

Question: How do I find general or explanatory information (analysis-type) on a specific topic of law?

General Answer

1. You may use Lexis Advance or Westlaw.
2. On the home page of one of Lexis Advance or Westlaw, there should be an indicator of “Secondary Materials” or “Secondary Sources” under the general heading of All Content or Content Types.
3. The list of secondary materials could be initially limited to the geographic area/jurisdiction you are concerned with. Often this is New York State.
4. Alternatively or in conjunction with limiting by geographic area/jurisdiction, you can limit secondary sources by a specific area of law (ex. estates, criminal, etc.).
5. You may need or want then to identify a specific source. Some are NYS-oriented and others national in scope. There may also be sources that are oriented toward a specific sub-area of law you are looking in. If needed, specific a state-specific or national source and the sub-area of law you are working with.
6. You can then browse or a table of contents for the source(s) to find a specific topic of interest. The source can also be searched as well.

Example using Lexis Advance

How do I find background analysis-type information (covering both statute and caselaw) on the ability of a grandparent, sibling or other family member to obtain custody of a child when the parents are found to have neglected him/her in NYS?

1. Click on the Lexis Advance link at the top left hand corner of the Public Access Terminal home page.
2. Click on “Secondary Materials” under Content Type.

The screenshot shows the Lexis Advance Research interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Lexis Advance® Research', a 'Browse' dropdown, and 'Client: -None-', 'History', and 'More' options. Below this is the 'Lexis Advance®' logo and a search bar with the placeholder text 'Enter terms, sources, a citation, or shep: to Shepardize®'. To the right of the search bar are links for 'Advanced Search | Tips | Get a Doc Assistance' and a search button. Below the search bar is a 'Content Type' navigation menu with tabs for 'Federal', 'State', 'Practice Area or Industry', and 'International'. Under the 'Practice Area or Industry' tab, 'Secondary Materials' is circled in red. Other content types listed include Cases, Statutes and Legislation, Administrative Codes and Regulations, Administrative and Agency Materials, Jury Instructions, News, Legal News, Dockets, Scientific, Company and Financial, Directories, Intellectual Property, Practical Guidance, and Public Records.

3. Click on “Family Law” under Practice Area.

Practice Area

Administrative Law	Constitutional Law	Healthcare Law	Public Contracts Law
Admiralty & Maritime Law	Contracts Law	Immigration Law	Public Health & Welfare Law
Antitrust & Trade Law	Copyright Law	Insurance Law	Real Property Law
Banking Law	Criminal Law & Procedure	International Law	Securities Law
Bankruptcy Law	Education Law	International Trade Law	Tax Law
Business & Corporate Law	Energy & Utilities Law	Labor & Employment Law	Torts
Civil Procedure	Environmental Law	Legal Ethics	Trade Secrets Law
Civil Rights Law	Estate, Gift & Trust Law	Mergers & Acquisitions Law	Trademark Law
Commercial Law (UCC)	Evidence	Military & Veterans Law	Transportation Law
Communications Law	Family Law	Patent Law	Workers' Compensation & SSDI
Computer & Internet Law	Governments	Pensions & Benefits Law	

4. Click on “All Family Law Treatises, Practice Guides & Jurisprudence”.

[Home](#) / [Secondary Materials](#) / [Family Law](#)

Family Law | [Actions](#) ▾

[Advanced Search](#) | [Tips](#)

Enter terms, sources, a citation, or shep: to Shepardize®

Family Law; Secondary Materials



Secondary Materials

Treatises, Practice Guides & Jurisprudence

[All Family Law Treatises, Practice Guides & Jurisprudence](#)

[Lindey on Separation Agreements and Antenuptial Contracts](#) | [i](#)

[Family Law & Practice](#) | [i](#)

[Forms from Family Law Litigation Guide with Forms: Discovery, Evidence, Trial Practice](#) | [i](#)

[Child Custody and Visitation Law and Practice](#) | [i](#)

[Valuation and Distribution of Marital Property](#) | [i](#)

Law Reviews & Journals

[All Family Law Reviews and Journals](#)

5. Click on “New York Civil Practice: Family Court Proceedings”. We are selecting this source because it is NYS-specific.

General

[Adoption and Reproductive Technology Law in Massachusetts \(MCLE\)* | i](#)

[Adoption Law and Practice | i](#)

[Adoption, Paternity and Other Florida Family Practice \(FLCLE\)* | i](#)

[Anderson's Ohio Domestic Relations Practice Manual | i](#)

[Anderson's Ohio Family Law | i](#)

[Arkansas Bar Association - Domestic Relations Handbook* | i](#)

[Bender's Forms for the Civil Practice | i](#)

[California Community Property With Tax Analysis | i](#)

[California Family Law Litigation Guide | i](#)

[California Family Law Practice and Procedure | i](#)

[CBA/LN - The Practitioner's Guide to Colorado Domestic Relations Law* | i](#)

[Child Custody and Visitation Law and Practice | i](#)

[Child Welfare Practice in Massachusetts \(MCLE\)* | i](#)

[Collier Family Law and the Bankruptcy Code | i](#)

[Complex Issues in California Family Law | i](#)

[Connecticut Family Law Citations | i](#)

[Couse's Ohio Form Book | i](#)

[Disputed Paternity Proceedings | i](#)

[Divorce, Separation and the Distribution of Property | i](#)

[Domestic Relations Manual for DC | i](#)

[Drafting Marriage Contracts in Florida \(FLCLE\)* | i](#)

[Encyclopedia of Matrimonial Clauses \(LJP\) | i](#)

[Family Law & Practice | i](#)

[Maine Family Law | i](#)

[Marital Litigation in South Carolina \(SCCLE\)* | i](#)

[Marital Settlement Agreement Form \(MSBA\) | i](#)

[Maryland Divorce & Separation Law \(MSBA\) | i](#)

[Maryland Domestic Relations Forms | i](#)

[Maryland Family Law | i](#)

[Massachusetts Divorce Law Practice Forms \(MCLE\)* | i](#)

[Massachusetts Divorce Law Practice Manual \(MCLE\)* | i](#)

[Massachusetts Domestic Relations | i](#)

[Massachusetts Family Law Sourcebook & Citator \(MCLE\)* | i](#)

[Massachusetts Juvenile Court Bench Book \(MCLE\)* | i](#)

[Massachusetts Juvenile Delinquency and Child Welfare Law Sourcebook & Citator \(MCLE\)* | i](#)

[Matthew Bender Practice Guide: California Family Law | i](#)

[Minnesota Family Law Practice Manual | i](#)

[Missouri Adoption Law & Practice \(MoBarCLE\)* | i](#)

[Missouri Family Law \(MoBarCLE\)* | i](#)

[Missouri Juvenile Law \(MoBarCLE\)* | i](#)

[Modern Child Custody Practice | i](#)

[New Hampshire Practice Series: Family | i](#)

[New Jersey Family Law Practice \(NJICLE\)* | i](#)

[New Jersey Family Law, Second Edition | i](#)

[New York Civil Practice: Family Court Proceedings | i](#)

[New York Civil Practice: Matrimonial Actions | i](#)

6. Review the table of contents for topics you think may be relevant to your question. In the table of contents links, click on the arrow icon sign next to “Chapter 13 Custody and Visitation”. We know our issue is on custody, so the material for our question could be here.

New York Civil Practice: Family Court Proceedings

🔍

Search All Documents in this source
 Table of Contents (TOC) only



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▶ What's New	☆	🔍
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▶ CHAPTER 2 GENERAL PROCEDURAL RULES; FAMILY COURT JUDGES	☆	🔍
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7. Click on “Part B Standards and Practices in Original Custody Proceedings”.

▶	Publication Information	☆	♀
▶	What's New	☆	♀
▶	CHAPTER 1 JURISDICTIONAL ASPECTS OF FAMILY COURT: A PRELIMINARY GUIDE	☆	♀
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	Chapters 4through 5 RESERVED	☆	
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▼	CHAPTER 13 CUSTODY AND VISITATION	☆	♀
	<input type="checkbox"/> Synopsis to CHAPTER 13: CUSTODY AND VISITATION		
▶	PART A INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN HANDLING CUSTODY AND VISITATION MATTERS	☆	♀
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▶	CHAPTER 14 RIGHTS AND LIABILITIES OF PRINCIPALS	☆	♀

8. Review the sections in the chapter and part to review the information. For this example, click on “§ 13.12 Custody Determinants in Initial Custody Conflicts Between Natural Parents and Nonparents”.

▼	CHAPTER 13 CUSTODY AND VISITATION	☆	Q+
	<input type="checkbox"/> Synopsis to CHAPTER 13 : CUSTODY AND VISITATION		
▶	PART A INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN HANDLING CUSTODY AND VISITATION MATTERS	☆	Q+
▼	PART B STANDARDS AND PRACTICES IN ORIGINAL CUSTODY PROCEEDINGS	☆	Q+
	<input type="checkbox"/> § 13.10 Child's Best Interests Constitutes Overriding Consideration		
▶	<input type="checkbox"/> § 13.11 Determinants in Initial Contests Between Natural Parents		
▶	<input type="checkbox"/> § 13.12 Custody Determinants in Initial Custody Conflicts Between Natural Parents and Nonparents		
	<input type="checkbox"/> § 13.13 Best Interests of Child Determinative in Original Custody Controversies Involving Nonparents Only		
▶	<input type="checkbox"/> § 13.14 Visitation Privileges		
	<input type="checkbox"/> §§ 13.15-13.19 [Reserved]		
▶	PART C MODIFICATION AND ENFORCEMENT ISSUES	☆	Q+
▶	CHAPTER 14 RIGHTS AND LIABILITIES OF PRINCIPALS	☆	Q+
▶	CHAPTER 15 MODIFICATION OF SUPPORT ORDERS	☆	Q+
▶	CHAPTER 16 ENFORCEMENT OF SUPPORT ORDERS	☆	Q+

9. Once in a section, discussion of how custody of a child is determined between natural parents, relatives and other potential suitable persons is potentially included. The information provided is explanatory in nature. You can review the sections you feel are on point.

Analysis material will also include links to statutes and case law, which is actual or primary law, throughout the text for you. Consequently, it is a great way to review both background information on a topic and then review the actual law (statutes and case law):

- Statutes define initial rules of law passed by the legislature or regulations defined by a government agency in further defining a legislative act (see yellow arrow below: click to find footnote to case, then click on case link).
- Caselaw interprets statutes. It defines how specific courts are defining the boundaries and meaning of statutes (see red arrow below: click to go directly to statute).

The screenshot shows a legal document viewer interface. At the top, there is a toolbar with icons for file operations and a search bar labeled "Search Document". Below the toolbar, the document title is "1-13 NY Civil Practice: Family Court Proceedings § 13.12". A "Copy Citation" button is visible. The table of contents on the left lists "New York Civil Practice: Family Court Proceedings > CHAPTER 13 CUSTODY AND VISITATION > PART B STANDARDS AND PRACTICES IN ORIGINAL CUSTODY PROCEEDINGS" and "§ 13.12 Custody Determinants in Initial Custody Conflicts Between Natural Parents and Nonparents". The main text section is titled "[1] Growing Recognition of Rights of Grandparents". The first paragraph discusses the presumption of custody for natural parents, with a yellow arrow pointing to a footnote link (1) and a red arrow pointing to a statute link (DRL § 72). The second paragraph discusses grandparent visitation and custody rights, with a red arrow pointing to the statute link (DRL § 72).