



# Family Law

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## A

You are asking whether you can legally give your child an unusual name. The answer is, depending on where you live, there are some restrictions as to what you can name your child. Recently, in France a judge did not permit the parents to name a baby girl "Nutella", stating that it was contrary to the child's interest to have a name that would only lead to teasing or disparaging thoughts. Instead, the judge directed that the child's name be "Ella".

New Zealand judges have rejected "Princess" and "Lucifer" but accepted "Number 16 Bus Shelter". German judges have rejected "Osama bin Laden" but accepted "Legolas" and "Nemo." If you are in Québec, British Columbia or Saskatchewan, there are rules as to what you cannot do. For example, in Québec the provincial registrar can reject a name that clearly invites ridicule or may discredit

the child. In the past, names like "Boom-Boom", and "Lucifer" have been rejected, along with "Avalanche".

In Ontario, you are restricted from naming your child using symbols or numbers, but otherwise given free rein. However, my mother used to say, "Just because you can do something does not mean you should". This applies to naming your child; I had a cousin who was named "Zipper", and he hated the teasing he received. So, for the most part, you can choose any name that you want, but if you want to show off how clever you are, why not change your own name instead?

If you are still determined to pick an unusual name, consult a local family lawyer for help in determining whether you can name your child the name of your choice.

Your friends at Shank Law.



Roxanne C. Shank  
LAWYER

## Q

I want to name my baby a fun name but my mother says I cannot. Why can't I name my baby anything I want to? It is my baby.



Phone: 705-435-5055  
Email: [lynn@shanklawoffice.com](mailto:lynn@shanklawoffice.com)  
Web: [shanklawoffice.com](http://shanklawoffice.com)

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