

“Child Custody 101: What Parents Should Know”

By Daniel Kim, J.D.

Introduction

Custody cases can be emotional and confusing. Knowing what to expect helps you approach the process with confidence and clarity.

Legal vs. Physical Custody

- **Legal custody** gives a parent the right to make major decisions about a child's life—education, healthcare, and religion.
- **Physical custody** determines where the child lives day-to-day. Courts often favor joint custody when it's in the child's best interest.

What Courts Consider

Judges evaluate each parent's ability to provide stability, safety, and emotional support. They also consider a parent's willingness to cooperate and communicate. The focus is always on what benefits the child most, not on punishing either parent.

Practical Tips

Document everything—communications, schedules, and any issues that arise. Be respectful in court and keep discussions centered on your child's well-being. Mediation can also help you resolve issues faster and with less conflict.

Final Thoughts

Custody isn't about winning or losing—it's about building a safe and supportive future for your child. Staying calm, informed, and child-focused makes all the difference.

About the Author

Daniel Kim, J.D. is a Los Angeles-based family-law attorney who helps parents navigate divorce and custody cases with empathy and clarity.
