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Securing Rights for Unwed Parents

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Over the last 50 years, the number of children born to unmarried parents has increased significantly from 5% to 41%. Often, unmarried parties who have children together will make informal arrangements between themselves concerning the care and support of their children. When things are good, it's human nature to believe they will remain good. We think, "Why fix something that isn't broken?" Factor in the expense and uncertainty involved with court proceedings, and it is understandable that unwed parents prefer not to involve the courts in their family affairs.

Raising a child takes eighteen years; conflicts during that time are inevitable. What happens if the parents' relationship ends? Without a court order, a mother may not be able to secure financial support for her children from their father. Similarly, without a court order, a father may not be able to secure custody and parenting time rights with his children and will have only the access to time and information that their mother allows. A court order can also provide protection from having a mother move with the children a great physical distance from the father.

Some parents may think their rights are protected because they are identified on the birth certificate, but the birth certificate does nothing more than identify a child's parents. Alone, it does not offer any protection for parental rights.

Failing to seek enforceable orders for child custody and support is really a gamble with everyone's future. Peaceful agreements are difficult to achieve when rational thought gives way to hurt feelings and inflamed emotions. Fighting battles or exercising parenting time across state lines is an expensive proposition. Putting the time and money into securing everyone's rights before there is a problem offers more stability for the long-term.

Securing your parental rights is the wise choice for parents and children alike. We can help you protect yourself and your loved ones.