

PARALLEL PARENTING AGREEMENT

NOTE: This template is one that is commonly used in high conflict child custody matters in most jurisdictions within the USA. Many courts will have their own version of such an Agreement based on nuances of its particular laws, statutes, precedents, etc. Use of this Agreement should not substitute any court that has its own version but shall be used as a guideline instead.

Although most of the provisions included in this template are customarily included in high conflict agreements, there are some provisions that apply in ANY child custody matter. Conversely, there are provisions omitted that can be included in high conflict cases.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DECISION-MAKING

1.1 Each parent has a responsibility to provide for the physical and emotional needs of the child. Both parents are very important to the child and the child needs both parents to be active parents throughout their lives. Both parents must respect each parent's separate role with the child. Each parent must put the child's needs first in planning and making arrangements involving the child.

1.2 When the child is scheduled to be with Father, then Father is the "on-duty" parent. When the child is scheduled to be with Mother, then Mother is the "on-duty" parent. Neither is to interfere with the "on-duty" parent.

1.3 The on-duty parent shall make decisions about the day to day care and control of the child.

1.4 This decision making is not to be confused with legal custody decision making concerning education, health care and religious upbringing of the child. These more significant decisions continue to be the exclusive responsibility of the parent who has been designated as the sole custodial parent.

1.5 In making decisions about the day to day care and control of the child, neither parent shall schedule activities for the child during the time the other parent is on-duty without prior agreement of the on-duty parent.

1.6 Parents share a joint and equal responsibility for following parenting time orders. The child shares none of this responsibility and should not be permitted to shoulder the burden of this decision.

1.7 Unacceptable excuses for one parent denying parenting time to the other include the following:

The child unjustifiably hesitates or refuses to go.

The child has a minor illness.

The child has to go somewhere.

The child is not home.

The noncustodial parent is behind in child support.

The custodial parent does not want the child to go because of some unjustified reason.

The weather is bad.

The child has no clothes to wear.

The other parent failed to meet preconditions established by the custodial parent.

2. REGULAR PARENTING TIME

2.1 The parents shall follow this specific schedule so the child understands the schedule.

2.2 Mother, or Father has sole custody of the child. The noncustodial parent shall have regular contact with the child as listed below:

Every other weekend, from 6:00 p.m. on Friday until 6:00 p.m. on Sunday.

Every other Saturday, from _____ a.m. until _____ p.m.

Every other Saturday and Sunday from _____ a.m. until _____ p.m. each day.

3. SUMMER PARENTING TIME SCHEDULE (use only if summer is different than the Regular Parenting Time outlined above.)

3.1 Mother shall be on-duty and the child will be with Mother as follows:

3.2 Father shall be on duty and the child will be with Father as follows:

*Parents shall agree, in writing, on their respective vacation during the Summer. Advance notice must be given at least sixty (60) days prior to the first day of the vacation time.

4. HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

4.1 Holiday Schedule Priority. The below detailed holiday schedule overrides the above Regular Parenting Time Schedule. For listed holidays other than Spring Break and Christmas Break, when a holiday falls on a weekend, the parent who is on-duty for that holiday will be on-duty for the entire weekend unless specifically stated otherwise. It is possible under some circumstances that the holiday schedule could result in the child spending three (3) weekends in a row with the same parent.

4.2 On New Year's Eve/Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Halloween, Fall Break, birthdays of the child and parents, and all other holidays / special days not specifically listed below, the child shall remain with the parent they are normally scheduled to be with that day, as provided in the Regular Parenting Time Schedule.

A SPECIFIC HOLIDAY SCHEDULE CAN BE ADDED HERE.

4.3 Spring Break. The child shall spend Spring Break with Father in odd numbered years and with Mother in even numbered years. This period shall be from two hours after the child is released from school before Spring Break, and ending at 7:00 pm of the last day before school begins again.

4.4 Mother's Day and Father's Day. The child shall spend Mother's Day weekend with Mother, and Father's Day weekend with Father each year. These periods shall be from Friday at 6:00 p.m. until Sunday at 6:00 p.m.

4.5 Thanksgiving. The child shall spend the Thanksgiving holiday, from two hours after the child is released from school Wednesday until Sunday at 7:00 p.m. with Father in odd numbered years, and with Mother in even numbered years. (Or the parties can agree to EVERY THANKSGIVING in exchange for EVERY CHRISTMAS, or any variation of this.)

4.6 Christmas.

a. The Christmas vacation shall be defined as beginning on the last day of school and ending the last day before school begins again. Absent agreement of the parties, the first half of the period will begin two hours after the child is released from school. The second half of the period will end at 6:00 p.m. on the day before school begins again. Each party will receive one half (1/2) of the total days of the Christmas vacation, on an alternating basis as follows:

***PARENTS CAN COME WITH A SIMILAR VARIATION WITH RESPECT TO ANY OTHER HOLIDAY SCHEDULE ABOVE.**

1. In even numbered years, the custodial parent shall have the first one half (1/2) of the Christmas vacation and non-custodial parent shall have the second one half (1/2) of the Christmas vacation.

2. In odd numbered years, the non-custodial parent shall have the first one half (1/2) of the Christmas vacation and custodial parent shall have the second one half (1/2) of the Christmas vacation.

3. In those years when Christmas does not fall in a parent's week, that parent shall have the child from Noon to 9:00 P.M. on Christmas Day.

4. No exchanges under this portion of the rule shall occur after 9:00 p.m. and before 8:00 a.m., absent agreement of the parties.

Or

b. The child shall celebrate Christmas Eve, December 24, from 9:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. with Mother in odd numbered years, and with Father in even numbered years. The child shall celebrate Christmas Day, December 25, from 9:00 p.m. on December 24 until 6:00 p.m. on December 25 with Father in odd numbered years, and with Mother in even numbered years. At 6:00 p.m. on December 25, the Regular Parenting Time Schedule resumes.

Or

c. Other: _____

5. TRANSPORTATION OF THE CHILD

5.1 The parents shall arrive on time to drop off and pick up the child. The parents shall deliver ANY AND ALL SPECIFIC clothing, school supplies and belongings at the same time they deliver the child. The parents shall always attempt to return the child's clothing in a clean condition and operational condition.

5.2 When the child is scheduled to return to Father, then Father shall pick the child up at [] Mother's home or [] _____.

5.3 When the child is scheduled to return to Mother, then Mother shall pick the child up at [] Father's home or [] _____.

5.4 Special Provisions Regarding Exchange Participation: (if necessary)

Other than the parents, only _____ shall be present when the child is exchanged.

_____.

5.5 A parent may not enter the residence of the other, except by express invitation, regardless of whether a parent retains a property interest in the residence of the other.

Accordingly, the child shall be picked up at the front entrance of the appropriate residence or other location unless the parents agree otherwise. The person delivering the child shall not leave until the child is safely inside.

6. EMERGENCY CHANGES IN THE REGULAR PARENTING TIME SCHEDULE

6.1 Although the child needs living arrangements that are predictable, if an unexpected or unavoidable emergency comes up, the parents shall give each other as much notice as possible.

6.2 If unable to agree on a requested change to the schedule, the Regular Parenting Time Schedule shall be followed. If an emergency results in the need for child care, the on-duty parent shall follow the Right of First Refusal in 6.4 and only if impracticable, the on-duty parent shall make the child care arrangements and pay for the cost of child care, unless otherwise agreed.

6.3 Unless the parents agree, any missed parenting time shall not later be made up.

6.4. Each party shall have the first right of refusal to provide care for the minor child if the other party finds it necessary to have an alternate care giver for any amount of time beyond 1 hour, during their scheduled parenting time. This applies to anticipated and unanticipated parenting time, the other parent shall be contacted by the most immediate modes of communication prescribed within this Agreement. Unless unpreventable, leaving a message with a third party or on a voice recording system shall not suffice as valid notice under this section.

7. COMMUNICATION

7.1 Communication Book or App. The parents shall always use a "communication book" to communicate with each other on the child's education, health care, and activities or use a family time communication app, i.e. Our Family Wizard. If the apps are used, each parent shall pay $\frac{1}{2}$ the costs for maintaining the app. The child shall not be used to relay any messages between the parents.

7.2 Neutrality of the Child. To keep the child out of the middle of the parents' relationship and any conflict that may arise between the parents, the parents shall not: Ask the child about the other parent or allow anyone else to ask the child about the other parent.

Ask the child to give messages to the other parent.

Make unkind or negative statements about the other parent around the child.

Allow other people to make unkind or negative statements about the other parent around the child.

7.3 Dignity and Respect. The parents shall treat each other with dignity and respect in the presence of the child. The parents shall keep any necessary conversations short and calm when exchanging the child so the child will not become afraid or anxious.

7.4 Telephone Contact. The child may have private telephone access to the other parent [] at all times or [] between the hours of _____ and _____. The parents shall encourage and help the child stay in touch with the other parent during their time with the child.

7.5 The parents shall not interfere, or allow anyone else to interfere, with communication between the child and the other parent by actions such as: refusing to answer a phone or refusing to allow the child or others to answer; recording phone conversations between the other parent and the child; turning off the phone or using a call blocking mechanism or otherwise denying the other parent telephone or electronic contact with the child.

7.6 Notice of Travel. Before leaving on out of town travel, the parents shall provide each other the address and phone number where the child can be reached if they will be away from home for more than 24 hours.

7.7 The parents shall at all times keep each other advised of their home and work addresses and telephone numbers. Notice of any change in this information shall be given to the other parent via email or app.

8. SAFETY (*use the following provisions only as necessary*)

8.1 Neither parent shall operate a vehicle when impaired by use of alcohol or drugs, including marijuana, prescribed drugs that are known for causing impairment, etc.

8.2 [] Mother [] Father [] Both parents shall not use alcohol or non-prescribed drugs when they are the on-duty parent.

8.3 The parents shall not leave the child _____ unattended at any time.

8.4 [] Mother [] Father [] Both parents shall not use, nor allow anyone else to use, physical discipline with the child.

8.5 _____ shall not use physical discipline with the child.

8.6 All contact between the child and _____ shall be supervised by _____.

8.7 Neither parent shall allow the child to be in the presence of _____

9. EDUCATION

9.1 The custodial parent shall determine where the child attends school.

9.2 Both parents shall instruct the child's schools to list each parent and their respective addresses and telephone numbers on the school's records.

9.3 Each parent will maintain contact with the child's schools to find out about the child's needs, progress, grades, parent-teacher conferences, and other special events.

9.4 The parents shall use the app to share information about the child's school progress, behavior and events.

10. EXTENDED FAMILY

10.1 The child will usually benefit from maintaining ties with grandparents, relatives and people important to them. The parents shall help the child continue to be in contact with these people.

10.2 However, as provided above at "SAFETY," all contact between the child and _____ shall be supervised by _____ neither parent shall allow the child to be in the presence of _____

11. CHILD CARE

11.1 Arranging for normal, day-to-day work-related child care for the child is the responsibility of the custodial parent on-duty parent.

11.2 When occasional other situations require child care for the child when the child is with the on-duty parent, the on-duty parent is required to offer the other parent the chance to provide this care before seeking someone else to care for the child as in 6.4. However, in such situations, the on-duty parent shall make any needed occasional child care arrangements, and the on-duty parent shall pay the cost of that child care.

11.3 Only the following listed persons may provide occasional child care for the child:
_____.

11.4 If the Mother Father anticipates being unable to personally supervise the child during the parent's entire scheduled on-duty time, the Mother Father must notify the other parent as soon as possible, and that parent's on-duty time for that day weekend will be cancelled, and not made up at any later time.

12. HEALTH CARE

12.1 Major decisions about health care (such as the need for surgery, glasses, contacts, prescription medications, orthodontia, etc., and the need for regular, on-going medical appointments and treatments, etc.) shall be made by the custodial parent.

12.2 Each parent has a right to the child's medical, dental, optical and other health care information and records. Each parent will contact the child's health care providers to find out about the child's health care needs, treatments and progress. The custodial parent shall give written authorization to the child's health care providers, permitting an ongoing release of all information regarding the child to the non-custodial parent including the right of the provider to discuss the child's situation with the non-custodial parent.

12.3 The parents shall use the app to communicate with each other on all health care issues for the child.

12.4 The on-duty parent shall make sure the child takes all prescription medication and follow all prescribed health care treatments.

12.5 In medical emergencies concerning the child, the on-duty parent shall notify the other parent of the emergency as soon as it is possible, via the app or if any method that is accessible in urgency. In such emergencies, each parent can consent to emergency medical treatment for the child, as needed.

13. RELOCATION FROM CURRENT RESIDENCE

13.1 When either parent considers a change of residence, a 90 day advance notice of the intent to move must be provided to the other parent and filed with the court.

14. EVENT ATTENDANCE

14.1 When the child is participating in a sports team, club, religious, or other such event at school or elsewhere, [] only the on-duty parent [] both parents may attend the event. If either parent will attend, they should inform the other.

14.2 The custodial parent is permitted to enroll the child in _____ extracurricular activity. The non-custodial parent shall encourage this participation and shall not interfere with the child's participation when the child is with them.

15. A CHILD'S BASIC NEEDS

To insure more responsible parenting and to promote the healthy adjustment and growth of the child, each parent should recognize and address the child's basic needs. Those needs include the following:

15.1 To know that the parents' decision to live apart is not the child's fault.

15.2 To develop and maintain an independent relationship with each parent and to have the continuing care and guidance from each parent.

15.3 To be free from having to side with either parent and to be free from conflict between the parents.

15.4 To have a relaxed, secure relationship with each parent without being placed in a position to manipulate one parent against the other.

15.5 To enjoy consistent time with each parent.

15.6 To be financially supported by each parent, regardless of how much time each parent spends with the child.

15.7 To be physically safe and adequately supervised when in the care of each parent and to have a stable, consistent and responsible child care arrangement when not supervised by a parent.

15.8 To develop and maintain meaningful relationships with other significant adults (grandparents, stepparents and other relatives) as long as these relationships do not interfere with or replace the child's primary relationship with the parents.

16. RESOLVING DISPUTES

16.1 Because this is an Order of the court, both parents must continue to follow this Parallel Parenting Plan even if the other parent does not.

16.2 When the parents cannot agree on the meaning or application of some part of this Parallel Parenting Plan, or if a significant change (such as a move or remarriage) causes conflict between the parents, both parents shall make a good faith effort to resolve those differences before returning to the court for relief. In most situations, the court will require the parents to attend mediation before any court hearing will be conducted.

16.3 The parties shall attend _____ counseling / parenting education program.

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