

Parenting Plan Checklist

The following is a checklist of topics that parents should consider when negotiating a parenting plan.

Decision making and responsibilities: custody

1. How will important decisions about the child's education, health care, religion and well being be made?

- by one parent alone
- by one parent after consultation with the other parent
- by the parent having responsibility allocated for making that type of decision

***Example:** one parent is allocated responsibility for dental care and the other for ongoing medical care*

- by both parents together
- by both parents together with a provision for how to resolve a disagreement when both parents can't agree

***Example:** the parents hire a parenting co-ordinator or agree to take part in mediation to try to settle the dispute*

2. What happens if an emergency decision has to be made in a situation where the parent who is responsible for making the decision is not available?

The decision will be made by

- the other parent
- another family member
- another individual

3. How will the parents communicate to avoid conflicts for the sake of the child?

Communications between parents will be

- in person
- by email
- by text messaging
- in writing by note or letter
- by telephone

- in a communication book
- through a third party

4. How will each parent get access to information about the child from third parties?

What information will each parent be entitled to receive about the child from third parties?

Will the other parent have the right to receive the information directly without the consent of the other parent?

Consider how each parent will receive information

- from medical or health professionals including the child's doctor, dentist and other health-care providers
- from the child's school, summer camp or others involved with the child
- about extra-curricular activities

5. How will the child's important documents be managed?

- Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) card (**Note:** OHIP regulations require the OHIP card to be with the parent who has care and control of the child at any given time)
- Passport

Set out the following with respect to the child's passport:

- which parent will be responsible for applying for the child's passport
- that both parents need to sign the passport application
- which parent will be responsible for the safekeeping of the passport
- the procedure to ensure that the parent who requires the child's passport for travel purposes will have the passport

6. How will future changes to the parenting plan be made?

- by written agreement between the parents
- if the parent's can't agree, by an alternative dispute resolution method, such as mediation, which is to be used before starting a court proceeding

7. Should the parenting plan be reviewed periodically and how often?

Residency and time-sharing schedule

1. Where will the child's primary residence be?
2. Will the child have primary residence with one parent?
3. Will the child be resident with each parent one half of the time?

4. If the child is going spend an equal amount of time with each parent, what will the address be for official documents such as school records?
5. What will be the regular time-sharing schedule, from Monday to Sunday?
6. How will holidays and special occasions be shared?
7. Consider the following public holidays and special occasions:
 - Birthdays
 - child's
 - parent's
 - other
 - Mother's Day
 - Father's Day
 - Good Friday public holiday including weekend
 - Canada Day public holiday
 - Thanksgiving public holiday including weekend
 - Christmas Day public holiday
 - Boxing Day public holiday
 - Religious days or special events
 - New Year's Eve
 - New Year's Day public holiday
 - Long weekends that include the following public holidays
 - February, Family Day
 - May, Victoria Day
 - August, Civic Holiday
 - September, Labour Day
 - Halloween
 - School vacations including
 - December winter holiday break
 - March Break
 - Summer Break
 - Other school holidays and Professional Activity days at the child's school

8. Who will be responsible for transportation between residences?
9. How will changes or cancellations to the schedule be made?
10. What will be the method of communication between the child and the non-residential parent?
11. How often will this communication take place?
12. What are the other limits on the child's primary residence?
 - geographical limitations as to where the child may reside
 - notification by a parent of any planned changes in residence
 - how much notice should be given
 - what form of notice should be given, such as in writing, by email, by text messaging or verbally
 - the procedure to be used if a parent wishes to move a child's residence out of a stipulated geographical area

Parenting

What are the important aspects of parenting the child?

Consider the following areas:

1. Religion

- religion(s) that the child is to be raised in or exposed to
- child's involvement and participation in religious activities
- parental involvement and obligations relating to the child's religious upbringing

2. Education

- choice of school: public, separate or private
- school location
- parental attendance and participation in school activities or organizations
- child's involvement in school activities

3. Extra-curricular activities

- choice of activities
- number of activities at any given time
- parental attendance
- conflicts with time-sharing plan
- who may arrange

- responsibility for payment for activities

4. Travel

The parent travelling with the child will provide the following information:

- departure dates and return dates
- mode of travel
- if travel by air, full flight particulars
- information as to where the child will be staying during the trip
- contact numbers

Additional considerations when travelling out of the country:

- travel consent letters
- passports
- medical coverage

5. Child's name change

- no changes allowed
- name change only if both parents consent (unless an agreement or court order states otherwise)
- if parents can't agree, a process to resolve the dispute and change the child's name

6. Death or incapacitation of a parent

- set out terms for the custody and care of the child in each parent's Will
- indicate what arrangements should be made for the child
- indicate what arrangements should be made to maintain ongoing relationships with the deceased or incapacitated parent's extended family
- purchase or arrange for life insurance to make sure there is money for child support

7. Dispute resolution between parents

Determine what dispute resolution process will be used when a dispute arises:

- mediation
- mediation/arbitration
- parenting co-ordinator
- court proceeding

Additional topics

What other important terms regarding the upbringing of the child should be included in the parenting plan?

For example, consider the following additional topics:

1. Involvement of others
 - new partners
 - extended families
 - other third parties
 - role each person is to play
 - other concerns
2. Alternate caregivers
 - other parent as “caregiver of first choice”
 - other caregivers
 - long-term child care—how and by whom
3. Special purchases for the child
4. Child’s allowance
 - allowance
 - gift giving by/for the child
5. Transportation of clothes/toys between two homes
6. Other special needs of the child

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