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**Visitation for Grandparents, Relatives and other non-parents**

In Ohio, certain third parties (persons who are not the child's parents) may be granted companionship or visitation rights with a child by a court (1) if the child's mother was unmarried when the child was born, (2) in a proceeding for divorce, dissolution of marriage, legal separation, annulment, or child support or after a decree or final order is issued if circumstances have changed, or (3) if one of the child's parents is deceased.

In making its decision on granting companionship or visitation rights to third parties, a court must consider all relevant factors, including all of the factors specified in statute. These factors include all of the following: the wishes and concerns of the child's parents; the prior interaction and interrelationships of the child with parents and other relatives; the geographical location of the parent's residence; the child's and parents' available time; the child's age; the child's adjustment to home, school, and community; the wishes of the child if the court has interviewed the child in chambers; the health and safety of the child; the amount of time that a child has available to spend with siblings; the mental and physical health of all parties; and whether the person seeking visitation has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to any criminal offense involving an act that resulted in a child being abused or neglected. The court can grant companionship or visitation rights if, after considering these factors, it determines that visitation is in the best interest of the child.

The marriage or remarriage of a child's parent does not affect the court's authority to grant or modify third-party companionship or visitation rights. But the effect of a stepparent adoption differs depending on the circumstances. In the case of a child whose parent has died, Ohio law provides that a relative's right to visitation is not restricted or curtailed by the adoption. Also, in that situation, the adoption of a child by a stepparent does not affect the authority of the court to grant reasonable companionship or visitation rights with respect to the child. In the case of a child whose parents are divorced or separated or a child born to an unmarried woman, the Ohio Supreme Court has held that a provision of Ohio law providing that a final decree of adoption terminates all legal relationships between the adopted person and the adopted person's relatives has the effect of terminating third-party visitation rights on adoption, regardless of whether the child is adopted by strangers, relatives, or a stepparent.

Under Ohio law, when a child's parent dies, a relative of the deceased parent can seek visitation rights. In the case of a child whose mother was unmarried when the child was born, the court can grant visitation to the child's maternal relatives and visitation can be granted to the relatives of the father only if paternity has been established. In a case of a child whose parents are divorced or separated, grandparents, relatives and other persons can be granted visitation rights.

When granting visitation rights in all cases, the court may grant companionship or visitation rights if it determines that granting companionship or visitation rights is in the best interest of the child.