

Family Lawyer

Divorce, parenting and support disputes. Small firms, hard conversations, and clients on the worst year of their lives.

TYPICAL PAY

\$95,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$55k to \$220k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

7 to 8 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Small firms, solo practice, family courts, mediation offices

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 English, and anything that teaches you to listen to people who are upset.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 3 to 4 years
 Psychology, social work, sociology and political science are common. Any subject works. Write the LSAT (law school admission test).
- 3 Law school (JD, juris doctor)** 3 years
 Take family law, evidence, negotiation and children's law. Most schools run a family law clinic or a legal aid clinic with family files.
- 4 Articling** About 1 year
 8 to 10 months at a family firm or a legal clinic, plus the barrister and solicitor licensing exams. Ontario's Law Practice Program is the alternative to articling.
- 5 Called to the bar** Ceremony
 Join a small firm, or go solo. Many family lawyers add mediation or collaborative training in their first few years.

Pros and cons

- + Steady demand in every city and town
- + You help people through the worst year of their lives
- + Easy to run your own practice
- High-conflict clients, some of whom turn on their own lawyer
- Children in the middle of every serious case
- Clients run out of money and bills go unpaid

Good to know

Custody is no longer a legal word

Since 2021 the federal Divorce Act talks about parenting time and decision-making responsibility instead of custody and access. The change was meant to stop parents from fighting over who wins the c...

Child support comes from a table

The Federal Child Support Guidelines set the basic monthly amount from the paying parent's income and the number of children. Lawyers argue about income and extra expenses, rarely about the table itself.

Optional boosts

Accredited family mediator. Collaborative practice training. Family arbitration. Business and pension valuation literacy.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Lawyers and Quebec notaries, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Law Society of Ontario: Becoming a lawyer

Department of Justice Canada

Legal Aid Ontario: Tariff and billing (rates from April 2025)

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/family-lawyer>



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