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It's Time to Choose a Guardian – Try These Helpful Tips

If you have given some thought to who should have guardianship over your child you've probably realized what a tough decision it is. Picking a person that both you and your spouse can agree on is no easy matter. Here are some tips from *Savvy-Parents* in their article, "[Six Tips for Choosing a Guardian for Your Child](#)":

1. **Make a decision.** This may seem like an obvious tip, but it can be easy for parents to be caught up in the "who's better" debate. The purpose of appointing a guardian is to guard against the worst-case scenario: your kid(s) having to endure waiting for a friend or relative to petition the court so they can be with someone they are comfortable, and likely this waiting spent in foster care. Making sure at least any reasonable guardian is named is highly important. You likely are okay with multiple people, so do your best to make as quick of a decision on one as you can.
2. **There is no perfect guardian.** The perfect person to raise your child(ren) will of course always be you, so trying to find the *perfect* person to take over raising your kid(s) is an impossible feat. It's not anything you want to think about, someone else raising your kid(s) and you not being a part of it, but it's something that needs to be planned for. As suggested by *Savvy-Parents*, try thinking about who you would be comfortable having your kids stay with while you went on a long trip. This can help with the elimination process and help you think of who comes to mind first.
3. **Choosing a guardian doesn't mean you are choosing one side of the family over the other.** Selecting one family member doesn't mean that your children will never see the rest of the family. To make sure of this, choose someone who respects your wishes for your children to be close with all of the family. Remember, like parents, guardians will need breaks too, so they will be glad for other loving aunts, uncles, and grandparents to be available.
4. **A letter of intent.** To further soothe your worries about how your child will be raised by the guardian you choose, you can write a letter of intent. This will provide guidance on how you want your children to be raised. In this letter you can outline who your children spend summers with, schooling preferences, cultural activities, religious upbringings, etc.
5. **You can change your mind.** Once you choose a guardian, it is not irreversible. As long as at least one parent is alive, guardianship can be changed. Relations are dynamic, so as they evolve over time you may decide

that there is another person in your child's life who would be a better fit. You also may just simply change your mind. This change is done easily enough with your lawyer.

6. **Flip a coin.** If in the end you are completely stuck on two excellent choices for who to name as guardian, flip a coin. The main point of appointing a guardian is to protect your child, so if you are happy with either person being the guardian, then it might be time to get out a penny and "call it". The risk of not having a guardian established is far worse a potential outcome than going with the winner of the toss.

While choosing a guardian is not an easy task, it is one that should be completed as soon as possible. You never know what could happen, but you can always be sure of a plan if you have one in place. Work with an experienced estate planning attorney to not only establish guardianship but also to fill out other necessary documents that will protect your family.