

Father's Rights in a California Divorce

There are many misconceptions regarding father's rights not only in California but across the country. In some states, fathers may not have equal parenting rights, but this is not true in the state of California. Once paternity has been established, fathers have equal parenting rights and responsibilities. When you decide to end a marriage, you are not deciding to stop being a father.

Protect your right to visitation, quality time, and financial contributions with help from a reputable divorce attorney from [Ratzer Dobis](#). Our firm will ensure you understand your father's rights and take the necessary precautions to secure them when your marriage falls apart.

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What Rights Do Fathers Have After Divorce?

Just because your marriage came to an end does not mean you will no longer be an involved father. In fact, you have specific rights, including:

- The right to sufficient parenting time with your children
- The right to parent your children without the other parent interfering
- The right to your child's medical and school records
- The right to be involved in your children's lives
- The right to make important decisions about what religion your children are raised in, where they go to school, and medical decisions

A Father's Obligations Post-Divorce

Once your divorce has been finalized, you will still have an obligation to your children. You will be expected to provide them access to healthcare and quality education, protect them from neglect or harm, and provide financial support.

Working with your child's other parent is almost always in the child's best interest unless you have reason to believe your child's other parent poses a threat to the child's safety or well-being. If you and your child's other parent cannot work together to co-parent your children, the family court system can step in and make these decisions on your behalf.

Common Mistakes Fathers Make During the Divorce Process

It is common for anyone to make mistakes during a [child custody](#) battle or [divorce](#). However, fathers may be more likely to make one or more of the following mistakes:

Making Unnecessary Purchases

You should only be paying for things that you are responsible for. Your child support will be used to cover your child's necessary living expenses, including housing, food, clothing, and other necessities. Do not get stuck covering the costs when the child's other parent asks for additional financial support. Of course, make sure your child has everything that they need to live comfortably, but separate your child's other parent's expenses from your child's, this way they can live independently.

Failure to Modify Existing Court Orders

If you have an existing child custody or support order, and can no longer adhere to the requirements, you need to obtain a formal modification. Do not simply stop paying child support or continue seeing your children.

If you need to change your child custody or visitation plans, were fired from your job and can no longer afford child support, or have another child on the way that will require your financial assistance, requesting a modification should be a top priority. If you fail to comply with an existing court order, you could be at risk for contempt of court charge according to the [California Courts](#).

Terminating Their Parental Rights

It is almost never in your best interests to give up custody of your child or terminate your parental rights. This is a life-changing decision not only for you but for your children as well. Many fathers who have terminated their parental rights report regretting their decisions according to the [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH).

The more time you spend away from your child and do not contribute to your child's upbringing, the greater the chances are that the court system will not find your involvement in the child's life to be in their best interests. If you are being pressured into terminating your parental rights, do not hesitate to contact our family law attorneys at Ratzer Dobis for help protecting your father's rights.

Fathers Have Visitation Rights

Both parents have a legal right to share quality time with their children. In a considerable number of child custody cases, fathers will be granted visitation rights and be considered the non-custodial parent. This means your children will primarily reside with their other parent, who is considered the custodial parent.

Having visitation rights does not mean you do not have the right to legal custody, however. If you and your child's other parent have entered into a shared legal custody arrangement, you will need to work together to make important decisions regarding your child's upbringing.

Fathers Have Child Support Obligations

Both parents have a legal obligation to financially support their children according to the [California Child Support Services](#). If you are considered the non-custodial parent, you may be ordered to pay child support to your child's other parent, as they will be the child's primary caregiver. The amount of your child support will vary depending on a number of different factors, including:

- Whether you have other children
- Your income and expenses
- Whether you are providing health insurance for your child
- Whether you are contributing to the child's extracurricular activities, medical bills, or other expenses

It is important to know that when a child support order has been issued, you will be required to make payments on time and regularly, usually until your child reaches the age of 18 or graduates from high school. Failure to make your child support payments could result in wage garnishment.

Consult a Top-Rated Child Custody Lawyer to Safeguard Your Rights as a Father

When you need to protect or assert your right to child custody, visitation, and child support, working with a highly skilled California child custody attorney with Ratzer Dobis may be the best decision you can make for your case. We can help you get a court order implemented to establish paternity and custody so you can maintain a strong relationship with your children even though your marriage has ended.

Learn more about the steps you need to take to establish your rights when you contact our legal team for a confidential consultation. You can reach us by phone or through our secured contact form to get started on your child custody case as soon as today.