

Chart 2: Custody Criteria

STATE	Statutory Guidelines*	Child's Wishes	Joint Custody	Cooperative Parent	Domestic Violence**	Health	Attorney or GAL***
Alabama	x	x ³	x	x	x		
Alaska	x	x	x	x	x		x
Arizona	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Arkansas		x	x		x		x
California	x	x ⁴	x ⁷	x	x	x	x
Colorado	x	x	x ¹		x	x	
Connecticut	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Delaware	x	x	x		x	x	x
District of Columbia	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Florida	x	x	x ¹	x	x	x	x
Georgia	x	x ⁴	x		x		x
Hawaii	x	x ⁴	x		x		x
Idaho	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Illinois	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Indiana	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Iowa	x	x	x	x	x		x
Kansas	x	x	x	x	x		
Kentucky	x	x	x		x	x	
Louisiana	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Maine	x	x	x ¹		x		x
Maryland		x ³	x	x ³	x		x
Massachusetts			x	x	x		x
Michigan	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Minnesota	x	x	x		x	x	x
Mississippi	x	x ³	x	x	x		x
Missouri	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Montana	x	x	x ¹		x	x	x
Nebraska	x	x	x		x		x
Nevada	x	x ⁴	x	x	x	x	
New Hampshire	x	x	x ¹	x	x		x
New Jersey	x	x	x		x		x
New Mexico	x	x ²	x	x	x	x	x
New York		x		x	x		x
North Carolina		x ³	x		x		
North Dakota	x	x	x	x ³	x	x	
Ohio	x	x	x ¹		x	x	x
Oklahoma	x	x ⁴	x	x	x		x
Oregon	x	x ³	x	x			
Pennsylvania	x	x ⁴	x	x	x		x
Rhode Island		x ³	x ³		x		
South Carolina		x ⁴	x ³		x		
South Dakota		x	x	x ³	x		x
Tennessee	x	x	x ³	x	x	x	x
Texas		x	x ⁵	x	x		x
Utah	x	x	x	x			x
Vermont	x		x ¹	x	x ⁶		x
Virginia	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Washington	x	x	x ¹		x		x
West Virginia	x	x	x ¹		x		x
Wisconsin	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Wyoming	x	x ³	x	x	x	x	

* Although there is a statutory list of factors, the court may in its discretion consider other factors under the particular circumstances of the case.

** The jurisdiction has enacted a statute permitting the consideration of domestic violence in conjunction with child custody. The statutes vary from making domestic violence a factor in custody determinations to imposing presumptions against custody in batterers or imposing special procedural considerations in cases involving domestic violence.

*** This column indicates whether a state has statutory authority for appointment of a guardian *ad litem* or attorney for a child specifically in child custody cases.

1. Does not use the term "child custody," but instead uses the term "parental responsibilities and rights" or similar terminology.
2. The wishes of children under fourteen are a factor to be considered; the court must consider the wishes of a child fourteen years of age or older.
3. By case law.
4. Court must consider the wishes of a child of sufficient maturity to express them.
5. Uses the terminology "managing conservator" of the child to describe a custodial parent.
6. The presence of domestic violence may be a defense for a parent who refuses to comply with a visitation order.
7. Joint custody may be ordered only if the parents agree to it.