

Family Law and Child Advocacy Require Special Skills



Summary: Those looking to be family law and/or child advocacy attorneys need to start before law school to develop the special skills needed to succeed in the field.

Family law or child advocacy can be a highly emotional charged practice area but for those that excel in counseling and negotiation, this may be the right practice area. Finding a law school that can prepare you to enter these kinds of practice areas is essential since they require a special set of tools. These kinds of lawyers mediate, litigate and counsel in a range of areas such as estate planning, divorce, parental rights, spousal support, paternity, custody, child support, adoption, neglect, and dependency. And not all schools are prepared to teach students to enter family law or child advocacy. [U.S. News](#) gives the lowdown on what to look for.

Specialized Training

Look for law schools that offer specialized training and programming. Most law schools will have some coursework in family law so that all students learn the basics but you want something that gets deeper. There are some law schools that offer specialized course options or training programs for students wanting to focus on family law.

Some of the schools that have these options include [Columbia Law School](#), [Maurer School of Law at Indiana University – Bloomington](#), [DePaul University College of Law](#), [Maurice A. Deane School of Law](#), and [Loyola University Chicago](#).

Clinic Options

In addition to a focus on specialized coursework, look for a law school that has related clinic options. Clinics are a great way to gain hands-on experience in casework and client advocacy. Many of the same law schools already listed have clinic options. Columbia has a couple of clinics that specialize in adolescent representation, sexuality and gender law, and incarceration. Each of these subjects can involve family law.

Other law schools to consider include [Harvard Law School](#), the [University of Virginia School of Law](#) and [New York University School of Law](#).

Prelaw

In addition to finding a law school that will foster your desire to pursue family law related practice areas, taking steps before law school is important to helping your development of special skills. Majoring or minoring in a subject like psychology or human development will provide valuable insight into the practice area.

You can also seek out internships or volunteer experiences with organizations that work with families or children so you can continue strengthening skills like oral communication and counseling. They are opportunities for internships in family court or with social service providers. You can also shadow attorneys practicing family law.

Help

With whichever law school you decide on, seek out a mentor and self-educate yourself. Know all you can about the practice area by networking with practitioners in the field. Ask them for advice and any guidance. Keep current on the trends in family law and changes that may happen to federal, state, and local laws.

Do you think family law is a safe practice area to economic downturns? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

To learn more about other specialties, read these articles:

- [George Washington Law Launches New Specialty](#)
- [California Law Schools Dominate in Production of Entertainment Law Power Lawyers in 2018](#)
- [Yale Law School Launches Legal Food Program in Connecticut](#)

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