

## Top 10 Questions to ask a Family Law Attorney



Parents sometimes feel embarrassed by the questions they have about working with a lawyer. Please remember that legal help is a service that you purchase. No service is useful if it is inconvenient, too costly to use, or the provider lacks expertise. Lawyers specialize in many areas – make sure that if you are struggling through a higher conflict custody battle that you choose someone who specializes in that area.

Before your initial consultation it is essential that you prepare a list of questions to ask. The better prepared you are, the more likely it is that you will make a good decision regarding who to work with.

1. What percentage of your practice involves family law cases? Are you certified as a family law specialist?
2. Are you trained or certified in collaborative law and/or mediation? What percentage of your family law work involves collaborative or mediation cases? Are you a member of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, the Association for Conflict Resolution, or the Alternative Dispute Resolution section of a Bar Association?
3. Do you recommend that parents attend co-parenting education classes in order to learn how to share custody peacefully and thereby avoid costly fighting later? Do you encourage parents to consider using collaborative law, mediation, and/or parent coordination?
4. Do you offer "unbundled" or "limited scope representation" services?
5. What percentage of your family law cases go to trial?
6. Will I be working with you directly? If not, who will handle my case? When can I interview that person?
7. What do you charge/hour? Are there different billing rates for the different types of work that you might do for my case (e.g. going to court)? Will I get a detailed invoice from you on a monthly basis?

8. In total what is your estimate as to what my case will cost? What is your policy on setting up a payment plan? Do I need to pay a retainer? Can you please explain your retainer policy?
9. Do you have malpractice insurance? Is your legal license in good standing?
10. What will you expect of me? How can I help to bring these problems to an end in a way that is good for the whole family?