

## Parenting Agreement Worksheet

This worksheet will assist couples in developing a parenting plan which meets the needs of their children and satisfies the requirements of the law. A Parenting Plan includes the following elements: 1) a schedule of time each parent spends with the child; 2) a designation of decision-making responsibilities regarding the child; and 3) a method of future dispute resolution

### **As you use this worksheet, keep in mind:**

- ✓ The Parenting Agreement Worksheet is a tool to create a unique parenting plan which will meet the needs of individual families. Parents are encouraged to use it as a working document and to change specific items or add to the plan based on their particular circumstances.
- ✓ The worksheet may be used for separating, divorcing or never-married parents, or edited for use with other primary care givers, such as grandparents.
- ✓ The language is gender-free and does not specify “mother” and “father.” Parents are asked to include language that fits for them or to remove language they do not want included. For example, parents with teenage children may delete the descriptive language regarding infants and toddlers.
- ✓ A chart is provided to help schedule parenting time, including ongoing, vacation, and holiday schedules. Holiday and access scheduling is created with as much detail as possible, including pick-up and drop-off times, to avoid future conflict.

# ***Parenting Plan***

**Parent's name:**

**Address:**

**Parent's name:**

**Address:**

**Child(ren) :**

## **Parenting Philosophy**

Our children need to experience love and affection from both of us. We understand that our level of cooperation in our parenting partnership is the single biggest predictor of success in our children's future. We need to support each other's parenting. This means that we will give our children messages that they are loved and appreciated in both our homes.

## **Models of Development and Tasks:**

***The developmental work of elementary school-age children (5 – 12) includes:***

- Developing and maintaining positive relationships with peers and adults
- Growth of academic, athletic and artistic skills
- Learning organizational and time management skills
- Increasing independence and self reliance
- Developing empathy for the feelings of others
- Learning and practicing social skills such as fairness and cooperation

## **Co-parenting considerations for parents of children this age:**

- Reinforce your child's sense of self-esteem, self-worth, moral development and personal safety.
- Help your child become more aware and appreciative of their parents' individuality.
- Support your child's identification with the same gender parent and his/her relationship with the other parent.
- Empathize with the child's feelings about the divorce or break up.
- Provide the child with age-appropriate tools for organizing and managing schedules and time.
- Establish and follow a predictable routine.

- Encourage and assist with phone, text, and/or email contact with each parent.
- Avoid criticism of either parent or others close to either parent.
- As appropriate, advise school personnel of stresses the child may be experiencing and solicit support and assistance.
- Actively encourage and support the child in maintaining connections with friends and extracurricular activities.
- Encourage both parents to attend your child's games and events.

***The developmental work of adolescence (12-18 years) includes:***

- Establishing a sense of identity and self-worth
- Developing appreciation for societal rules and regulations
- Going through the process of emancipating from parents
- Increasing mastery of life skills, academic, artistic and athletic skills
- Making and sustaining positive relationships with peers
- Continuing the process of gender identification
- Questioning the values and beliefs of others and developing one's own belief system
- Dating and managing sexual feelings
- Developing a work ethic, objectives and goals for academics and work which will become a foundation for future success in life

**Co-parenting considerations for parents of adolescents:**

- Recognize teens may be ambivalent about the loss of childhood, dependency and the protection of family.
- Recognize that a teen's challenging of parents' beliefs and values probably reflects identity formation rather than oppositional behavior.
- Understand that teens may have doubts about their relationships with peers and family members.
- Recognize that parents may need to stay engaged even though teens might send inconsistent signals and messages about needing independence and separation; make a consistent effort to remain connected despite the teen's attitude.
- Give teens permission to be embarrassed or irritated about their relationships with parents---that's normal.
- Recognize teens need the active support and involvement of both parents.
- Recognize that teens may experiment with alcohol, drugs or other risky behavior in order to stay connected with their peer group.
- Recognize the need for consistency in family rules, and the wisdom of involving teens in the evolution of the rules.
- Recognize the importance of peer relationships, and that to the teen, these relationships may take priority over family time.
- Recognize that the parenting schedules for teens are often revised, for example when teens signal that they may prefer longer blocks of time with either or both parents.
- Recognize need to continue monitoring school progress.

**Issues specific to divorce and break up:**

- Seek input from adolescents when establishing a parenting time schedule.
- Allow sufficient flexibility in any schedule to provide for activities and time with friends.
- Consistently apply co-parenting rules and expectations.

- Be responsive to the needs and concerns of the adolescents, and be willing to flex rules in reasonable ways when necessary.
- Challenge the assumption that the other parent is to blame for a teen’s moods swings and negative attitudes. Moodiness and “attitude” are typical of adolescence.

## **I. Communication**

Primary form of communication will be via e-mail, unless the information is time sensitive and then communication will be via telephone or face-to-face. The tone will be respectful, courteous and there will be no arguing in front of the children.

## **II. Major Decision Making**

**A. Discipline and Boundaries:** We agree on the following guidelines for discipline and boundaries in our own respective homes:

- Bedtimes:
- Homework Routines:
- Behavior Problems:
- Friendships:
- Activities:
- Other:

### **B. Family Rituals:**

After meeting with our child specialist and coach, and seeking out the feelings of our children, we believe that the following rituals have been important to our family.

Based on this discussion, we agree to respect these rituals as follows:

**Holidays:**

**Vacations:**

**Contact with extended family:**

### **C. Education**

Each parent will contact our children's schools to get information about our children's needs, progress, special events, and parent-teacher conferences. We agree to share our children's school information with each other. Recognizing that college or technical training is important, we will encourage and support our children's efforts for further education.

**Parent-Teacher Conferences.** Both parents will attend the same parent-teacher conference.

**Events.** Both parents will be present at school or extracurricular activities for the children.

**Major decisions about our children's education will be made by:**

( ) Both parents ( ) Mother ( ) Father

## D. Medical Care

It is important to provide our children with good medical care. This may include dental, physical health, and psychological/counseling services for our children's guidance and behavioral health. We have discussed who will make appointments; attend appointments; receive reports; and transport our children; and how information will be conveyed to the other parent.

### Medical appointments.

**Emergencies.** The other parent will be notified immediately. If immediate medical attention is required, each parent may consent to emergency medical treatment for our children without waiting for the consent of the other parent. Each parent agrees that it is imperative that we be reachable by phone for such emergencies or necessary communication.

**Major decisions about our children's medical care will be made by:**

Both parents  Mother  Father

## E. Religion and Cultural Heritage

**Major decisions about religious or cultural events involving our children will be made by:**

Both parents  Mother  Father

## II. Parenting Time Schedule

*Transitions: We have discussed with our child specialist or coach the fact that transitions between our homes can be difficult for children during and after a separation or divorce. In recognizing this fact, we plan in the following ways to be sensitive to our children's needs as they transition from one home to another:*

- Cordially greeting and saying good-bye to the other parent
- Exchanging information about what each parent will be doing with the children, to help the children look forward to the transitions
- Exchange information regarding pertinent issues during their time with the other parent, i.e. sleeping or eating issues, physical or behavior concern or other
- Exchanging information about homework to make sure the homework assignments are done
- Having familiar things available for the children in each home so children do not feel like visitors in either home

### A. Parenting Time Schedule:

1. Weekly schedule:

Weekend Schedule:

We agree that adjustments to which weekend occurs when can be flexible as family and other situations arise.

2. Summer schedule:
3. Transportation logistics:

*We recognize there will be times the schedule will need to be changed because of changes in our lives and the lives of our children. We agree to be open to make adjustments.*

*We recognize decision making is an important part of parenting. We agree that each parent will need to make ordinary decisions about daily care during his or her on-duty parenting time.*

*We agree to treat each other with respect, be on time, and provide as much advance notice as possible with any schedule changes.*

**B. Holiday Schedule:**

Below is a list of holidays and special occasions frequently included in holiday schedules. Parents are encouraged to make changes and additions to develop a plan that reflects the occasions that are meaningful to them and their children. **The following holiday parenting time plan supercedes the usual ongoing parenting time arrangement:**

**Birthdays:**

<b>Holidays:</b>	<b>Odd-Numbered Years</b>	<b>Even-Numbered Years</b>
Labor Day		
MEA weekend		
Halloween		
Thanksgiving**		
Christmas Eve		
Christmas Day		
Martin Luther King Day		
President's Day		
Easter		
Mother's Day		
Memorial Day****		
Father's Day		
July 4 <sup>th</sup> ****		

**School Breaks:**

Spring Break:

Winter Break:

MEA Weekend:

Late Starts:

\*If either parent is unable to get time off from work for the school break the other parent will be given proper notice.

### **C. Vacations**

We want our child to spend enjoyable vacation time with each parent. We have discussed the following ways that we will support our children's vacation planning:

#### **Vacation Arrangements.**

**Notice.** We agree to give the other parent notice before the anticipated vacation dates, if the vacation affects the usual parenting time or holiday schedule, as follows: We will inform the other parent of vacation dates as soon as plans are being decided and then confirmed.

**Vacation Transportation.** We agree to the following vacation transportation plan: Transportation will be arranged as necessary.

**Emergency Contact During Vacation.** Each parent will supply the other with emergency contact information for vacation periods as follows: The parent making the vacation plans will e-mail the other parent with phone number & location of where they are staying.

#### **Non-emergency Vacation Telephone Contact Between Child and Other Parent.**

We wish to have our child contact the other parent during our vacation time with our child as follows:

### **D. Other Ongoing Contact with Our Child**

**Phone Calls.** Phone calls are one of the many ways positive contact with parents can be encouraged and continued. We agree to allow each parent to have phone contact with our child as follows:

**Mail and e-mail.** We agree our child and each parent will be able to contact each other by mail and e-mail as follows:

### **E. Long Distance Contact**

If either parent lives a significant distance from our child, we agree to develop a plan to maintain good contact with our child. This may include e-mail, videotape and audio tape in addition to mail and telephone contact.

### **F. Participation in Child's Activities**

We agree our child benefits from our support of their extracurricular, athletic, religious, arts, and cultural activities. We agree to the following plan:

In making decisions about our child's activities we will consider our child's interests as well as the impact these activities may have on the time our child spends with each parent. Based on these considerations, we agree that our child should participate in the following activities:

The child will be encouraged to follow their interests and participate in a variety of activities. Participation in activities will be subject to the effect on the family schedule and budget.

We agree to consult with the other parent before registering our child for activities that may have an impact on the other parent's parenting time.

We agree to share information regarding our child's activities with each other.

#### **G. Child Care**

We have talked about child care, including who chooses the child care provider, picks up and/or drops off our children, emergency contact information, and who is able to visit our child at day care. We have agreed as follows:

We recognize that as our child gets older, we will need to review and make changes about alternate care, to agree on the age our child may be left alone, and to agree how long our child may be left alone without supervision.

We have discussed who will be responsible for our child if our child is sick or need to stay home from daycare or school. We have agreed:

We have discussed if we would like to be the first choice for back-up care in situations when the parent is unable to provide care for 24 hours or more. We have agreed as follows:

#### **H. Family Relationships**

We recognize our child will benefit from maintaining ties with extended family members and other people important to them. We agree that each parent will take primary responsibility for maintaining these relationships and to accommodate changes in the parenting schedule for special family occasions such as weddings, reunions, funerals and graduations.

#### **I. Parental Cooperation**

Children need both of their parents' love and support. We agree to leave our child out of adult discussions about our parenting plan and all other aspects of our divorce.

We will not discuss the other parent in a negative way in the presence of or within the hearing range of our child and will not allow others to do so. We will advise others about the importance of not speaking negatively about either parent around our child. ***In addition, we agree to support our child in loving each of us, so that the children feel free to express love and attachment to both of us in each other's homes.***

**Direct Communications.** We will encourage our child to discuss their grievances against a parent directly with the parent in question. We will discuss our concerns directly with the other parent without our child present.



**Expectations and Routines.** We agree to support consistent expectations and routines for our child, which may include shared expectations regarding homework, curfew, bedtime, television/movie appropriateness & restrictions, phone restrictions and chores. We agree on the following expectations:

**Parental Communication.** We recognize that communication between parents is very important and we agree to keep communication open by:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Each parent agrees that it is important to be reachable by phone should an emergency or other communication need arise.

#### **J. Transportation**

We recognize that time with the other parent is important and agree to arrange transportation as follows:

If the other parent is impaired or suspected to be impaired, the child will remain with the other parent. Should one parent obtain a DUI/DWI or any other substance related offense, that parent will be precluded from transporting the child.

In the event of inclement weather, a mutual, common sense agreement will be made based on the safety of the child.

We will help our child gather the things they will need to take to the other parent's home and/or school, and agree to be patient in helping our children stay organized in this way, particularly about homework assignments.

#### **K. Clothing**

We agree our child will need clothing and personal hygiene supplies in both parental homes. We agree to provide them in the following way:

#### **L. Financial Responsibility/Expenses**

The details regarding the financial support of our child are included in the terms of the proposed Judgment to which this Parenting Plan is attached. In making these plans for the financial support of our child, we have given particular attention to the following specific items:

**Activities & Sports:**

#### **M. Introduction of Significant Others to Children**

Each parent will be sensitive to the child's perceptions and needs when considering introducing them to a significant other. Prior to this event occurring, we agree to inform and discuss this with

the other parent. Ideally, this individual will be introduced to the other parent first. If there is an issue or concern expressed by the child, the parents will listen sympathetically, and will address the issue directly and openly with the other parent. If the issue can not be resolved by working together, and the child's concerns remain unaddressed, a mutually agreed upon parenting expert or Collaborative Team Professional will be contacted to assist with a recommendation.

#### **IV. Future Dispute Resolution**

**We agree that in the future we shall first make our best efforts to resolve any differences over our parenting on our own without the use of outside help for conflict resolution. However, in the event we cannot agree, we will use the following forms of alternate dispute resolution, as they may be appropriate or as we may choose to do so: use of a financial specialist to assist with budget or financial needs; use of a child specialist or coach to assist with other parenting needs; return to Collaborative Team Divorce with collaborative attorneys; or to make use of a one-mediator model for all aspects of disagreement. *We agree that we will not schedule any contested court appearances until we have made a good faith effort to utilize these forms of dispute resolution.***

##### **A. Changes to Our Parenting Agreement**

We agree to review our Parenting Agreement periodically as our children's developmental needs, activities, and interests change. We may make temporary or permanent changes to our Parenting Plan as mutually agreed. Changes to this plan must be confirmed by a Court Order to be enforced by the Court. If we are unable to agree to a change, this plan will prevail.

##### **C. Residential Moves**

We agree to discuss how our children will be affected by changes in residence and to renegotiate our parenting schedule, as needed, to meet our children's needs.

We agree that neither parent will move our children to another state without the consent of the other parent.

## Signing Statement

We have jointly created this developmentally responsive parenting plan in good faith, using interest-based negotiation and problem solving. We shall each honor the agreements we have reached to the best of our ability.

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Date

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Date