

# Wisconsin

## CIVIL PROCEDURE CHAPTER 822. UNIFORM CHILD CUSTODY JURISDICTION ACT

822.01. Purposes; construction of provisions.

(1) The general purposes of this chapter are to:

(a) Avoid jurisdictional competition and conflict with courts of other states in matters of child custody which have in the past resulted in the shifting of children from state to state with harmful effects on their well-being;

(b) Promote cooperation with the courts of other states to the end that a custody decree is rendered in that state which can best decide the case in the interest of the child;

(c) Assure that litigation concerning the custody of a child takes place ordinarily in the state with which the child and family have the closest connection and where significant evidence concerning the child's care, protection, training, and personal relationships is most readily available, and that courts of this state decline the exercise of jurisdiction when the child and family have a closer connection with another state;

(d) Discourage continuing controversies over child custody in the interest of greater stability of home environment and of secure family relationships for the child;

(e) Deter abductions and other unilateral removals of children undertaken to obtain custody awards;

(f) Avoid relitigation of custody decisions of other states in this state insofar as feasible;

(g) Facilitate the enforcement of custody decrees of other states;

(h) Promote and expand the exchange of information and other forms of mutual assistance between the courts of this state and those of other states concerned with the same child; and

(i) Make uniform the law of those states which enact it.

(2) This chapter shall be construed to promote the general purposes stated in this section.

822.02. Definitions.

As used in this chapter:

(1) "Contestant" means a person, including a parent, who claims a right to legal custody, physical placement or visitation with respect to a child.

(2) "Custody determination" means a court decision and court orders and instructions providing for legal custody, physical placement or visitation rights. It does not include a decision relating to child support or any other monetary obligation of any person.

(3) "Custody proceeding" includes proceedings in which a custody determination is one of several issues, such as an action for divorce or separation, and includes child neglect and dependency proceedings.

(4) "Decree" or "custody decree" means a custody determination contained in a judicial decree or order made in a custody proceeding, and includes an initial decree and a modification decree.

(5) "Home state" means the state in which the child immediately preceding the time involved lived with the child's parents, a parent, or a person acting as parent, for at least 6 consecutive months, and in the case of a child less than 6 months old the state in which the child lived from birth with any of the persons mentioned. Periods of temporary absence of any of the named persons are counted as part of the 6-month or other period.

(6) "Initial decree" means the first custody decree concerning a particular child.

(6m) "Legal custody" has the meaning given in s. 767.001 (2)

(7) "Modification decree" means a custody decree which modifies or replaces a prior decree, whether made by the court which rendered the prior decree or by another court.

(8) "Person acting as parent" means a person, other than a parent, who has physical custody of a child and who has either been awarded custody by a court or claims a right to custody.

(9) "Physical custody" means actual possession and control of a child.

(9m) "Physical placement" has the meaning given in s. 767.001 (5)

(10) "State" means any state, territory, or possession of the United States, the commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia.

#### 822.03. Jurisdiction.

(1) A court of this state which is competent to decide child custody matters has jurisdiction to make a child custody determination by initial or modification decree if:

(a) This state is the home state of the child at the time of commencement of the proceeding, or had been the child's home state within 6 months before commencement of the proceeding and the child is absent from this state because of the child's removal or retention by a person claiming custody or for other reasons, and a parent or person acting as parent continues to live in this state; or

(b) It is in the best interest of the child that a court of this state assume jurisdiction because the child and the child's parents, or the child and at least one contestant, have a significant connection with this state, and there is available in this state substantial evidence concerning the child's present or future care, protection, training, and personal relationships; or

(c) The child is physically present in this state, and the child has been abandoned or it is necessary in an emergency to protect the child because the child has been subjected to or threatened with mistreatment or abuse or is otherwise neglected or dependent; or

(d) It appears that no other state would have jurisdiction under prerequisites substantially in accordance with par. (a), (b) or (c), or another state has declined to exercise jurisdiction on the ground that this state is the more appropriate forum to determine the custody of the child, and it is in the best interest of the child that this court assume jurisdiction.

(2) Except under sub. (1) (c) and (d), physical presence in this state of the child, or of the child and one of the contestants, is not alone sufficient to confer jurisdiction on a court of this state to make a child custody determination.

(3) Physical presence of the child, while desirable, is not a prerequisite for jurisdiction to determine custody.

[Return to AMBER Alert Legal Database](#)