



THE LAW COLLABORATIVE

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BUILDING A CO-PARENTING PLAN

The most important document that you will prepare is your parenting plan. When you create an equitable and flexible version of the parenting plan, the possibility of reaching the standard of the best interest of the child is greatly enhanced. This is how you may provide your child with a win-win custody arrangement.

In each custody case, the judge must sign a plan that indicates how the child will be cared for. You have a chance to influence this decision by writing your own plan. The more time you spend thinking through the following custody issues, the better your chances are of influencing the other parent, the evaluator, or judge to decide in a way that is satisfactory to your child and you. Remember, eventually there will be a court ordered parenting plan that becomes the law in your family. This plan will not be easily modified. How well prepared you are will make a big difference in the outcome.

Before beginning your parenting plan, take into consideration the specifics that apply to your child in age characteristics. Anticipate future changes that will be needed as your child goes through predictable development stages. This can cut down on future trips to Court.

1. _____ is the appropriate kind of custody. (See Divorce Glossary for types of custody).

- A. Joint Custody
- B. Divided and Alternating Custody
- C. Split Custody
- D. Sole Custody

2. Division of the child's time between parents will be:

- A. Week days, including overnight

- B. Mid week visits

C. Weekends - Every weekend or alternating ones

D. 3 day weekends

E. Vacations

1). Christmas/Winter

2). Easter/Spring

3). Summer

F. Special Days

1). Child's Birthday

2). Parent's Birthday

3). Mother's Day/Father's Day

G. Realistically how much time do I have for the child (see chart):

H. The holiday schedule will be:

I. I will/will not have "right of refusal." In situations when the other parent leaves child in another's care for more than ___hours, I will be offered that time to be with the child first.

3. The arrangements that need to be made for financial support are:

A. The amount of money that will be paid in child support:

B. Support will be paid according to the following time schedule:

C. Will state and federal tax deduction alternate between parents? If so, how?

4. The child's educational requirements will be handled by:

A. The child will go to a private/public school.

B. _____ will attend parent-teacher conferences.

C. Parents will keep each other informed about school events by:

D. The special needs or talents that need to be addressed in order to supplement the child's education are: _____

E. The extra curricular activities that I think are important for my child are:

F. _____ will be allowed to attend and accompany child during organized activities such as: Little League, Boy Scouts, school activities, etc.

G. _____ will make decisions about changing the child's school.

H. The financial arrangements that will be made for child's future education after high school are:

5. The child's medical and dental insurance be taken care of by:

A. _____ will carry medical insurance for the child.

B. _____ will carry dental insurance for the child.

C. _____ will pay for medical costs not covered by the insurance.

D. _____ will take the child for check ups and treatment.

E. The child's health care providers will be:

- 1) physician _____
- 2) dentist _____
- 3) vision _____
- 4) mental health professional _____

F. Information about the child's medications will be exchanged by:

G. The arrangements that need to be made for emergency care are:

H. _____ should be contacted in case of an emergency if the other parent is not available - for mother.

_____ should be contacted in case of an emergency if the other parent is not available - for father

I. _____ will decide what mental health professional to go to.

J. _____ will determine how long the treatment will last.

6. Parents will communicate with each other by:

A. Parents will reach mutual decisions about child's care by:

B. If one parent makes independent decisions, the other parent will/won't be informed:

C. Each parent will/won't provide the other parent with the address and phone number of the child's residence, and notify the other parent within 48 hours of any changes of address and/or telephone number:

D. Parents will keep each other informed of the whereabouts of the child, such as vacations by:

E. Advance notification will/won't be provided by each parent to the other parent for proposed and forthcoming medical care, and will/won't notify the other parent immediately of illnesses requiring medical attention or any medical emergencies involving child:

- F. A log that is shared between parents will/won't be transported by child from one parent to other to provide continuity in child care, citing important events, emotions, physical state of child and medications:

- G. The other parent will/won't be kept informed about new people in child's life, day care, hired help, new friends:

- H. Each parent will/will not promote respect and affection for the other parent by not talking in a demeaning way about the other parent in front of the child:

- I. Parents will/won't assist child in remembering the other parent on special occasions; birthdays; when parent is ill:

- J. Both parents agree/don't agree to never use the child to carry messages to the other parent:

- K. Parents will/won't ask permission before scheduling events involving the child during the other parent's time:

- L. The professional that we will use for post divorce/separation counseling will be

M. The choices that we will use to help me communicate if we reach an impasse are

- 1) Counseling
- 2) Mediation
- 3) Arbitration
- 4) Litigation

7. The child will maintain contact with the other parent by:

A. The child will/will not be entitled to telephone communication with other parent without interference with child's right to privacy, such as, listening on an extension phone or any type of telephonic listening device during such telephone calls:

B. The observed schedule for telephoning will be:

C. The child will/will not have a private phone:

D. _____ is the person responsible for paying the bill.

8. Transportation of the child will/will not be shared:

A. I will make transition easier by:

B. Pick up and drop off will be at school/public place such as a mall, a restaurant or park or at other parent's home:

C. Driving will be shared by:

9. Expectations regarding names and designations are:

A. The child's surname will be:

B. When a parent marries, will you or will you not allow child to call new person mom or dad?

10. I will handle the child's religious training by:

A. The religion the child will be raised to observe is:

B. The child will/won't be taught in two religions:

11. The expectations parents have on corporal punishment are:

A. Parents will/will not agree not to use corporal punishment:

B. If parents will use corporal punishment, the extent of the punishment will be:

C. Other people will/will not be allowed to use corporal punishment on child:

D. If a child complains about discipline in the other parent's home, the other parent will communicate this to the other parent by:

E. Both parents will/will not be required to finish a recognized parent education program:

12. Safety issues that need to be addressed are:

A. Parents agree/don't agree not to use alcohol or drugs while the child is in his/her care:

B. Firearms will be safely locked away or stored off the premises at:

C. Both parents will/will not get a CPR certificate:

13. If the other parent wants to move (See section on Move Away), I will:

- A. Except for vacations or holidays, each parent will/won't be restrained from changing the child's residence to a distant location outside of the country without the written consent of the other party or further orders of the court:

- B. The other parent will have a _____ day notice about a move away.

14. The child's' extended family and special friends will maintain contact with the child by:

- A. The child will/won't maintain contact with grandparents and extended family on both sides:

- B. Other special friends or individuals that the child has bonded with that ought to be included are:

15. _____ will sign for passport?

- A. Travel abroad is permissible under circumstances such as:

- B. The limitations on travel time (If there is fear of abduction, an attorney needs to be consulted) are:

16. The life insurance plans that will be put into effect are:

A. Either parent will/won't carry life insurance on his or her own life to benefit the child:

B. Child's life will/won't be insured on a policy that can later be converted to pay for higher education:

17. _____ will sign for child to have a license to drive a car or motorcycle.

A. The rules that need to be put in place about how these vehicles are to be used will be done by:

B. _____ will pay for insurance, gas, repairs and tickets.

18. _____ will sign for child to go into the military or engage in an under age marriage.

19. Other issues that need to be resolved are: _____
