

MEET THE (BARRISTERS CLUB) PARENTS

Adam I. Kaplan



Adam

Big surprise: life got a lot busier about three and a half years ago when my twin daughters Kyla and Avery were born. Thankfully, there are loads of all-star parents who work as attorneys at my firm and in the BASF community. They've served as role models for my wife and me and imparted much wisdom over the years. I've also learned from—and at times kvetched and commiserated with—other parents in the Barristers Club who are juggling young children and busy legal careers. As you'll see, they are an impressive bunch, so I decided to gather reflections, stories, and advice from as many of them as I could squeeze into these pages. Here is what they had to say.



Evan



Sara

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Evangeline (“Evan”) A. Z. Burbidge

Lewis & Llewellyn

Mother of Win (3½) and Graham (1) and cochair of the Barristers Club Litigation Section

We’re a two-lawyer family, meaning efficiency at work and sharing the load is very important. Last week, I was traveling for depositions and had a hearing; this week, my husband started trial. We work to be flexible. That also means compromising and working after the kids are asleep, when needed. So far, routine has proven the most helpful thing for the kids during the week. We have the usual activities we do when we get home from school (such as making dinner together, playing a game, taking a bath) and a set bedtime. That seems to make things easier—at least most of the time.

Reno F. R. Fernandez III

Macdonald | Fernandez

Father of Harriet Sue (5) and Josephine Anna (2) and past member of the Barristers Club Board of Directors

I like to spend as much time with my kids as possible and still rock as an attorney. The kids are asleep in the morning and awake in the afternoon, so I start my workday at 5:30 a.m. and leave at 4:00 p.m., without fail. There are unexpected benefits; it is very hard for opposing counsel to get the jump on me!

Sara Peters

Walkup, Melodia, Kelly & Schoenberger
Mother of Asher (3) and twins Emmett and Corben (1) and CLE vice chair of the Barristers Club Litigation Section

5:00–6:00 a.m.: Nurse the twins repeatedly
6:00–7:30 a.m.: Prepare, bike 7.5 miles to work, get ready at gym
7:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.: Work (expressing milk every three hours)
5:00–5:45 p.m.: Bike home
5:45–7:00 p.m.: Nurse the twins, briefly play with them, put them to bed
7:00–8:00 p.m.: Prepare dinner, eat dinner, talk to toddler
8:00–9:00 p.m.: Play with toddler, read stories, put him to bed, clean up
9:00 p.m.: Say “Hi” to husband
9:00–10:30 p.m.: Glass of red wine, relax, work a little, prepare for tomorrow
11:00 p.m.–12:00 a.m.: Nurse the twins repeatedly
12:00–5:00 a.m.: Sleep (not enough), with toddler and twins waking up frequently

BARRISTERS CLUB REPORT



Phyra



Mark

Phyra McCandless

government attorney

Mother of Hyonia (5½) and member of the Barristers Club Board of Directors and the Justice & Diversity Center Board of Directors

Google Calendar is my friend. I need to have everything on there so I know the schedule and know when I need to do a pickup or we need to ask family. Having local grandparents has been the secret to making sure I can go to attorney or Barristers Club activities. We use calendar invitations with my parents so they know when we may need them. Online/social networks have also been an invaluable resource. In the past, I think people had the wisdom of their neighbors in their “village.” My village has come from lawyer moms on Facebook, the Mission Parents Yahoo group, and the like. I’ve traded so many life hacks through these groups, I’ve lost count.

Sara

I look for every possible way to multitask. By biking to work, I fold my workout into my commute. I read the news on my phone apps while nursing. My entertainment consists of podcasts or audio books while doing dishes or brushing my teeth. Most important, I try to remember that contentment is a matter of perspective. Yesterday, geese were flying above me while I biked in Golden Gate Park. Their wings were flashing yellow in the low sunlight. I breathed deeply and told myself I was on vacation. People pay money to go cycling in beautiful places, something I do every day. Whether it’s a daily grind or a luxury is all in my head.

Reno

It is not possible for me to make every minute with my kids into quality time. Instead, I take them on weekend “dates.” I take them out one at a time to a park, to share ice cream or to do something simple that requires no planning. Because it is just one child and me (and no cell phones, but maybe a *printed* book), it is pure fun. Afterwards, time at home is more relaxed; I can play with the kids, check my cell phone or do nothing at all without the pressure to be Ward Cleaver all day long.

PARENTING HACKS

Adam

I’m all about multitasking as well. Most of my exercise consists of running with the kids in the double stroller, rain or shine. This helps everyone, dog included, deal with our little 5:00 a.m. risers. I get extra time with them and my wife gets a chance to work out or catch up on sleep. My pleasure reading is on BART to work. And I make calls while walking the dog.

KIDS DO (AND SAY) THE DARNDDEST THINGS

John Hamasaki

Hamasaki Law

Father of Omar (2½) and member of the Barristers Club Board of Directors

About a month ago, I was getting ready for a hearing in the morning and realized I couldn't find my keys. I remembered that Omar had been playing with them the night before when we got home. My wife and I frantically tore the house apart looking for the keys as Omar watched on. Finally, he dug down into his toy box and opened the roof of a toy truck and pulled out the keys, smiling. I arrived in court late for the hearing and asked to approach. I explained my morning to the judge, apologized profusely, and said that he had never hidden my keys before. The judge looked at me, laughed, and said "It won't be the last time."

Sebastian Kaplan

Fenwick & West

Father of Zoe (5), Juliette (3), and Naomi (21 months) and past Barristers Club president and current Justice & Diversity Center board member

It's hard to explain to my young kids what I do and why I do it. One morning, when my oldest daughter was four, she asked me: "Are you going to work?" I nodded. "Are you going to make money?" I smiled and nodded again. "It is really hard to make money; you have to do it a lot," she said sympathetically. "It is hard," I replied, "but I get to help people when they have disagreements with other people." I want her to understand that work can be enjoyable and intrinsically valuable, not just lucrative, but that's a complex lesson for someone not yet in kindergarten.

Mark Conrad

Conrad & Metlitzky

Father of Penelope (6) and Colby (4) and past Barristers Club president

One morning my daughter snookered me into bringing her to the office, claiming she was too ill for school. The copy machine kept her entertained for about fifteen minutes, but by lunchtime she realized she had made a big and very boring mistake, and she begged me to take her back to her teachers and friends.

John



Diana



BONDING WITH OPPOSING COUNSEL OVER KIDS

Diana Kruze

Morrison & Foerster

Mother of Dani (4), Hawk (2), and Evie (6 months) and past Barristers Club secretary

I always ask opposing counsel if they have children—it's a great way to learn more about them personally and help foster understanding and empathy during difficult times. When I was pregnant with my third, I was litigating a copyright case against a great guy from Cooley who also has three kids. On breaks during technical witness depositions, I got his advice on everything from the minivan versus SUV debate to the transition from man-on-man to zone defense that having three kids entails. After bonding over stories of sick toddlers throwing up on you and the timeless popularity of "Thomas the Train," compromises somehow come faster during discovery disputes, extensions are more easily given, and, with any luck, your adversary has magically been transformed into a friend.

Evan

Once I had opposing counsel show me pictures of his baby in the middle of tough settlement discussions. It was nuts. It completely changed his demeanor.

Reno



Phyra

I got delayed at the Phoenix airport with someone who had been an opposing counsel. We had just left an American Bar Association conference. I was flying alone with my daughter and she was flying with her wife and two kids. It was my first time traveling alone with a child and although we had flown a lot, we weren't prepared for being stuck for seven hours at the airport. The opposing counsel's older child played well with Hyonia and the gate agent gave us Wikki Stix, which I learned were the key to keeping kids entertained. After spending some time with the opposing counsel, I felt comfortable with her. This led me to get more involved in that ABA conference and go to her for advice about living with kids in San Francisco.

Adam

I've had a few cases where relations with opposing counsel were strained and tensions often ran high at depositions and during meet and confers. Talking about the little ones, and the tribulations of sleep deprivation, for example, always lightened the mood. I've also had great experiences bonding with clients about our children. When a client in Los Angeles heard my wife and I were expecting twins, he revealed that he's also a twin father and invited me to meet his family the next time I was in Los Angeles. I did, and we became fast friends. To this day, one of my favorite client outings is taking him, his wife, and his boys out for pizza.

WORDS OF WISDOM

Evan

I don't think there's a "best time" to start a family. From the very beginning, children teach you that you can't plan everything; some things are simply out of your control. Instead, my advice would be: look for role models at the top. Make sure there are people at the firm whose lives you want to emulate. Do the powerful partners at your firm have kids? A working spouse? Did they take their full maternity/paternity leave or have they bragged about missing the birth of a child because of trial? Those answers give you important information about the culture of the firm.

Sara

I advise law students to find a law firm that encourages employees to honor their family commitments. Look for a generous maternity *and* paternity leave policy, and partners who are actively involved with their own young kids. I'm lucky to be surrounded by genuinely supportive people. Without that, I would not survive.

John

Being a great parent requires the same traits as being a great lawyer—time, dedication, patience, and most of all, love. It is hard to share two great loves, but it is possible. And they have to be willing to share you as well. Being a parent has been the greatest experience of my life. It hasn't always been easy to balance a rewarding career in the law with fatherhood, but the payoff has been extraordinary.

Adam

I couldn't agree more with these sentiments. I was moderating a panel about balancing life as an attorney and parent when a law student asked this important question: "Is it possible to be a great attorney *and* a great parent?" Yes, it is! My fellow Barristers Club parent/attorneys prove it every day.

Adam I. Kaplan, 2017 Barristers Club president, is a litigator in the San Francisco office of Munger, Tolles & Olson. His practice includes complex commercial litigation, copyright litigation, securities litigation, and internal corporate investigations. He can be reached at adam.kaplan@mto.com.

Mark

Talking about work with my kids has turned out to be a lot of fun, especially as they get older. Kids can give you great insight into your cases—they have a very strong sense of what is fair, and they are usually pretty blunt about calling nonsense.

Sebastian

I think fathers should be sensitive about gender disparities when talking about kids at work. I've noticed that when I take my daughters out in public by myself, I'm treated like a hero; but when my wife does, it's not noticed. And at work, I can talk about my kids, or not talk about them, without worrying it will raise doubts about my professional abilities. That's a privilege that, unfortunately, mothers often lack.

Phyra

There is no "right" or perfect time to have a kid. Make your own decisions about your career and your family. The time I thought I was ready, it didn't happen right away, so when it did and I didn't think I was ready anymore, I just had to go with it. Don't use your kid as an excuse not to do something you wish you could do. You can make it work.