew came to see the baby today, but he only stayed for a few minutes. He said he had to work again tonight. He's going to come over on Saturday with his sister for a few hours. I went to the mall with the baby today and hung out with some friends.

TIPS

- Stick to the facts
- Don't make stuff up
- Don't include a lot of details about your feelings
- Include the baby's milestones
- Include activities that you do with the child

Living Together

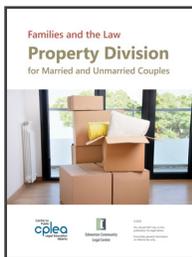
You may choose to live together, either as a married couple or in an adult interdependent relationship.

Minor Tip

If you are 16 or 17 years old, you can marry if you have parental or guardian permission or a court order allowing you to get married. You cannot marry in Alberta if you are under 16 years old.

If you live with someone that you are not married to and you have a child with them, you may be in an **adult interdependent relationship**. The people in an adult interdependent relationship are adult interdependent partners.

If you are married or in an adult interdependent relationship and then separate, how you divide property is the same if you separated on or after January 1, 2020.



For more information on dividing property on separation, see the **Families and the Law: Property Division for Married and Unmarried Couples** booklet.

The term “common law” describes partners who are not legally married but living together, with or without children. In Alberta, the correct legal term is an adult interdependent relationship.



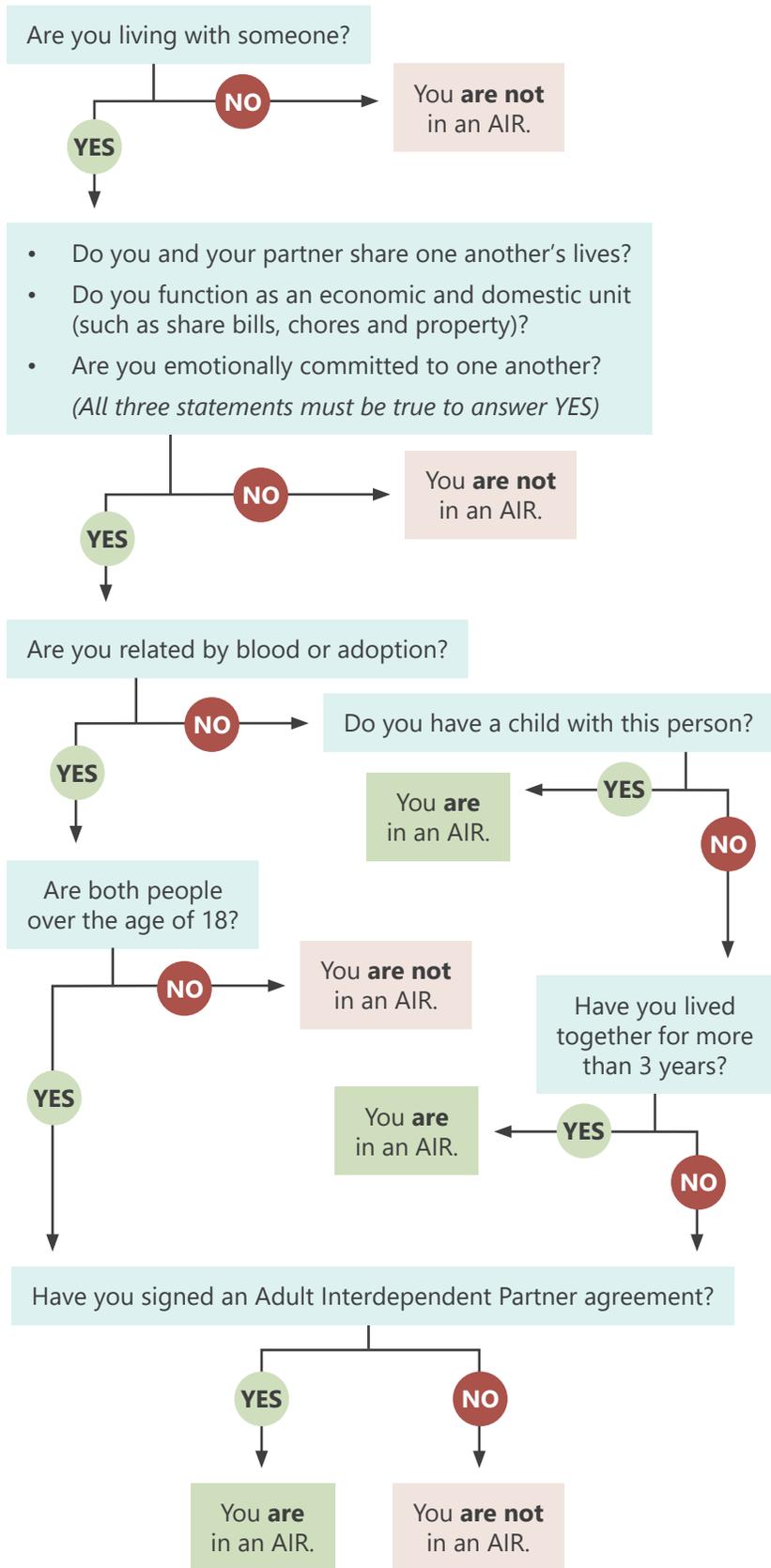
An **adult interdependent relationship** is a type of relationship for unmarried people. There are certain criteria you must meet for your relationship to be an adult interdependent relationship. These criteria are set out in the *Adult Interdependent Relationships Act*. The people in an adult interdependent relationship are adult interdependent partners.



If you don't know if you are in an adult interdependent relationship, take the test on the next page to learn more.

If you want to get married, there are certain requirements that you must meet. You can find more information on the Service Alberta website at: <http://bit.ly/3oKIDm6>

ARE YOU IN AN ADULT INTERDEPENDENT RELATIONSHIP?



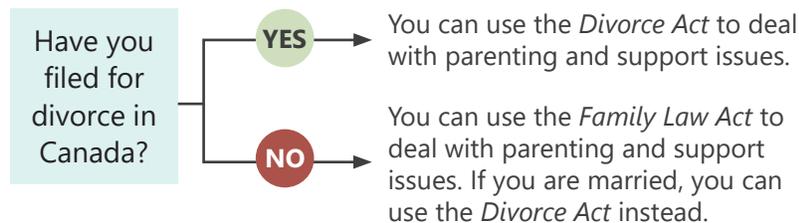
AIR = Adult Interdependent Relationship.

Living Apart

If you and your child's other parent do not live together, there are decisions that need to be made such as where the child will live, when each parent will see the child and who will pay child support.

There are two different laws that deal with parenting time and child support in Alberta. Married people can use the *Divorce Act* or the *Family Law Act* to sort out parenting arrangements and financial support for the child. Parents who are not married must use the *Family Law Act*.

WHAT LAW CAN I USE?



Parenting Time

Parenting time means the time that a parent has with a child. During this time a parent has responsibility of the child. They can make day-to-day decisions about the child, unless the court orders otherwise. Parenting time can be set out in a **parenting plan** or a **parenting order**.

The parents can agree on parenting time or the court can make a decision. These decisions are always in the best interest of the child. It is unusual for a judge to refuse a parent's request to have contact with their child. If the judge has concerns about a parent's contact with their child, then the judge might order conditions on contact, such as supervised visits.

Contact means the time that someone who is not a spouse or guardian has contact with a child, such as a grandparent. A person with contact does not usually get to make decisions about the children's lives. Contact may exist in the form of visits or any other form of communication.



A **parenting plan** is a written agreement about parenting arrangements.

A **parenting order** is a court order about parenting arrangements.

Parenting arrangements include:

- where the children will live
- how the parents will look after the children
- how the parents will make decisions about the children
- how the parents should communicate with each other

DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITY VS. GUARDIANSHIP

Legal terms can be confusing!

Decision-making responsibility is a term used in Canada's *Divorce Act* and it only applies if the parents are or were legally married to each other. Having decision-making responsibility means the person has the responsibility to make significant decisions about the child's well-being. This includes the child's health, education, culture, language, religion, spirituality and significant extra-curricular activities. A parenting order or parenting plan sets out a person's decision-making responsibilities and parenting time with the child.

Guardianship is a term used in Alberta's *Family Law Act*. A child's guardians are usually its parents but not always. A child may have one, two or more guardians. Some guardians may not have access to the child all the time. The time a guardian may spend with a child is set out in a parenting order or parenting plan.



For more information on parenting and contact, see the **Families and the Law: Parenting Time and Contact** booklet.

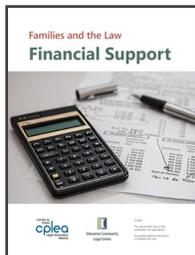
Child Support

All parents are obligated to support their children. This obligation starts when the child is born and continues at least until the child turns 18. Even if one parent does not see or live with the child, that parent still has to pay child support. Child support is the right of the child. This means that the parents cannot waive the child's right to financial support.

Who pays child support usually depends on which parent the child lives with. When the child lives mostly with one parent, then the other parent has to pay child support. When the child spends equal amounts of time with each parent, then the parents or the court decide how much child support the parents have to pay each other.

Child support amounts are determined by the income of the person who is paying the child support and the child's needs. There are tables (Child Support Guidelines) for each province. It is important for the parents to share income information every year so that the child support amount is based on current income.

The parents usually share the costs for extracurricular activities (like sports, music lessons and other classes) in proportion to their incomes.



Child support is complicated. To learn more about how child support is determined, see the **Families and the Law: Financial Support** booklet.

Child support and parenting time are different issues. If a parent is supposed to pay child support but does not, that parent still has a right to spend time with the child.



There are lots of private mediators, arbitrators and collaborative lawyers. See the Resources section of this booklet for more information.

Coming to an Agreement

There are many options for coming to an agreement on these issues.

Do-It-Yourself Agreement

You and the other parent can make an agreement together about how to care for the children. The agreement should be in the best interests of your children. You should write down what you both agree to. It is a good idea for each of you to talk to a different lawyer to make sure the agreement is fair and legally enforceable. Working together saves you time and money and gives you more control over the decisions you need to make.

Mediation

A mediator helps you work together to come up with a plan that works for everyone. A mediator should be a neutral person and should not take sides. A mediator won't force an agreement on you but can help you come up with an agreement that you both accept. The agreement must be in the best interests of your children.

Arbitration

An arbitrator is a person the parties appoint to make a decision instead of a judge. You can choose someone who is very experienced in family law issues. The arbitrator will make a decision that is in the best interests of your children.

Mediation-Arbitration

Combining mediation and arbitration, a mediator has the power to make a binding decision (as an arbitrator) if the parties cannot reach an agreement.

Collaborative Processes

This is a type of negotiation where each person has their own lawyer but everyone works together to come up with solutions. Everyone signs an agreement saying they will all work together and no one will go to court. Most of the communication occurs in four-way meetings, with both sides and their lawyers present. Everyone is encouraged to be honest and openly share information.

Courts

If you cannot agree on a parenting plan, then you can apply to the court. A judge will decide the parenting arrangement and issue a court order (called a parenting order). Court should be a last resort.

Parenting After Separation is an online course for parents offered by the Government of Alberta. The course helps parents build relationships, communicate effectively and understand the adverse effect that conflict in separation may have on children's brain development and well-being. Anybody can take the course for free online.

Sometimes the course is voluntary. You must take the course before you file a divorce application or a *Family Law Act* application in the Court of Queen's Bench. A judge may also order you to take it.

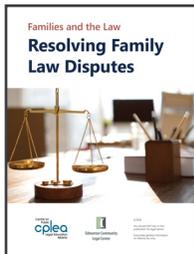
For more information on Parenting After Separation, see the Government of Alberta's website:

<http://bit.ly/3pH7Uz7>

and Family Law Practice Note 1 from the court:

<http://bit.ly/3rgQXvK>

For more information on the impact of conflict in separation on a child's brain development and well-being, see: www.albertafamilywellness.org/



For more information on going to court, see the **Families and the Law: Resolving Family Law Disputes** booklet.



You can find Parenting Plan worksheets online in the Parenting After Separation (PAS) Parent's Guide:

<http://bit.ly/3pH7Uz7>



If you have children and one parent makes less than \$40,000 per year, you might qualify for **Family Mediation** through Resolution and Court Administration Services (RCAS):

<http://bit.ly/36SIEQf>

A **limited scope retainer** is an arrangement where a lawyer provides legal services for part but not all of your legal matter. You and the lawyer will agree ahead of time which parts they will do. Find a lawyer who will coach you or provide limited services at **Alberta Legal Coaches & Limited Services**.

<https://albertalegal.org/>

Resources

LEGAL SERVICES

Law Society of Alberta Lawyer Referral Service

Provides names of three lawyers. Each lawyer to provide half-hour consultation free of charge.

Toll-free: 1.800.661.1095

www.lawsociety.ab.ca/public/lawyer-referral/

Legal Aid Alberta

Toll-free: 1.866.845.3425

www.legalaid.ab.ca

Edmonton Community Legal Centre (ECLC)

Legal clinic in Edmonton. Call for hours and eligibility.

780.702.1725

www.eclc.ca

Student Legal Services (SLS)

Legal clinic in Edmonton. Call for hours and eligibility.

780.492.2226

www.slsedmonton.com/

Calgary Legal Guidance (CLG)

Legal clinic in Calgary. Call for hours and eligibility.

403.234.9266

<http://clg.ab.ca>

Student Legal Assistance (SLA)

Legal clinic in Calgary. Call for hours and eligibility.

403.220.6637

<https://slacalgary.com/>

Community Legal Clinic – Central Alberta

Legal clinics in Central Alberta. Call for hours and eligibility.

Central Alberta: 403.314.9129

Fort McMurray: 587.674.2282

Lloydminster: 587.789.0727

Medicine Hat: 403.712.1021

www.communitylegalclinic.net

Grande Prairie Legal Guidance

Legal clinic in Grande Prairie. Call for hours and eligibility.

780.882.0036

www.gplg.ca

Lethbridge Legal Guidance

Legal clinic in Lethbridge. Call for hours and eligibility.

403.380.6338

www.lethbridgelegalguidance.ca/

Alberta Legal Coaches & Limited Services

List of lawyers offering legal coaching and limited scope retainers.

<https://albertalegal.org/>

Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Alberta

Centre albertain d'information juridique.

780.450.2443

www.ajefa.ca/

GOVERNMENT & COURT SERVICES

Provincial Court – Family

<https://albertacourts.ca/pc/areas-of-law/family>

Court of Queen’s Bench – Family

<https://albertacourts.ca/qb/areas-of-law/family>

Resolution and Court Administration Services (RCAS)

Resolution and court support services across Alberta.

1.855.738.4747

www.alberta.ca/rcas.aspx

Family Court Assistance

Edmonton Family Court Counsellors: 780.427.8343

Calgary Family Court Counsellors: 403.297.6981

www.alberta.ca/family-court-assistance.aspx

Family Mediation

Government of Alberta mediation service for low income Albertans. Offices in Edmonton and Calgary.

Calgary: 403.297.6981

Edmonton: 780.427.8329

Elsewhere in Alberta: 403.355.2414

www.alberta.ca/family-mediation.aspx

OTHER RESOURCES

Alberta Law Libraries

Help with finding legal information. Locations across the province.

<https://lawlibrary.ab.ca/>

Alberta Family Mediation Society

Roster of family mediators.

Toll-free: 1.877.233.0143

<https://afms.ca/>

Arbitrations in Alberta

Find a family law arbitrator in Alberta.

<https://divorcearbitrations.ca/>

ADR Institute of Alberta

Roster of mediators and arbitrators.

Toll-free: 1.800.232.7214

<https://adralberta.com>

Collaborative Divorce Alberta Association

Directory of Collaborative Divorce professionals.

<https://collaborativepractice.ca/>

LawNow Magazine – Family Law Column

Recent articles on family law issues.

www.lawnow.org/category/columns/familylaw

Families and the Law

New Parents



info@cplea.ca
www.cplea.ca



Edmonton Community
Legal Centre

intake@eclc.ca
www.eclc.ca