

The Weekly Scenario: Qualities to Look for When Choosing a Guardian for Minor Children

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When you are nominating the guardian of your minor children, the goal is to provide each child as little disruption to his or her life as possible.

To accomplish that, you want to choose someone who will raise your children the same way you would raise them if you were still alive. The guardian should have similar philosophies to yours about raising children, about education, about discipline and about religious or spiritual matters. A good indicator of how someone might raise your children is how they are raising their own children.

If you are choosing a married person, you will need to decide whether to name just one individual (like a relative) or if you are naming the couple. You should consider what will happen if the guardians you appoint get divorced after your children have moved in with them.

You will also want to consider the economic wherewithal of the guardian so that you don't saddle them with responsibility that will overwhelm them financially. If you have more than one child and want to keep your children together, you'll have to name a guardian that is willing and able to take all of them.

All of this assumes that the person you name agrees to take your children. You should always check with them ahead of time to be sure they are willing and then name backup guardians in case circumstances change and the person who agreed in advance is unable to take the children at the actual time of your death.

As always, if you have any questions or would like to learn more, please contact Steve Shane at sshane@offitkurman.com or [301.575.0313](tel:301.575.0313).