

Synopsis of the Family Court

Legal Authority

The Belize Family Court operates under the guidance of the Family Court Act, Chapter 93 of the Laws of Belize Revised Edition 2020. Established on April 1, 1989, the Belize Family Court has been in operation for 36 years.

Practice and procedures of the Family Court

The Belize Family Court operates under the Family Court Act, Chapter 93 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2003. Established on April 1, 1989, the court aims to provide a complete, professional, family-centred service in a caring, committed, and confidential manner, based on the principles of dignity and respect for all. The court's mission is to settle family and juvenile matters in a holistic manner, offering alternative methods for reconciliation, protection, rehabilitation, growth, and development. It plays a vital role in keeping society together by administering justice for family and juvenile matters. The court has seen a significant increase in the number of cases it administers annually, with the majority falling within the areas of Maintenance and Domestic Violence. The Domestic Violence Chapter 178, revised edition 2020, provides greater protection and assistance for victims of domestic violence, including the power to direct respondents to relinquish firearms used in domestic violence and to receive professional counselling or therapy. The court also oversees cases regarding child custody, including securing the rights of a child, appointing custody, providing support, determining family maintenance, determining parentage, ensuring proper care and protection, and assigning proper foster care placements.