

## Child disputes available Court Orders Family

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When parents can't agree about issues concerning their children's welfare, they may need to obtain a Order from the Court to resolve the dispute.

Some of the Orders that the Court can make are set out below:

### **Parental Responsibility**

This is an Order which determines parental responsibility in a parent. This is the phrase used for the rights and responsibilities that every parent has in respect of his or her child. Mothers automatically have this responsibility. Fathers only have it automatically if they are either married to the mother or they are named as the father on the birth certificate. This applies to all children born after the 1 December 2003. It is also possible for a father to obtain parental responsibility, where he wouldn't otherwise be entitled to it, either by agreement with the mother or by obtaining a Court Order.

### **Child Arrangement Orders**

Child Arrangement Orders decide who the child/children is to live with and/or who the child/children will spend time with, and can be granted to more than one person whether they live together or not. It usually lasts until the child reaches 16 – although it can be extended in some circumstances to 18.

### **Contact Order**

This Order defines the amount of contact (either face-to-face or by way of telephone calls and letters) that a child should have with his or her non-resident parent.

### **Specific Issue Order**

This is an Order which sets out how a particular matter should be dealt with. It is used in the case of disputes about schooling, medical treatment and holidays abroad.

### **Prohibited Steps Order**

This is an Order which prevents a parent from taking particular steps in relation to a child, for example, sending them to a particular school without agreement, insisting on bringing them up observing a particular faith, removing a child permanently from the country without Court approval.

### **Care Order**

If a Care Order is made then the relevant local authority assumes parental responsibility for a child. When a final Care Order is made that authority will have power to decide where a child should live.

### **Adoption Order**

This is an Order whereby someone who is not the child's natural parent can become their legal parent through adoption. An Adoption Order will give the child's new parents parental responsibility for them and will remove parental responsibility from the child's natural parents.

### **Special Guardianship Order**

This is similar to a Residence Order in that it gives the person with the Order the power to decide where a child should live. Remember that once such an Order is made it is usually the case that the natural parents will need to obtain Court permission before they can apply for any Court Order.