

What age does my child have to be to decide who he wants to live with?

*Although the law in Georgia says that at age 14, a child can elect which parent he/she primarily wants to live with, it doesn't mean the child can decide to stop seeing a parent altogether. Even so, the judge is the final decider if the child's election is in his/her best interests. Two things matter here. We don't want to teach our children that when a primary relationship gets uncomfortable or hard, that we quit. We also don't want to encourage a child to escape and cut off a parent because it's easier. That will come back in anger later on as they become adults. Kids are fickle. One day they hate a parent and don't want to see them. Then when that parent goes away, they accuse the parent of abandoning them. A child has every right to experience each parent as their primary custodian as long as it is done for the right reasons. Parents should put boundaries around it, such as you need to do it for a summer first or a semester of school to see how it goes before we make it official. Again, kids are fickle and we don't want them changing homes every time they don't like the rules or things aren't going their way. That teaches them very little about the real world.*