

HOT-BUTTON ISSUES

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10 TIPS FOR FINDING A SAFE DAYCARE

Download Our Guide
for Peace of Mind

A few months ago, an attorney I've known for years called my office. "Hey, Russell," she said, "I'm working on a daycare injury case right now. I asked a friend who I should go to for help, and they recommended you. Do you really work on these kinds of cases?"

I couldn't believe it. Here was an attorney I'd known for years and even partnered with on personal injury work in the past. And yet, she had no clue BLF has experience in helping people with daycare injuries.

I couldn't say, "yes" fast enough. After we hung up, I felt like climbing up on the roof of our building and shouting to the whole city of Dallas: "IF YOU NEED HELP WITH A CHILD INJURY CASE, BLF WAS MADE FOR YOU!"

Maybe that sounds extreme, but my team and I really are that passionate about helping parents and kids. We do pride ourselves on being a trial firm that can handle the most complex and catastrophic cases, but our main goal for years has been advocating for children injured in daycares and other childcare settings. We truly feel for these kids and their parents to the point that we go beyond legal representation and put together resources to help parents get ahead of potential daycare problems and keep their kids safe.

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One of these resources was inspired by my niece, Aria. My sister and her husband both work, so they had to put Aria in daycare as soon as she was old enough. But they were scared of choosing the wrong facility — just like all parents. When they asked our team how to find a safe, reputable daycare, we got inspired to create a guide for parents, especially folks whose children have already been through a traumatic event. My team and I call it "10 Tips for Finding a Safe Daycare: A Guide for Parents and Families." Here's a quick overview of the 10 tips inside:

- 1. TOUR THE DAYCARE WITH YOUR CHILD.** Try to do this during the day to look for red flags while other children are present.
- 2. ASK ABOUT THE DAYCARE'S SECURITY PROCEDURES.** Is there a strict check-in and check-out process? Are the doors monitored and secured at all times? You need to know.
- 3. FIND OUT HOW QUALIFIED THE DAYCARE'S EMPLOYEES ARE.** Most states have minimum requirements for this — but the bare minimum is rarely enough.
- 4. MAKE SURE THE DAYCARE IS LICENSED AND INSURED.** You should also check on the *type* of license or permit the daycare has. Some are better than others.
- 5. CHECK THE CHILD-TO-STAFF RATIO.** Daycare centers with low child-to-staff ratios have fewer complaints, deficiencies, and injuries.
- 6. ASK ABOUT TRANSPARENCY.** Can you visit the daycare any time during operating hours? How often can you expect updates on your child? These are important questions.

- 7. LOOK UP REVIEWS AND ASK FOR REFERENCES.** A good daycare will have a list of references available and score highly in Google and Facebook reviews.
- 8. CALL WITH ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS.** Your call should be answered by a polite, informed staff member. Our guide includes four questions you can ask them.
- 9. ASK ABOUT SECURITY CAMERAS.** We recommend using a daycare with security cameras that offer both a live feed and a recorded feed.
- 10. DO EXTRA RESEARCH.** Look online for daycare licensing, inspection reports, and deficiency citations that show you if the daycare has violated the law.

What I've written here just scratches the surface. **You can download the full guide for free by scanning the QR code included with this article.** We hope this helps your family in finding the safest and best daycare for your child.

If you don't have children of daycare age but know someone who does, please share these tips with them. And remember, if anything goes wrong, our team can help. Our team knows how to help families with child injury cases. Help me spread the word!



-Russell Button

ASHLEY AND HER MENTOR — REUNITED!

THE 'PINK PANTHERS' ARE BACK TOGETHER

When she was in high school, BLF attorney Ashley Washington didn't eat in the cafeteria. Instead, every day at noon, she grabbed her lunch and headed to the classroom of her favorite teacher: Mrs. Pence, the law instructor and mock trial coach.

Ashley wasn't the only teenager who crashed Mrs. Pence's classroom. As she remembers it, the entire mock trial team camped out there during lunch for two years straight. Mrs. Pence's room was their anchor. It was the first place they met in the morning, the place they gathered to eat, and their port in a constant storm of typical high school drama.

"I had a rough time fitting in while in high school, and Mrs. Pence always stepped in to make me feel like I belonged," Ashley remembers.

Ashley knew since she was a child that she wanted to be an attorney, and Mrs. Pence's classroom was her first step on that journey. Though she didn't realize it at the time, Ashley also made a lifelong friend and mentor.

This summer, she and Mrs. Pence reconnected after 17 years apart.

THE EPIC ROAD TRIP REUNION

If the name "Mrs. Pence" sounds familiar, that might be because Ashley shared a bit about her in our August newsletter. After writing about Mrs. Pence as her all-time favorite teacher, Ashley realized it had been years since she'd talked to her. She reached out on Facebook, and Mrs. Pence responded!

They shared memories from high school and made plans to meet when Ashley was in Florida. There was only one problem: Ashley was visiting Miami, and Mrs. Pence was three hours away in Cape Coral. But even a road trip couldn't get in the way of their reunion.

"She drove the whole three hours to have lunch with me!" Ashley says.

When they met, Ashley and her mentor both cracked up remembering their mock trial team, "The Pink Panthers," and how they got their name.

THE STORY OF 'THE PINK PANTHERS'

It was the day of an important mock trial competition. Tension was high, and after hours of watching other teams compete, Ashley realized something was missing. The winning teams of the past years always coordinated outfits and consistently scored higher in professionalism than those that didn't — like hers.

"Ashley being Ashley, she wanted to win!" Mrs. Pence recalls. "We were a very good team, and she was smart enough to say, 'We should up our game.'"

On the day of their trial, Ashley (the team captain) surprised her team with matching pink dress shirts. They all changed right there in the lobby before running inside to compete — and it worked!

"That was the first thing the judges recognized," Ashley remembers. Their marks for professionalism soared.

From then on, Mrs. Pence required all of her mock trial teams to wear matching outfits, just like the original team she dubbed "The Pink Panthers." In her final year of coaching, her team made it to the state competition and took first place in professionalism.

A TEACHER'S LEGACY

Mrs. Pence taught classes on law studies, constitutional law, legal research, international relations, and American



history for 19 years. Her bottomless legal wisdom and encouraging attitude made her one of the most important people in Ashley's life, and she's still a major influence today.

Without her, Ashley would not be the advocate she is today, and she definitely wouldn't have become a mock trial coach for the University of Houston Law Center, where she puts Mrs. Pence's lessons into practice.

"The thing about teaching is that hopefully you give something to students that lights a fire in them, and they go forth in their life," Mrs. Pence says. "When I hear about what Ashley is doing, it makes me so happy. I'm happy for her, and happy for the world."

Our team here at BLF is incredibly lucky to have Ashley, and even luckier that Ashley had Mrs. Pence. If you happen to be a teacher, thank you for your life-changing work!

EVERYONE NEEDS A JAMES

Our New Hire Gets Things Done — Even After Midnight!

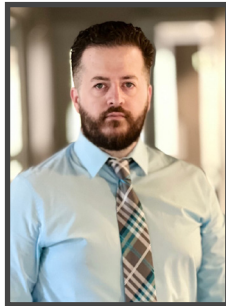
A few years ago, Russell's mom was flying home from a trip. Her flights were delayed over and over. Every time she updated Russell, his anxiety spiked. He wasn't in Dallas, nor was his dad — so who would pick his mom up from the airport in the middle of the night?

Russell was so worried about what could happen to his mom if she took a late-night Uber or taxi ride that he couldn't sleep. So, he called one of his oldest friends, James Cook, for help.

"I started calling James," Russell remembers. "He answered, got up in the middle of the night, went to the airport to pick up my mom, and made sure she got home safely — no

questions asked. I have a million stories like that from throughout our lives. I can always rely on James, no matter what."

Russell and James have been friends since second grade, and as of this June, they're also coworkers! We're thrilled to have James on the BLF team as our operations assistant.



James's background in transport, logistics, and customer service makes him an excellent fit for the role. He jumps in wherever he's needed, whether delivering essential documents to our clients or co-counsel, restocking supplies, or making clients feel comfortable in our office.

"I keep the train moving, and I like it that way," he says.

James is excited to play a part in BLF's mission to help kids and families.

"Working in the legal field is new to me, but I've always been open to and intrigued by BLF, the people they help, and how they can make a difference for families with the effort they put in," he explains. "... There is no 'half effort,' only giving everything we can. At the end of the day, we can give somebody hope."

When James isn't working, you can find him watching the Food Network or experimenting with a new cuisine in his kitchen. Right now, he's cooking regional Italian food with the same zeal he brings to his job.

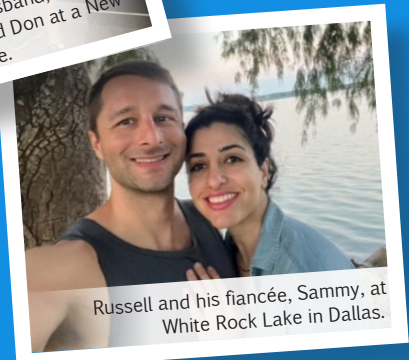
BLF HIGHLIGHT REEL



Elizabeth with her husband, Kelly, and friends Erica and Don at a New Orleans Saints game.



Jessica with her husband, Michael, and her daughter Hazel at a school event.



Russell and his fiancée, Sammy, at White Rock Lake in Dallas.

CLIENT REVIEW

"My son in elementary school was beaten up on a public school bus, and unfortunately, the bus driver did not stop. This situation happened for over several minutes, with my son being choked, punched, and more. My son ran home once he was able to get off the bus. And I immediately called the police department and made a report. Then I knew something needed to be done. I called around to multiple firms, but it was turned down until I was referred to the Button Law Firm. Russell got in contact with me super fast and told me immediately that he wanted to take our case on. Russell and his team worked so diligently at each detail. And now we are able to say that we can put this to the past and continue to repair and move forward. I spoke with Rosie multiple times; she is very professional, informative, and kindhearted. Also Ashley worked directly with Russell on my case, which was very professional as well. I am so beyond happy I called Button Law Firm. They look out for the best of all."

-Jessica D.

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BLF BATTLES A DAYCARE DISASTER

Justice for a Victim of Bad Discipline Practices

As a parent, one of the most important things you can do for your child is find them a safe daycare center. This is harder than it seems! Often, daycares with serious problems like understaffing, lax security, and poorly trained employees hide their red flags from visiting parents. You could accidentally choose a daycare that is a disaster waiting to happen.

That's exactly what our clients experienced when they picked out a daycare center for their sweet 2-year-old girl, whom we'll call Aubrey. They chose a facility here in Texas that seemed perfectly safe but was actually staffed by people who weren't properly trained, supervised, or vetted for the job. While Aubrey was in daycare, she was the victim of illegal discipline when a staff member pushed her to the ground.

Aubrey fell face-first and sustained a facial injury to her right cheek in the fall. She was traumatized by the inappropriate "discipline" and its aftermath. She lost trust

in adults, regressed in her potty training, and even developed anxiety and nightmares. Her parents came to our team looking for help and justice.

We gathered the evidence, dove deep into the daycare's negligence and lack of communication, and held them accountable for Aubrey's awful experience.



It felt great to secure justice for Aubrey and her parents, but it wasn't enough. Our team is determined to stop incidents like this *before* they happen by educating parents about the process of daycare selection. It's hard to find a safe daycare, but it isn't impossible! Check out the cover of this newsletter to learn how to download our free guide, '10 Tips for Choosing a Safe Daycare.'

Whether your child has already been through trauma at daycare or you're considering professional care for the first time, these tips will help you protect them from an injury like Aubrey's.