Colorado Child Custody Cases Spotlight the Crucial Role of Legal Advocacy for Children

June 18, 2025

ARVADA, CO - June 18, 2025 -
As custody disputes continue to affect families across Colorado, one legal expert is calling attention to the importance of selecting the right kind of advocacy to protect a child?s well-being during these emotionally charged proceedings. Krista Nash, a respected family law and divorce attorney at Children First Family Law, is leading the conversation on how parents can better understand and navigate the legal mechanisms that give their children a meaningful voice in court while safeguarding long-term family stability. Child First Family Law has released an article on the subject titled Colorado Child Advocacy: How to Pick the Right Legal Support for Your Child for an easy reference for anyone seeking information on the topic.

Colorado custody courts operate under a ?best interests of the child? standard, a comprehensive guideline that considers numerous factors such as each parent?s relationship with the child, the mental and physical health of all parties involved, and the child?s ability to adjust to new environments. While many parents believe that their child can simply choose where to live once they reach a certain age, Nash clarifies that this is a common misconception. Colorado law does not assign decision-making power to children based solely on age. Instead, judges evaluate the child?s preferences in the broader context of what serves their overall welfare. That nuanced evaluation is why experienced legal advocacy can make a measurable difference.

Children First Family Law, which serves clients in Denver, Lakewood, Arvada, Boulder, Colorado Springs, Greeley, and Pueblo, works with families to navigate both informal and formal channels for representing a child?s wishes. Informal methods, including direct communication between parents and children or insights shared by therapists and teachers, are sometimes useful. However, they also come with limitations?especially in high-conflict or emotionally volatile situations where children may feel pressure or discomfort. Nash notes that while in-camera interviews between judges and children are legally possible, they are rarely granted due to the risk of placing emotional strain on the child.

This is where formal advocacy roles become essential. Colorado offers several options to formally represent a child?s voice in custody disputes, each with distinct responsibilities and impacts. A Child and Family Investigator (CFI) conducts focused investigations and produces reports that recommend custody

arrangements. These investigations are useful in moderately complex cases and come with a cost ceiling of approximately $3,250. While CFIs provide judges with crucial insights, their reports represent a static moment in time, lacking the ability to adjust as family dynamics evolve throughout the legal process.

Parental Responsibilities Evaluators (PREs) deliver a more extensive and psychologically informed assessment, ideal for custody battles involving significant parental conflict or concerns about mental health. These evaluations are considerably more expensive?typically ranging from $20,000 to $35,000?but offer a deeper dive into each parent?s capabilities. The drawback, however, is the potential for escalating conflict due to the level of personal detail and criticism that often surfaces in these reports.

Among these options, Nash strongly advocates for the use of a Child?s Legal Representative (CLR), an attorney appointed by the court who represents not just the child?s wishes but their broader best interests. Unlike CFIs and PREs, CLRs actively participate throughout the custody process?from mediation to court hearings?making them a dynamic force in securing favorable, child-focused outcomes. According to Nash, the ongoing engagement of CLRs helps reduce conflict and allows for flexible responses to shifting family circumstances, including unexpected emotional or behavioral challenges that children may face as the case progresses.

Nash emphasizes that selecting the right type of advocate is not just a legal decision but a relational one. The advocate a parent chooses can influence not only the final custody arrangement but also the emotional and psychological well-being of the child involved. Many families begin the process focused on legal rights and quickly realize the deeper goal is fostering stable, healthy relationships. In Nash?s experience, when families prioritize the needs and voice of the child from the outset, they are more likely to reach amicable agreements that hold up over time.

This point is especially critical in cases involving domestic violence or child abuse, where a child?s safety must be vigilantly protected. Such cases require a heightened level of sensitivity and the involvement of professionals trained to manage trauma and risk. Nash has worked with families where abuse was initially undisclosed, only to later become a central issue requiring judicial intervention. In these cases, early use of CLRs and trauma-informed therapy can ensure that the child?s safety and voice are both honored without adding further psychological harm.

Krista Nash and her team also encourage families to explore early intervention strategies through amicable divorce processes. By addressing custody and child advocacy early in the separation process, families can often prevent prolonged litigation, lower financial burdens, and shield children from protracted conflict. Nash regularly works with clients who begin the process feeling overwhelmed but find clarity and relief when they understand the role of structured advocacy in reducing tensions and creating practical, sustainable solutions.

At Children First Family Law, the mission is to reframe how parents think about custody?not as a fight to be won, but as a challenge to be met with intention and care. Nash stresses that child-focused advocacy is not only legally sound but emotionally stabilizing, often leading to faster resolutions and healthier post-divorce family dynamics.

For families in Colorado navigating the uncertain terrain of child custody, Children First Family Law offers the guidance and expertise to ensure that children are seen, heard, and supported in ways that reflect their evolving needs. With a compassionate approach rooted in legal knowledge and real-world experience, Krista Nash helps parents find paths forward that honor both their legal goals and their family values.

Children First Family Law serves families throughout Colorado, including Denver, Lakewood, Arvada, Boulder, Colorado Springs, Greeley, and Pueblo. For consultations, call (720) 252-9638 or visit Children First Family Law to schedule online.

Children First Family Law is committed to protecting children?s voices and guiding families toward compassionate legal solutions that prioritize long-term well-being and healthy relationships.
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Children First Family Law

Child First Family Law is a family law office with a child-centered approach that provides services as a Child?s Legal Representatives (CLR), Mediators, Parenting Coordinator/Decision-Makers (PC/DM), and Attorney Representing Parents.

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