

# PLANNING FOR THE CHILDREN

*Working together to create a Parenting Plan that meets the best interests of your children*

**Ending a relationship is hard. It is equally hard for children.**

Children can continue to grow and thrive even when their parents are no longer a couple as long as you:

- **Don't fight or talk negatively about each other in front of them; and**
- **Build security back into their lives right away**

Unless contact puts their safety somehow at risk, your children need regular time with both parents so that both parents are an integral part of their lives.

That means you and your former partner must find ways to make thoughtful decisions at a most difficult time, to agree as much as possible about what's important and to work out differences and eventually "co-parent" to make your children's lives positive and strong.

Our mediators can help you do that. However, you are the ones who know the most about your children and yourselves ... your needs, hopes and concerns. These are your decisions. If you're just beginning to think about how to share time, information, and make decisions together about your children, completing this packet can be the first step.

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# SHAPING A PARENTING PLAN

## SETTING THE SCENE

When a couple ends their relationship as “husband and wife” or “partners”, they will always remain “parents” of their children. Unless there are issues of substance or child abuse, children and their parents need continued and real participation in each other’s lives. Therefore, the focus when developing a Parenting Plan is not on “who gets the kids and who has to visit” or “who is most fit”, but rather on ways of “co-parenting” and ensuring that the children have real and continuing access to and interaction with **both** of their parents, in a way that works.

In mediation, we do this by helping parents talk about:

- What their children are like;
- What is important to them personally; and
- What is in the “best interests” of the children.

By talking and focusing on the needs of your children in mediation, most parents can work out agreements, function cooperatively and learn to co-parent.

## REMEMBER THE BASIC PREMISES

- Children can continue to grow and thrive even when their parents are no longer a couple, as long as you:
  - **Don’t fight or talk negatively about each other in front of the children; and**
  - **Build security back into their lives as soon as you can.**
- Whatever the final decisions about sharing time, decision-making and information-sharing, unless there is some reason to protect the children from one parent, they will spend time with both of you. Therefore, it is important to learn how to work and co-parent, together.
- When developing an effective parenting plan, the needs of the children should be evaluated first. Then, agreements can be reached on what could help, what must be included, what cannot be done
- The actual parenting plan should meet the children’s needs first and your needs as parents second.

Once a parenting plan focusing on the needs of the children is developed, decisions on the legal issues, “custody” and “visitation”, can be made.

**PHYSICAL CUSTODY:** *who is immediately responsible for the care of the child at a particular time and what that care includes*

**LEGAL CUSTODY:** *how you will make the major decisions and share information about the child*

## **THE CHILDREN: DIVORCE OR END OF A PARTNERSHIP**

Adapted from: **CHILDREN OF DIVORCE, THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TASKS OF THE CHILD**, Judith Wallerstein, Ph.D., adapted by Anita Trubitt, M.S.W.

Divorce or end of a partnership represents a special kind of stressful experience for the child who has been raised by two parents. In these instances, the child’s experience is comparable in several ways to the experience of the child who loses a parent through death or to that of the child who loses his or her community following a natural disaster.

Each of these experiences strikes at and disrupts close family relationships. Each weakens the protection that the nuclear family provides, leaving it in its wake a diminished, more vulnerable family structure. Each begins with an acute, time-limited crisis, and is followed by an extended period of disequilibrium that may last several years or longer. For the family, there needs to be psychological, social and economic reorganization. For the child, these readjustments often stretch over the years of childhood and adolescence.



Normal development of children poses a number of social-emotional tasks that are universal across all cultures:

- TRUST in infancy
- AUTONOMY in the toddler years
- INITIATIVE as a pre-schooler
- INDUSTRY as a school-age child
- IDENTITY as an adolescent

The success with which a child achieves mastery of each of these developmental tasks depends on the successful resolution of the previous one. Optimal achievement of these tasks is dependent on an optimal environment for the child. When a change of massive proportions is imposed upon a child, it can be assumed that these normal developmental tasks will be adversely affected.

In addition to the above developmental tasks for all children and adolescents, the child of divorce must accomplish six additional psychological tasks described below. These additional demands on the child of divorce or ending partnership pose a special set of challenges and carry an added burden for them.

### **TASK #1: ACKNOWLEDGING THE END OF THE MARRIAGE OR PARTNERSHIP**

In this first stage the child has a powerful need to deny, defer and avoid the terrifying thoughts and feelings, and initially gains comfort in the fantasy that the parents will come together, and all will be well. By the end of the first year, children typically have accepted the reality of the end of the partnership.



### **TASK #2: STAYING OUT OF PARENT CONFLICTS AND ADAPTING TO A NEW LIFESTYLE**



This second task is achieved when the child is able to return to regular activities and relationships at school and at play, focus on learning and take pleasure in normal childhood activities. During this stage, the child must also achieve some measure of psychological distance and separation from the parents. By the end of the first year-and-a-half, the majority of youngsters are able to find their way back to an age-appropriate lifestyle.

### **TASK #3: RESOLUTION OF LOSS**

Losses for children often include not only the loss of daily contact with either parent, but also the loss of familiar daily routines, the loss of the symbols, traditions and continuity of the intact family, and the loss of the protective physical presence of two parents who can buffer each other as needed. Often, the losses involved in the end of a partnership can include the loss of the family home, school and neighborhood, and sometimes of a more privileged way of life, including private school and a wide range of pleasurable, exciting activities.



#### **TASK #4: RESOLVING ANGER AND SELF-BLAME**

Children and adolescents do not believe in “no-fault” divorce or ending of partnerships. They may blame one or both parents, or they blame themselves. They may be angry with the parent who initiated the divorce or ending of the partnership or with both parents for what they perceive as self-centeredness not caring about their wishes to keep the family together. The anger that these children experience is sometimes likely to be intense and long lasting. The diminishing of anger and forgiveness go hand in hand with the growing emotional maturity of the child and the child’s ability to forgive him/herself for not being able to keep his/her parents together.

#### **TASK #5: ACCEPTING THE PERMANENCE OF DIVORCE**

The child who loses a parent through death comes to understand, during the period of mourning, that death can never be undone. The child of divorce or ending partnership, however, faces a more difficult task in accepting permanence because the living presence and availability of two parents gives continuing credence to the wish to restore the relationship. The fantasy of restoration taps into deep wellsprings within the child’s functioning and yields to reality only very gradually, usually not until the child makes a clear psychological separation between self and parent during the adolescent years.



#### **TASK #6: ACHIEVING REALISTIC HOPES REGARDING RELATIONSHIPS**



The most important task for both the child and for society is the ability to reach and sustain a realistic vision regarding one’s ability to love and be loved. It is the task that brings together and integrates the coping efforts of earlier years and provides an opportunity for the resolution of the impact of the divorce experience. In the same way that the child who loses a parent through death must learn to take a chance on loving with the full knowledge that humans are mortal and that all relationships will end; so too the child of divorce or ending partnership must learn to take a chance on a long relationship that may fail, but with the realistic hope that it will flourish and endure.

**REMEMBER: NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF A DIVORCE OR ENDING PARTNERSHIP VARY FROM CHILD TO CHILD AND FAMILY TO FAMILY. AFTER THE INITIAL TRANSITION, HOW THE PARENTS INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER AND PARENT THE CHILD ARE GREATER PREDICTORS OF CHILD BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS THAN WHETHER THE CHILD LIVES IN A ONE OR TWO PARENT FAMILY.**



## **PRINCIPLES FOR CO-PARENTING**

1. Stop blaming the other parent or yourself for what happened in the past. Realize that the past is behind you and cannot be relived.
2. Realize that your child needs TWO parents. Be willing to share your child with the other parent.
3. In discussions with the other parent, stick to issues pertaining to your child. Do not bring up other matters.
4. Stay focused on your child's current and future needs.
5. Work together with the other parent to provide your child with as safe and as conflict-free an environment as possible.
6. Make every effort to be civil to your former spouse/partner and defuse tension and animosity so that your child can have a decent, peaceful, and satisfying life.

## **COOPERATION & EFFECTIVE CO-PARENTING MEANS:**

1. Agreeing on a workable parenting plan that gives children access to both parents.
2. Keeping ongoing contact with the children so they don't feel rejected or abandoned
3. Reassuring the children that they can still count on both parents.
4. Taking the parenting plan seriously.
5. Never disappointing the children at the last minute.
6. Rarely canceling plans with children.
7. Each parent establishing a 'home' for children with a place for their clothes, toys, and other possessions, even if it's a futon and an orange crate.
8. Maintaining frequent telephone contact with the children.
9. Providing children telephone/email access to both parents.
10. Having children ready on time for the other parent.
11. Being home to receive the children on time.
12. Calling the other parent when it's necessary to be late.
13. Setting up a 'hot line' between parents for discussion of serious problems/important issues concerning the children.



## **YOU ARE NOT EFFECTIVELY COOPERATING & CO-PARENTING WHEN YOU:**

- Pump children for information about the other parent.
- Try to control the other parent.
- Use the children to carry angry messages back and forth.
- Use the children to deliver child support payments.
- Argue in front of the children.
- Speak negatively about the other parent.
- Ask the children with whom they want to live.
- Put the children in the position of having to take sides.



## **SOME ADVANTAGES OF CO-PARENTING**

1. Fewer health, emotional, school and social problems for the children.
2. More personal satisfaction and less frustration for parents.
3. Fewer visitation problems.
4. Fewer child support problems.
5. Less going back to court.
6. Easier sharing of responsibility.
7. Better parent-child relationships.
8. More freedom from conflict.



# WHAT LITERATURE SAYS ABOUT A CHILD'S AGE AND TIMESHARING

## INFANTS TO AGE TWO

- One parent establishes "home-base"; other visits on MTW, takes over all day Saturday.
- One parent establishes "home-base"; other visits two days a week: in addition, spends one night and one full day with child.

GUIDELINES: As much stability and contact with the other parent, and conflict-free interaction between parents as possible. Until three years, the major issue is stability. Basic question: Has the child been cared for by both parents? Can the child handle shifting environments without major upset? Can parents manage a spirit of cooperation in caring for the child together/separately after the divorce? Explore what clues would tell them the plan was more than the child could handle.

## AGES THREE TO FIVE

- Two spaced overnights a week with one parent; rest of week with the other parent.
- One week with one parent; one week with other parent; phone calls back and forth.
- Three and a half days with each parent per week.

GUIDELINES: A child at this age can deal with more change and more people in their lives. The best test is if the child is cheerful and curious most of the time, eating well and suffering no major upsets, settles down at night easily, and doesn't cry for prolonged periods after leaving one or the other parent.

## AGES SIX TO TWELVE

- M/W with one parent; T/TH with other; alternate weekends.
- M/T with one parent; W/TH with other, alternate weekends.
- Three and a half days; three and a half days; split weekends.
- Three days/four days; split weekends (Wed. PM to Sat. PM with one; Sat. PM to Wed. PM with other) or to Sat. AM gives each parent a free weekend every other week.
- Two weeks/two weeks with midweek overnight with other parent (10-12 years).
- One month/one month, with exchange weekend or periodic overnights with other parent plus vacations.

GUIDELINES: The outside world is beginning to be more important. If possible, parents should be in geographical proximity so children can have continuity of school and friendships. Keeping the details and paraphernalia of life together takes work, especially since children normally have the "forgets" during this period.

## AGES THIRTEEN TO EIGHTEEN

- Home base with one parent: flexible but constant time with other parent for dinners, trips, activities, overnights, etc. Children stay in family home; parents move in and out; out-of-house parent spends flexible but consistent time with children.
- Parents maintain separate homes; children attend same school but live in home-base houses in alternative years. Other parent spends flexible, consistent time with children.
- School year with one parent/summer with other parent, if near enough, spends flexible, consistent time; midwinter holidays with summer parent.

GUIDELINES: The onset of puberty means children want freedom to alternate between being independent and dependent whenever they feel like it. They may still like going back and forth or may now reject the notion. They still need consistent supervision and may react even more profoundly to divorce than younger children. They should be consulted about time-sharing and the things they feel are critical in their lives.



## PARENTING PLAN CATEGORIES

### TIME-SHARING

<b>1. Residence (time with each parent)</b> Schedule/pattern of day-to-day arrangements, including transportation.	Options: children with one parent 100%; weekdays with one, weekends with other; school year with one, summer with other; etc.
<b>2. Vacations, holidays, special times</b>	Time during Christmas/Hanukkah with each; Time during other vacations with each; Mothers Day/Fathers Day; Children's birthdays; Parents' and grandparents' birthdays; Other holidays/family events.

### DECISION-MAKING

<b>1. General agreement</b> How major decisions about quality of child's life (school, religion and religious education, medical, general discipline, extracurricular activities) will be made	Options: residential parent makes all decisions, with or without input from or notification of nonresidential parent (sole legal custody); parents share all major decisions (joint legal custody) with plan for how to resolve differences.
<b>2. School arrangements</b>	School to be attended; who attends parent-teacher conferences; who gets report cards, school communications; who arranges/pays for tutoring, if needed, who pays school tuition, if private; who attends school performances, sports events, recitals, etc. (See Information Sharing)
<b>3. Medical care</b>	Preferred doctor, who makes decision re: doctors, dentist; who decides what type of medical care will be given; who cares for children when ill; who holds medical records. On whose medical coverage; how uncovered medical costs get paid; how extraordinary medical expenses (braces, plastic surgery) get paid.
<b>4. Religious education</b>	Church or temple children will attend; who selects; who pays fees; who provides transportation.
<b>5. Discipline issues</b>	Agreements and ways to handle differences in childrearing values; definitions of appropriate behavior; routines; study habits; chores, etc.

### INFORMATION SHARING

<b>1. Sharing of child development information</b>	General behavior, progress, issues, medical, school, other data regarding the children
<b>2. Scheduling information</b>	Time, schedule changes, i.e., illness, unpredicted events
<b>3. Regular planning sessions</b>	Time, schedule changes, i.e., changing needs, work, moving issues

# HELPING PARENTS SHAPE PARENTING PLANS: USEFUL QUESTIONS

*These questions are designed to help you think through all the possible ways you can make things work for yourselves and your children, as you part and continue to co-parent at the same time. Questions and options listed under each item do not cover all the possibilities or issues in your situation, so be sure to make notes on other ideas you have and bring them to mediation.*

## TIME-SHARING

How parents will share responsibility for the quality of their children's daily care

### 1. WHAT ARE THE CHILDREN'S SCHEDULES AND NEEDS?

- a. Is it important that each parent have regular contact with the child on school days?
- b. Is it important that each parent have time alone with each child?
- c. Is there any viable reason to limit or structure access (i.e., if there is spouse abuse, child abuse, alcoholism, drug abuse, court-ordered supervision?)

### 2. WHAT ARE THE ADULTS' SCHEDULES AND NEEDS?

- a. How will you know when you've got a plan that best meets the needs, desires and capacities of both adults and the children (what are your goals, desired outcomes for yourselves and children)?

### 3. WHAT ARE THE AVAILABLE OPTIONS?

Depending on age and needs of child(ren), space available, distance to school, etc.

- *every other weekend*
- *every other weekend / midweek visit*
- *every other weekend / midweek overnight*
- *every other weekend to Monday a.m.*
- *every other weekend to Monday with midweek overnight*
- *alternate weeks*
- *alternate weeks / midweek overnight*
- *Monday night to Thursday a.m. / Thursday night to Monday a.m.*
- *mother five days / father two days, then mother two days / father five days*

#### **4. HOW WILL YOU DEAL WITH VACATION TIME?**

- a. i.e., one parent each summer commencing X days after close of school and ending X days before school resumes; and the entire winter-Christmas school vacation: other parent entire Spring school vacation, first X and last X days of summer school vacation.
- b. i.e., each parent will take children all/part of their individual vacations and jointly choose a day care plan for intervening periods.

#### **5. HOW WILL YOU SET SCHEDULES FOR HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL DAYS?**

- a. Arrange X months at a time?
- b. Put in your agreement that in any year where you haven't agreed in writing to a schedule, the following schedule will supersede the basic responsibility schedule?

#### **6. DO YOU WANT A FEW "WILD CARD" DAYS PER YEAR TO COVER SPECIAL EVENTS?**

- a. Each parent entitled to up to X additional days of responsibility a year upon at least X days notice to other party, provided that...?

#### **7. HOW WILL TRANSITION FROM ONE HOME TO ANOTHER GO?**

- a. What will each expect re: Condition of child? Clothes? Baths? Meals? Toys? School supplies? Extracurricular activity equipment? Other gear?
- b. Is it o.k. to schedule pickups/drop-offs at residences or school, day camp, day care?

#### **8. WHERE THERE IS RISK OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, do you need a neutral, safe place for access exchanges; do you need supervised access?**

#### **9. WHERE THERE ARE ANY OTHER RISKS TO CHILD (e.g., concern about use of alcohol, drugs), do you need agreements to refrain from consuming alcohol or drugs while child is in Xs care and for a period of hours prior to such periods?**

## DECISION-MAKING

### 1. WHAT ARE THE BIG DECISIONS THAT SHAPE YOUR CHILDREN'S LIVES?

Those affecting the child's well-being, supervision, education, moral ethical religious training, standards of conduct, travel, non-emergency health care, decisions with long-range outcomes.

### 2. HOW DO YOU WANT TO MAKE THE MAJOR DECISIONS IN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE?

- a. Together? i.e. after school programs, non-emergency health care providers, regular day care or child care providers, regular extracurricular activities and counselors shall be selected jointly.
- b. Allocate specific decisions to specific partners? One of you mainly, in consultation with the other? Will you do that better face-to-face? By email? By phone?
- c. What will you do if you disagree about an issue?
  - *one parent makes decision re: (school); or re: (summer school)*
  - *if can't agree on private school, will child attend public school?*
  - *if can't agree to mutually fund an activity, will parent wanting it pay for it?*
- d. Do you want to frame some common attitude toward the role other significant adults might play in your children's lives:
  - *grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins*
  - *girlfriends, boyfriends, new spouses (i.e., that significant other adults will be encouraged to play a friendly, supportive role in the lives of the children that in no way threatens the parents' role?)*

### 3. WHAT ARE THE DAY-TO-DAY DECISIONS YOU WILL EACH HANDLE DURING YOUR PERIODS OF RESPONSIBILITY?

You are exercising parental responsibility and authority when you don't let a toddler go into the street, when you plan a visit to grandma, hire a sitter for a few hours, attend a parent-teacher conference, take a child to soccer practice or to the emergency room for stitches.

1. How do you want to handle the daily decisions?
2. Do you want to say that authority for making day-to-day decisions affecting the child belongs to the parent having responsibility at that time?
3. Looking at the parental activity from itemizing the task of caring for children on a daily basis are there any you would like to discuss, get some agreement on, or an agreement to disagree about?

#### **4. HOW WILL YOU MAKE NECESSARY CHANGES?**

- a. In recognition that children's needs and adults, lives change, how will you handle needs to fine-tune or change your plan?
- b. What kinds of changes could you predict?
  1. age and developmental changes of children
  2. changes in composition of each parent's household
  3. location of each residence
  4. employment and financial changes
  5. changes in hours each parent is available to care for the children
  6. children's school and activity schedule changes
  7. changes in identified needs and capacities of children
- c. How do you know when something's not going well for your children? (Clinginess, withdrawal, anxiety, fearfulness, sleep or eating problems, grinding teeth, crankiness, acting up, social problems, physical illness, slipping school grades, just plain unhappy?)
- d. What would you like to see happen when you see these behaviors in your child(ren)?
- e. See information-sharing for transmitting these concerns.

#### **5. HOW WILL YOU WORK OUT ANY DIFFERENCES ABOUT THOSE CHANGES?**

i.e., upon request of either party, each party will schedule and keep appointment with the Mediation Center or other mutually acceptable person or organization who can help you resolve those differences.

## **INFORMATION SHARING**

### **1. WHAT INFORMATION WILL YOU WANT TO SHARE ON A REGULAR BASIS?**

- a. Child's well-being, experiences, immediate needs
- b. Report cards, samples of schoolwork
- c. School meeting notices, schedules, class programs
- d. Requests for parent-teacher conferences
- e. Invitations to special events, school and other activities involving the child(ren)
- f. Results of standardized or diagnostic tests
- g. Order forms for school pictures
- h. Communications from health providers
- i. Communication from sports or other extracurricular activity organizers

### **2. HOW WILL YOU SHARE INFORMATION?**

- a. Could you provide each other promptly with copies of above items, where desired? (specify when and how)
- b. Do you want to share information regarding the children regularly?  
Face-to-face? Note/notebook? Email? Text Message? Phone?
- c. How will you share information about emergencies?
  - 1. Do you want a provision that allows either parent to get emergency medical care, notification of illness, injury, emergencies, change of address or telephone number? Do you want to exchange medical release forms?



2. Do you want a provision that each agrees to notify the other as soon as reasonably possible of any injury, condition or illness requiring medical attention, hospitalization, interruption of child's usual routine, or any emergency involving the child?

### **3. DO YOU WANT A SYSTEM FOR HANDLING GLITCHES?**

- a. When your plans change; when there's time to notify (by when? how?), when there isn't time?
- b. Will it work better to each take responsibility for getting sitters when the child is with you or would either of you like to be called first to see if you are available?

### **4. ARE THERE ANY NEW WAYS OF TALKING WITH EACH OTHER YOU'D LIKE TO TRY WHEN YOU EXCHANGE INFORMATION? e.g.,**

- a. Deal only with the actual event, how it affects you, what you'd like to see happen differently?
- b. Refrain from saying negative things about each other in front of the child?
- c. Talk directly with each other rather than asking the child, friend, relative to get information for you?
- d. Understand that what each of you does in your own home and how you parent is your own business, unless the child is in danger, (can you maintain your own territory courteously and firmly and respect the other's right to do so)?

### **5. HOW WILL TELEPHONE CALLS BETWEEN CHILD AND PARENT BE HANDLED?**

- a. How will each facilitate those conversations? Child's right to privacy? Times child can be available? In the event the child will be away from home at those hours?
- b. How will handle adult issues without involving the child (negotiate changes, raise complaints, make important announcements)?

### **6. WHERE THERE IS A HISTORY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AS WELL AS A STRONG NEED TO DETACH FROM A CONFLICTFUL RELATIONSHIP, do you need an alternative method of communication? To meet always in a public place? To have someone with you?**

# WORKSHEET FOR DEVELOPING PARENTING PLANS

NAME OF CHILD \_\_\_\_\_ NAME OF CHILD \_\_\_\_\_

**LIST ALL THE WORDS YOU CAN THAT DESCRIBE WHAT THE CHILD IS LIKE.**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**LIST ANY CONCERNS YOU HAVE ABOUT HOW THE CHILD IS DOING: (any problems you feel that the child is dealing with that you would like to talk about and plan for)**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**LIST ALL THE THINGS YOU WANT FOR YOUR CHILDREN: (stable life, happiness, good relationship with both parents, good education, connection with religion, balance of work and play, etc.)**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**LIST ALL THE ISSUES YOU NEED TO SETTLE IN ORDER TO GIVE THEM THOSE THINGS: (how you two will part and continue to co-parent including: sharing time with the children, making decisions and sharing information (school, medical, social), etc.)**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**OTHER CONCERNS:**

_____	_____
_____	_____

## PARENTAL ACTIVITIES

Please use M or F on each line to show activity of BOTH mother and father.

ACTIVITIES	ALWAYS	USUALLY	EQUALLY	SELDOM	NEVER	HAVEN'T BUT WILLING	N/A
Buy Clothes							
Do laundry, ironing, mending							
Make beds, fold / hang clothes							
Wash hair, see that it gets cut							
See to regular bathing, teeth brushing							
Buy groceries							
Cook meals							
Have meals together							
Do dishes							
Get ready for school							
Pack lunch/give lunch money							
Confer with teachers							
See to homework time/space/help							
Fill out school papers							
Attend PTA meetings							
Take to after-school activities							
Take to day care							
Take to religious school/church							
Take to sports, social activities							
Take to library							
Arrange for play time with friends							

<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>ALWAYS</b>	<b>USUALLY</b>	<b>EQUALLY</b>	<b>SELDOM</b>	<b>NEVER</b>	<b>HAVEN'T BUT WILLING</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Set play rules, be available							
Monitor TV/Internet activity							
Arrange for family recreation							
Plan time with extended family							
Take to birthday parties, buy gifts							
Tend to minor first aid							
Recognize physical, emotional stress							
Care for when sick							
Take to dentist, doctor							
Seek help when troubled about child's growth or development							
Express positive feelings for child							
Encourage child's interests							
Commend child's efforts							
Talk, listen and read together							
Set limits child can understand							
Assign chores child can do							
Support child's relationship with other parent							
Keep adult issues separate							
Help child prepare for time with other parent							
Change arrangements as child needs							
Arrange time for self, get reliable babysitters							

## PLANNING FORM FOR CHILD'S TIME WITH EACH PARENT

Note: Each line covers two week's time, providing the space to create up to four different time-sharing plans that you could live with. At least one of them – with some negotiated adjustments – should work for everyone involved. Use M and F to show when child(ren) is/are with each parent.

	M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU
<b>DAY</b>														
<b>NIGHT</b>														

	M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU
<b>DAY</b>														
<b>NIGHT</b>														

	M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU
<b>DAY</b>														
<b>NIGHT</b>														

	M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU
<b>DAY</b>														
<b>NIGHT</b>														

Thanksgiving \_\_\_\_\_

Child's birthday \_\_\_\_\_

Christmas (Winter recess) \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's birthday \_\_\_\_\_

Easter (Spring recess) \_\_\_\_\_

Father's birthday \_\_\_\_\_

Other religious holidays \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Day \_\_\_\_\_

Three/four-day weekends \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Day \_\_\_\_\_