

PARENTING PLAN DISCUSSION & SCHEDULE GUIDE

A guide to help parents understand the
legal issues inside a parenting plan

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Parenting Planning Discussion Guide

This list of discussion points is presented here to stimulate your thinking about how parenting may change in the divorce process. This is information is not all-inclusive and it is not an official form. In Utah, if you wish to have *joint legal custody*, you must have a Parenting Plan. The best interests of the child(ren) is the primary consideration in the Parenting Plan.

A. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND DECISION MAKING

1. Parental Responsibility Options

- Joint Legal Custody or Shared Parental Responsibility. It is in the best interests of the child(ren) that the parents confer and **jointly** make all major decisions affecting the welfare of the child(ren). Major decisions include, but are not limited to, decisions about the child(ren)'s education, healthcare, and other responsibilities unique to this family.
- Shared Parental Responsibility with Decision Making Authority: It is in the best interests of the child(ren) that the parents confer and attempt to agree on the major decisions involving the child(ren). If the parents are unable to agree, the authority for making major decisions regarding the child(ren) shall be as follows:
 - Education/Academic decisions [] Mother [] Father
 - Non-emergency health care [] Mother [] Father
 - _____ [] Mother [] Father
 - _____ [] Mother [] Father
- **Sole** Parental Responsibility: It is in the best interests of the child(ren) that the [] Mother [] Father shall have sole authority to make major decisions for the child(ren). It is detrimental to the child(ren) to have shared parental responsibility.

2. Day-to-Day Decisions

Unless otherwise specified, each parent shall make decisions regarding day-to-day care and control of each child, including the performance of daily tasks, while the child is with that parent. Regardless of the allocation of decision making, either parent may make emergency decisions affecting the health or safety of the

child(ren) when the child is residing with that parent. A parent who makes an emergency decision shall share the decision with the other parent as soon as reasonably possible.

3. Final Decision Making Authority – All Major Decisions

Which parent should have the final say on all major decisions if there is a dispute? Legal custody concerns *decision making* on, usually, three main topics: (1) the education of the child(ren); (2) the health of the child(ren); and (3) the religious upbringing of the child(ren). Having final decision making authority means that both parent must still discuss all major decisions together. However, if a mutual resolution cannot be reached, the parent with final authority can make his or her decision the final decision and begin implementing it. If the parent without final decision-making authority continues to object, he or she must follow the dispute resolution mechanism outlined in the parenting plan (usually mediation). If you are unable to resolve it after attempting mediation in good faith, typically the objecting parent can bring his or her complaint back to court.

4. Extracurricular Activities Options

- Either parent may register the child(ren) and allow them to participate in the activity of the child(ren)'s choice.
- The parents must mutually agree to all extracurricular activities.
- The parent with the minor child(ren) shall transport the minor child(ren) to and/or from all mutually agreed upon extracurricular activities, providing all necessary uniforms and equipment within the parent's possession.
- The costs of the extracurricular activities shall be paid by:

Mother _____ % Father _____ %

- The uniforms and equipment required for the extracurricular activities shall be paid by:

Mother _____ % Father _____ %

- Other: _____

B. INFORMATION SHARING CONSIDERATIONS:

- Each parent shall have access to medical and school records and information pertaining to the child(ren) and shall be permitted to independently consult with any and all professionals involved with the child(ren). The parents shall cooperate with each other in sharing information related to the health, education, and welfare of the child(ren) and they shall sign any necessary documentation ensuring that both parents have access to said records.

- Each parent shall be responsible for obtaining records and reports directly from the school and health care providers.
- Both parents have equal rights to inspect and receive governmental agency and law enforcement records concerning the child(ren).
- Both parents shall have equal and independent authority to confer with the child(ren)'s school, day care, health care providers, and other programs with regard to the child(ren)'s educational, emotional, and social progress.
- Both parents shall be listed as "emergency contacts" for the child(ren).
- Each parent has a continuing responsibility to provide a residential, mailing, and contact address and contact telephone number to the other parent. Each parent shall notify the other parent in writing within 24 hours of any changes.
- Other: _____

C. SCHEDULING

1. School Calendar

If necessary, on or before _____ of each year, both parents should obtain a copy of the school calendar for the next school year. The parents shall discuss the calendars and the time-sharing schedule so that any differences or questions can be resolved.

The parents shall follow the school calendar of: (Choose all that apply)

- [] the oldest child
[] the youngest child
[] the school calendar for _____ County
[] the school calendar for _____ School

2. Academic Break Definition

When defining academic break periods, the period shall begin at the end of the last scheduled day of classes before the holiday or break and shall end on the first day of regularly scheduled classes after the holiday or break.

3. Schedule Changes (Choose all that apply)

- A parent making a request for a schedule change will make the request as soon as possible, but in any event, except in cases of emergency, no less than _____ before the change is to occur.

- A parent requesting a change of schedule shall be responsible for any additional child care, or transportation costs caused by the change.

D. TIME-SHARING SCHEDULE

If it differs from child to child, you will have to reach agreement for each child and define the individual schedules.

1. Weekday and Weekend Schedule

The following schedule shall apply beginning on _____ with the
[] Mother [] Father and continue as follows:

- a. The child(ren) shall spend time with the **Mother** on the following dates and times:

WEEKENDS: [] Every [] Every Other [] Other (specify) _____

From _____ to _____

WEEKDAYS: Specify days _____

From _____ to _____

OTHER: (Specify) _____

- b. The child(ren) shall spend time with the **Father** on the following dates and times:

WEEKENDS: [] Every [] Every Other [] Other (specify) _____

From _____ to _____

WEEKDAYS: Specify days _____

From _____ to _____

OTHER: (Specify) _____

2. Holiday Schedule

There could be several options about how to approach holiday planning:

- No holiday time -sharing shall apply. The regular time-sharing schedule set forth above shall apply. Or
- Holiday time-sharing shall be as the parties agree. Or
- You create a schedule with which both agree and this holiday schedule will take priority over the regular weekday, weekend, and summer schedules. Fill in the blanks with Mother or Father to indicate where the child(ren) will be for the holidays. Provide the beginning and ending times. If a holiday is not specified as even, odd, or every year with one parent, then the child(ren) will remain with the parent in accordance with the regular schedule

<u>Holidays</u>	<u>Even Years</u>	<u>Odd Years</u>	<u>Every Year</u>	<u>Begin/End Time</u>
Mother's Day				
Father's Day				
President's Day				
Martin Luther King Day				
Easter				
Passover				
Memorial Day Weekend				
4 th of July				
Labor Day Weekend				
Columbus Day Weekend				
Halloween				
Thanksgiving				
Veteran's Day				
Hanukkah				
Yom Kippur				

This holiday schedule may affect the regular time-sharing schedule. Parents may wish to specify one or more of the following options:

- When the parents are using an alternating weekend plan and the holiday schedule would result in one parent having the child(ren) for three weekends in a row, the parents will exchange the following weekend, so that each has two weekends in a row before the regular alternating weekend pattern resumes.
- If a parent has the child(ren) on a weekend immediately before or after an unspecified holiday or non-school day, they shall have the child(ren) for the holiday or non-school day.

3. Winter Break

A. Entire Winter Break (Choose only one)

- The [] Mother [] Father shall have the child(ren) from the day and time school is dismissed until December ____ at ____ a.m./p. m. in [] odd-numbered years [] even-numbered years [] every year. The other parent will have the children for the second portion of the Winter Break. The parties shall alternate the arrangement each year.
- The [] Mother [] Father shall have the child(ren) for the entire Winter Break during [] odd-numbered years [] even-numbered years [] every year.
- Other: _____

B. Specific Winter Holidays

If not addressed above, the specific Winter Holidays such as Christmas, New Year's Eve, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, etc. shall be shared as follows:

4. Spring Break Options:

- The parents shall follow the regular schedule.
- The parents shall alternate the entire Spring Break with the Mother having the child(ren) during the [] odd-numbered years [] even numbered years.
- The [] Father [] Mother shall have the child(ren) for the entire Spring Break every year.
- The Spring Break will be evenly divided. The first half of the Spring Break will go to the parent whose regularly scheduled weekend falls on the first half and the second half going to the parent whose weekend falls during the second half.
- Other: _____

5. Summer Break Options

- The parents shall follow the regular schedule through the summer.
- The [] Mother [] Father shall have the entire Summer Break from _____ after school is out until _____ before school starts.
- The parents shall equally divide the Summer Break. During [] odd-numbered years or [] even numbered years, the [] Mother [] Father shall have the children from _____ after school is out until _____. The other parent shall have the child(ren) for the second one-half of the Summer Break. The parents shall alternate the first and second one-halves each year unless otherwise agreed. During the extended periods of time-sharing, the other parent shall have the child(ren) _____
- Other: _____

6. Number of Overnights:

Based upon the time-sharing schedule, the Mother has a total of _____ overnights per year and the Father has a total of _____ overnights per year.

Note: The two numbers must equal 365.

E. TRANSPORTATION AND EXCHANGE OF CHILD(REN)

1. Transportation Options:

- The [] Mother [] Father shall provide all transportation.
- The parent beginning their time-sharing shall provide transportation for the child(ren).
- The parent ending their time-sharing shall provide transportation for the child(ren).
- Other: _____

2. Exchange

Both parents shall have the child(ren) ready on time with sufficient clothing packed and ready at the agreed upon time of exchange. If a parent is more than _____ minutes late without contacting the other parent to make other arrangements, the parent with the child(ren) may proceed with other plans and activities. Here are some options:

- Exchanges shall be at Mother's and Father's homes unless both parents agree to a different meeting place.
- Exchanges shall occur at _____ unless both parties agree in advance to a different meeting place.
- Other: _____

3. Transportation Costs (Choose only one)

- Transportation costs are included in the Child Support Worksheets and/or the Order for Child Support and should not be included here.
- The Mother shall pay ____ % and the Father shall pay ____ % of the transportation costs.
- Other: _____

4. Foreign and Out-Of-State Travel Options:

- Either parent may travel within the United States with the child(ren) during his/her time-sharing. The parent traveling with the child(ren) shall give the other parent at least _____ days written notice before traveling out of state unless there is an emergency, and shall provide the other parent with a detailed itinerary, including locations and telephone numbers where the child(ren) and parent can be reached at least _____ days before traveling.
- Either parent may travel out of the country with the child(ren) during his/her time-sharing. At least _____ days prior to traveling, the parent shall provide a detailed itinerary, including locations, and telephone numbers where the child(ren) and parent may be reached during the trip. Each parent agrees to

provide whatever documentation is necessary for the other parent to take the child(ren) out of the country.

- If a parent wishes to travel out of the country with the child(ren), he/she shall provide the following security for the return of the child _____

F. EDUCATION

1. **School designation.** For purposes of school boundary determination and registration, the [] Mother's [] Father's address shall be designated.
2. *(If Applicable)* The following provisions are made regarding private or home schooling: _____

3. **Other.** _____

G. COMMUNICATION

1. Between Parents

All communications regarding the child(ren) shall be between the parents. The parents shall not use the child(ren) as messengers to convey information, ask questions, or set up schedule changes.

The parents shall communicate with each other through the following options

- in person
- by telephone
- by letter
- by e-mail
- Other: _____

2. Between Parent and Child(ren)

Both parents shall keep contact information current. Telephone or other electronic communication between the child(ren) and the other parent shall not be monitored by or interrupted by the other parent. "Electronic communication" includes telephones, electronic mail or e-mail, webcams, video-conferencing equipment and software or other wired or wireless technologies or other means of communication to supplement face to face contact.

The child(ren) may have [] telephone [] e-mail [] other electronic communication in the form of _____ and communication with the other parent (here are some options:

- Anytime
- Every day during the hours of _____ to _____
- On the following days _____ during the hours of _____ to _____

3. Costs of Electronic Communication shall be addressed as follows:

H. CHILD CARE OPTIONS

- Each parent may select appropriate child care providers
- All child care providers must be agreed upon by both parents.
- Each parent must offer the other parent the opportunity to care for the child(ren) before using a child care provider for any period exceeding _____ hours.
- Other _____

I. OTHER CONCERNS _____

Standard Statutory Minimum Parent-Time Schedules

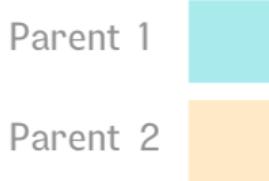


Alternating Weekend Parent-Time Schedule § 30-3-35

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 7:00 p.m.	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 3:00 p.m.	14

Extended Parent-Time Schedule § 30-3-35.1

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 9:00 a.m.	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 3:00 p.m.	14



50/50 Joint Physical Custody

Parent-Time Schedules



2-2-3 Schedule

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		3:00 p.m.		3:00 p.m.		3:00 p.m.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	3:00 p.m.		3:00 p.m.		3:00 p.m.	

2-2-5-5 Schedule

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		3:00 p.m.		3:00 p.m.		3:00 p.m.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
			3:00 p.m.			

Parent 1



Parent 2



50/50 Joint Physical Custody

Parent-Time Schedules



3-4-4-3 Schedule

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 3:00 p.m.	3	4	5 3:00 p.m.	6	7
8 3:00 p.m.	9	10	11	12 3:00 p.m.	13	14

8-6 Schedule

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 3:00 p.m.	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 3:00 p.m.	11	12	13	14

Parent 1



Parent 2



50/50 Joint Physical Custody

Parent-Time Schedules



Alternating Weeks

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		3:00 p.m.				
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	3:00 p.m.					

Parent 1
 Parent 2

Custom Parent-Time Schedule

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14