



© Patricia Van Haren

torrancefamilylaw.com

Child Custody: Part 3 of 3 Put Down That Crack Pipe.

While ideally every parent would be fit to raise their children, sometimes this is not the case. When the courts deal with child custody, they look into several factors to decide what would be in the best interest of the child. The courts believe that if possible, it is in the best interest to have a healthy relationship with both of the parents. However, there are several factors that can prevent this from happening, which will ultimately affect child custody.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

In determining what is in the best interest of the child, the courts will consider the habitual or continual illegal use of controlled substances and/or alcohol by either parent. Where there is a parent who is addicted to drugs or alcohol, the judge may order that the parent has monitored visitation until they are able to maintain a significant amount of time without drugs or alcohol. If you have a concern about the other parent, you may request that the court make orders for drug and alcohol testing prior to setting up unmonitored visitations.

I have had several cases where a parent is unable to refrain from active drug and alcohol use or where the parent refuses to comply with orders for drug and alcohol testing. In those circumstances, the court may suspend visitations until the parent complies with drug and alcohol testing.

If you are a parent that has a history of alcoholism and drug addiction, this does not mean that you will not be able to have a relationship with your children. The Courts agree that it is in the best interests of children to have a loving relationship with both parents. If you can show the court that you are serious about maintaining sobriety, they will work with you to increase your time with the children. The worst thing that you can do for your children is to refuse to comply with orders for drug testing or orders pertaining to your treatment program. The court will want to see that you are serious about your sobriety prior to allowing you to have increased time with your children. I have seen many parents gain joint or even primary custody of their children after obtaining years of continuous sobriety.

The role of a family law court is to act in the best interests of a child and to have safeguards in place in order to protect children from harm. The goal is not to deprive one parent of a relationship of the children. The best possible outcome for cases where a parent has a problem with drugs or alcohol is that the parent receive treatment for their addiction and becomes capable of having a loving relationship with their children.

About Patricia C. Van Haren: Prior to attending law school and obtaining her degree, Patricia C. Van Haren worked in the legal industry for over 20 years as an Office Manager,

17702 Mitchell North Suite 150, Irvine, CA 92614

Tel: (949) 756-9050 ext. 234 – Fax: (310) 606-2068

© Patricia Van Haren



© Patricia Van Haren

torrancefamilylaw.com

Paralegal and Law Clerk. She also had her own business as a family law paralegal and mediator. She has assisted numerous couples through uncontested dissolutions. She has also worked extensively with law firms and attorneys through highly litigious contested dissolutions and custody battles. Ms. Van Haren went through her own divorce in the 90s, so she knows firsthand how difficult and trying a divorce can be. She uses this knowledge to help her clients deal with both the legal and emotional issues involved in getting a divorce. In addition to handling a divorce, Patricia can help in matters such as paternity matters, child custody and visitation, child support, spousal support, adoption, guardianship, and estate planning. She serves all of the Los Angeles County and Orange County areas.



17702 Mitchell North Suite 150, Irvine, CA 92614

Tel: (949) 756-9050 ext. 234 – Fax: (310) 606-2068

© Patricia Van Haren