

## **Modification of Visitation Packet**

If a party wishes to change a final order in a family law case, s/he must file a new case with the court. Both parties should follow the terms of the original order until the court issues a new order. Even if the parties agree to a change, the change is not official until the court approves it in a court order.

Child custody, visitation and child support orders are frequently changed by the courts. Still, the court follows certain guidelines to determine whether a requested change is proper.

Visitation can be changed if it is in the best interests of the child. The Plaintiff need not prove that there has been a "material" change in the child's life or a parent's life. Once the court grants a modification of visitation, the parties must wait two (2) years to ask the court for another change. However, if the reason for the requested change is a material change of circumstances, the two (2) year waiting period does not apply.

In an action seeking modification of visitation rights, since "custody" includes visitation rights, any complaint seeking such a change must be brought as a separate action in the county of residence of the legal custodian of the child; and the superior court may transfer the question of the determination of visitation rights to the juvenile court. However, the parties to a case changing visitation rights cannot waive jurisdiction of the subject matter, but can waive jurisdiction of the person and venue. Accordingly, the previous county could entertain the case if a new suit is filed and the parties waive jurisdiction of the person and venue.

Allegations alone as to denial of visitation are sufficient to allege the required change of condition so as to redetermine visitation privileges. The same is true of allegations of improper supervision and prejudicing the child against the other parent.

Modification of a court order in family law cases can be a complex process. If possible, you should discuss your case with an attorney or hire an attorney to represent you.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA

\_\_\_\_\_, )  
 )  
Plaintiff, )  
 )  
v. ) Civil Action No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 )  
 )  
\_\_\_\_\_, )  
 )  
Defendant. )

**COMPLAINT FOR MODIFICATION OF VISITATION RIGHTS**

The Plaintiff states [his/her] claim for a change in visitation rights as follows:

1.

The Defendant is subject to the jurisdiction of this Court and may be served with a copy of the complaint and summons at \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. (address).

2.

The Defendant presently has legal custody of the minor child(ren),  
\_\_\_\_\_,  
age(s) \_\_\_\_\_, by virtue of a final decree of  
\_\_\_\_ Divorce  
[OR]  
\_\_\_\_ Legitimation in Civil Action No. \_\_\_\_\_, entered on  
\_\_\_\_\_ (month and day), \_\_\_\_\_ (year), in the Superior Court of  
\_\_\_\_\_ County, \_\_\_\_\_ (state).

3.

Since the date of the final decree,  
\_\_\_\_\_ there has been a change in circumstances materially affecting the welfare of the  
minor child(ren)

[OR]

\_\_\_\_\_ it is now in the child(ren)'s best interests to change the visitation arrangement







