



Understanding Trial

A trial is the final hearing where the court decides the issues the parties could not resolve on their own. Most Georgia family cases are decided by a judge, not a jury. Careful preparation helps you present your case clearly and calmly.

How trial works

- 1 Preparation.** We organize evidence, prepare witnesses, and meet the court's requirements, which often include a pretrial order listing issues, witnesses, and exhibits.
- 2 Opening Statements.** Each side may briefly outline what it expects the evidence to show.
- 3 Testimony.** Parties and witnesses answer questions under oath. The other side may then ask its own questions on cross-examination.
- 4 Exhibits.** Documents, photos, messages, and financial records are offered as evidence for the court to consider.
- 5 Closing Arguments.** Each side summarizes the evidence and explains the outcome it is asking the court to reach.
- 6 The Decision.** The judge may rule at the end of trial or later in a written order.

Judge or jury

Bench Trial. Most Georgia family law cases are tried before a judge alone.

Jury Option. In a divorce, a party may generally request a jury on certain financial issues, such as property division and alimony.

Custody. A jury cannot decide child custody. The judge always decides custody.

Settlement. The parties can still settle before trial and even while trial is underway.

What to keep in mind

Dress professionally, arrive early, and silence your phone before entering the courtroom.

Stay calm. Avoid facial reactions, sighs, or comments while others are speaking.

Never speak out in court. Write a note for your attorney instead.

A judge who does not know your family will make important decisions about it.

Trial is costly and unpredictable. No outcome is ever guaranteed.

This guide provides general information about trials in Georgia family law matters and is not legal advice about your specific case. Your attorney will explain how trial applies to your situation.

YOUR ROLE

Review your testimony with us, send requested documents by our deadlines, and tell us about possible witnesses early. On trial day, stay composed and follow our lead.

QUESTIONS?

As always, all questions and requests should be directed to the team via email to team@pepitone.law.