

3 REASONS TO SETTLE CUSTODY OUT OF COURT

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Amanda C. Cook

COOK & ASSOCIATES
106 Arcadia Court
9380 McKnight Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
(across McKnight from the Outback)

(412) 366-8980
www.pittlawyers.com

- 1. It's expensive and time consuming!** The court process for custody is costly and it can take a long time. Unless parents can work out an agreement along the way, they can expect an education session, a mediation session, a conciliation or two with court personnel, a conciliation or two with a judge, trial preparation and then trial. There is also a potential for costly psychological evaluations, home studies and much more. For each of these steps, both parties will have to take time away from work and their families. It is advisable to have legal counsel for most of these steps. And, as you can imagine, the legal costs will mount.
- 2. It is damaging to families and ongoing relationships!** Face it, no matter how you feel about your estranged spouse, you are not getting rid of him or her. With shared children, you can be assured that you will have to have a workable relationship with him or her for many years to come. The court process often results in much of the parent's (and children's) dirty laundry being dragged out. Tensions and mistrust rise. That is no way to start your co-parenting relationship.
- 3. No one will like the outcome!** Though our judges are very capable, a judge just doesn't know your family, doesn't fully understand your schedules or the specifics of your lives. How can he or she make decisions about your day-to-day life better than the two of you? Invariably, nobody likes the outcome when it is left to the hands of a judge. Two parents (and their attorneys) are in a much better position to sit down and work out a schedule that best fits the family dynamics.

This **Industry Insight** was written by attorney Amanda C. Cook. Ms. Cook is a Senior Associate at Cook & Associates located in McCandless Township. For over a decade, she has provided her clients with compassionate representation during the often-difficult divorce, support and custody processes. Ms. Cook is also a certified mediator. Other areas of practice for Cook & Associates include estate planning and probate, real estate law and business law. For a free initial consultation, please call Ms. Cook today at 412.366.8980 or visit the website at www.pittlawyers.com.