

Parent Handbook

For

Positive Parenting



Superior Court of California
County of Trinity

Family Court Services

**Child Custody Recommending Counseling
(Mediation)**

11 Court Street, 1st Floor
Weaverville, CA 96093

Tel: (530) 623-1404

Fax: (530) 623-3762

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>page</u>
Logistics.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Child Custody Recommending Counseling at Family Court Services	4-7
3 Important Points.....	8
How parents experience separation and divorce.....	9
Five stages of Grief/Loss.....	10
How Children experience separation and divorce.....	11
Risks for Children during Separation	12
Helping your children through Separation/divorce.....	13
Why an absent parent should re-enter a child’s life.....	14
Domestic violence.....	15-16
Drugs and Alcohol.....	17
Developmental needs of children.....	18
Transitions’ between parents.....	19
Two models of parenting.....	20
Resolving conflict between parents.....	21
How to develop a successful co-parent relationship.....	22
Facts to consider when developing a parenting plan.....	23
Important terms to understand.....	24
Pre-appointment check list.....	25
Parent plan worksheets.....	26-28

	Offices	Hours
1st Floor	Family Court Services - Child Custody Recommending Counseling (Mediation) Telephone: (530) 623-1404 Fax: (530) 623-3762	Mondays - Wednesday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm (closed noon - 1 pm)
1st Floor	Clerk's Office and Records Department View your Family Law file; (Note: Family Court Services files are confidential) Telephone: (530) 623-1208	8:00 am - 4:00 pm
1st Floor	Department 1 or 2 - Family Law Domestic Violence Calendar (Please check daily calendar to confirm courtroom)	
1st Floor	Family Law Courtroom Department 1 or Department 2 (Please check daily calendar to confirm courtroom)	Mondays as assigned
1st Floor	Access to Justice Center ⇒ Self Help Center ⇒ Family Law Facilitator's Office	Access to Justice Center 2 Fridays a month call Court Services for a schedule 530-623-1208

Access to Justice Center:

Is available to help both parents and all other parties who have questions about family law and many civil matters. The Family Law Facilitator/Self-Help Attorney/ Assistant is a neutral person who does not represent any parent or party but can help prepare forms and give you general information.

Telephone assistance: 530-245-6900 (message only)

E-Mail famlawfac@shasta.courts.ca.gov

Website for forms and self-help info:

www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp.htm

Things to Bring to Process Your Court Papers:

- A pen to fill out your forms;
- Copies of all court documents relating to your case;
- Information and documents regarding your case;
- Your 3 most recent paycheck stubs, and your latest tax return;
- Monthly living expenses; including food, housing, utilities, and health insurance;
- Names and birth dates for all minor children of the parties;
- Time-share arrangement between each of the parents; and,
- Someone to translate, if English is not your primary language.

INTRODUCTION

What is Child Custody Recommending Counseling?

Mediators who make recommendations to the courts are known as Child Custody Recommending Counselors.

The primary purpose of Mediation and Child Custody Recommending Counselors is the same.

Child Custody Recommending Counseling

provides an opportunity for parents to meet with a trained professional to develop a parenting plan that is in the best interest of their children. The Family Code governs mediation and sets forth the purpose of Child Custody Recommending Counseling: To reduce acrimony that may exist between parents, to develop an agreement assuring the children close and continuing contact with *both* parents and to effect a arrangement that is in the best interest of the children.

California's mandatory mediation law affords parents **the opportunity** to develop their own plans to raise their children after the decision to separate has been made, rather than to delegate that responsibility directly to the court. If parents are not able to agree upon a parenting plan a recommendation will be submitted by the Child Custody Recommending Counselor to the Courts. **The judge will make the final decision.**

The law states that **the parents**, the Child Custody Recommending Counselor and the Court must consider what arrangements are in the "best interest" of the child. It also provides that the child of separating parents has the "right to frequent and continuing contact with both parents."

Read Custody and Visitation Basics to learn more about parenting plans and to prepare yourself for mediation

<https://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp-custody.htm>.

Family Court Child Custody Recommending Counseling

Child Custody Recommending Counseling is an opportunity for the parents to meet and work out a parenting plan for their children.

The goals are:

- To help the parents develop their own parenting plan.
- To improve communication between parents.
- To reduce anger and resentment between parents.

Child Custody Recommending Counseling

Mandatory: You and the other parent must attend mediation if you disagree about custody/visitation issues.

Scheduling: Call Family Court Services at (530) 623-1404 to schedule an appointment after you have filed a motion and after you have served the other parent or if you have been served paperwork instructing you to contact Mediation/Child Custody Recommending Counseling.

Format: One mediation session lasting 1 - 2 hours with **both** parents, unless there is a restraining order and/or domestic violence.

Fees: No charge.

Confidentiality: The Child Custody Recommending Counselor will make a recommendation if the parents do not reach an agreement.

The Child Custody Recommending Counselor must report suspected child/elder abuse or if a parent is a danger to himself or herself or someone else. The Family Court Services reports are confidential. They are distributed only to the judge, the parents and their attorneys.

The Child Custody Recommending Counselor may be subpoenaed to testify.

What is discussed: The discussion focuses on developing a parenting plan that is in the best interest of the children.

Attend your appointment with a positive attitude

DO	DON'T
Think about a parenting plan that allows your child to have frequent and continuing contact with both parents.	Come unprepared.
Focus on your child's needs.	Focus on your own needs.
Acknowledge that a child needs time with <u>both</u> parents.	"Punish" the other parent by withholding the child.
Listen respectfully to the other parent in the mediation session.	Let your feelings lead you to behave in an abusive or threatening manner toward the other parent or toward the Child Custody Recommending Counselor.
Think about your child's needs and schedule, as well as both parents' schedules.	Think that there is one standard plan that fits the needs of all children.
Be prepared to compromise about scheduling.	Compromise about your child's health or safety. You do not have to agree to a parenting plan that you feel is dangerous, harmful, or that is not in your child's best interest.
Bring up any valid concerns about the other parent's ability to care for your child.	Needlessly bad-mouth the other parent.
Understand that as your child grows, his/her developmental needs may change, which may require flexibility and changes in your parenting plan.	Assume that the agreement reached will be "carved in stone."

You have a Very Important Decision to Make

Come to Child Custody Recommending Counseling prepared to negotiate. This means that you may need to compromise about less important issues.

The Child Custody Recommending Counselor cannot...

- ✓ talk about financial issues (child support, spousal support, property issues)
- ✓ receive confidential information from either parent.
- ✓ give legal advice
- ✓ enforce, modify, or interpret court orders

If the parents reach an agreement...

- ✓ the Child Custody Recommending Counselor documents the agreement and sends a copy to both parents, any attorneys involved, and the judge

If the parents do NOT reach an agreement...

- ✓ the Child Custody Recommending Counselor will make recommendations about the issues in dispute
- ✓ the judge will make the decision



IT'S UP TO YOU!

Are you going to work on an agreement in mediation or are you going to let a stranger make the decision for you???

3 Important Points

1. Children do best when parents get along.
2. Put aside your differences' for the sake of your children.
3. Come to your Child Custody Recommending Counseling (Mediation) appointment prepared to discuss a parenting plan.



How Parents Experience Separation and Divorce

Emotional Aspects of Separation

Separation involves a transition from being partnered to being single, regardless of whether or not you and the other parent were married. The separation may be a change that you began and you may believe it to be a positive change. But loss of a relationship is the type of change that can bring forth a variety of unexpected and mixed feelings: happiness, anxiety, sadness, anger and confusion.

For parents, the end of the relationship or the marriage can be a serious loss. The emotions that arise from such a loss can feel just like the grief one feels when someone close to them has died.

It is natural to grieve the loss of a dream, the loss of a partner, the loss of a happy childhood for your children, because loss means that something you once held close and precious has gone away forever.

It is very important to learn how to accept loss and the feelings that go with it. This is called the grieving process.

Tips for Parents

- ◆ Accept your feelings, but don't let them control your life.
- ◆ **Take time to make decisions.**
- ◆ Talk to people you trust about your issues, don't use your children as "therapists" or "sounding boards."
- ◆ **Pick wise friends, therapists and lawyers who don't have their "own agenda."**
- ◆ Avoid an adversarial approach.
- ◆ **Give the children time and a safe place so they can talk about their feelings.**
- ◆ Know that "This too, will pass."

The Five Stages of Grief

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

<p>DENIAL</p>	<p>Denial feels like emotional numbness.</p> <p>YOU MAY THINK, <i>"This can't be happening to me."</i></p>
<p>ANGER</p>	<p>Emotions of hurt, pain and fear turn to anger and negative feelings about the other parent.</p> <p>YOU MAY THINK, <i>"That loser can't do this to me!"</i></p>
<p>BARGAINING</p>	<p>Bargaining involves trying to make a deal with yourself or with the other parent, in order to get what you want.</p> <p>YOU MAY THINK, <i>"If only..."</i></p>
<p>SADNESS & DEPRESSION</p>	<p>Feelings of sadness and depression usually occur once the anger begins to lessen.</p> <p>YOU MAY THINK, <i>"This really is happening to me." "I'll never be happy again."</i></p>
<p>ACCEPTANCE & RECOVERY</p>	<p>You begin to move on with your life and have a more balanced view of the other parent.</p> <p>YOU MAY THINK, <i>"I can deal with this..."</i></p> <p>Acceptance and recovery are the goals. It can take 1 to 3 years to arrive at this stage.</p>

How Children Experience Separation, Divorce, and Parental Conflict

Before Separation

- Children feel the tension in the home
- Children worry what will happen to their parents and what will happen to them.
- Children feel anxious. They may have trouble sleeping or have problems in school.
- Children may have problems with their behavior.

During Separation

- Children face shock and denial. They think, “this can’t be happening!”
- Children worry that they may lose their parent’s love.
- Children worry that they may be rejected by a parent.
- Children worry about their future. They think, “Who will take care of me?”

After Separation

- Children still worry about who will take care of them.
- If a parent is sad and unable to care for the home or the children, the child may try to do the parent’s job.
- It can be hard for children to go back and forth between the parents’ homes, especially if there is conflict between the parents.
- Children can feel deep sadness.

The experience of separation is different for children than it is for adults. Adults will seek relief from unhappiness, but children don’t have the tools to do this.

Children tend to worry about their parents and to blame themselves for the separation and/or divorce.

Risks for Children during Separation

- Parents are so emotionally empty that they are not available to their children.
- Children become emotional supports for their parents.
- One parent tends to spend less time at home and this may cause a break in the child-parent bond.
- Conflict between parents interferes with the children's development.
- Even under the best circumstances, children feel guilty and have problems with loyalty and trust.
- Children tell parents what they think their parents want to hear.
- Parents put pressure on children to state a preference.
- Fighting between parents reinforces children's wish for their parents to reconcile.

When is it time to consider counseling for the children?

- **It is normal for children to have some behavioral and emotional problems for a while.**
- **Children usually react to parents' stress.**
- **Sometimes it's the parents who need help!**
- **Consider counseling for children if problems are severe and don't go away.**
- **Counseling may help if children are shutting down and not talking.**

How to Help Your Child Adjust to Your Separation/Divorce?

DO:

- Tell the child **briefly** what is happening, where everyone will live, and when he/she will see each parent.
- Explain that separation/divorce is an adult decision that is made when parents can't get along with one another. **Don't burden the child with too many details.**
- Reassure the child that he/she didn't cause the separation/divorce and that he/she can't change the decision.
- Reassure the child that separation/divorce doesn't happen between children and parents.
- Encourage the child to talk about how he/she feels and what he/she thinks. Encourage the child to ask questions.
- Keep a clear and reliable schedule for the child.
- Speak respectfully about the other parent.
- Reach out for support for yourself, if necessary.
- Allow the child to adjust to having two homes - one with each parent.
- Allow the child to love both parents.

DON'T:

- Fight - physically or verbally - with the other parent. Witnessing family violence hurts children of all ages.
- Put the child in the middle. Don't ask him/her to carry messages, deal with money matters, or spy on the other parent. Don't make the child choose between parents.
- Talk about legal and financial issues (child support, spousal support, etc.) with the children.
- Criticize the other parent in front of the child. This only creates a loyalty conflict for the child.

Why should an Absent Parent Should Re-enter a Child's Life?

<i>Child's Needs:</i>	<i>Custodial Parent's Wish Might be:</i>
To have both parents in his/her life.	To have the absent parent be gone permanently.
To know both parents love him/her.	To have the child believe the absent parent does not love him/her.
To be financially supported by both parents.	To receive support and be left alone.
To know why the absent parent has not been there.	To have the child believe the custodial parent's version.
To trust that the absent parent won't leave again.	To have the absent parent leave permanently.

How to Manage Anger When Talking to the Other Parent

Take your time - don't respond impulsively!

Listen, Listen, Listen - especially if you want to be heard by the other parent.

Let the other parent finish what she/he is saying. Who knows? You might just agree!

Talk nicely. Imagine that your interactions are being videotaped and will be played for your children when they are adults.

Leave the past alone. Focus on resolving the issues at hand. Don't discuss old marital/relationship issues. If your feelings are getting in the way, consider seeing an individual therapist.

Keep it short. Often, the less said, the better.

Relax. Use stress management techniques.

Domestic Violence

What is Domestic Violence?

- ⇒ Physical abuse (punching, choking, slapping)
- ⇒ Sexual abuse (rape, non-consensual sex acts)
- ⇒ Verbal, emotional and mental abuse (yelling, cursing)
- ⇒ Stalking
- ⇒ Threats and coercion, intimidation (written or verbal)
- ⇒ Isolation (preventing from leaving home or making phone calls)
- ⇒ Economic abuse (limiting access to funds and accounts)
- ⇒ Power and control (making someone afraid)

Custody and Visitation Orders

If your child's other parent has been abusive to you or your children, it is very important for you to protect yourself and your children, and find a parenting plan that will help you all stay safe.

- For protection, you can ask the court for a restraining order to protect you and your children. You can ask for custody, visitation (also called "parenting time"), and child support orders at the same time. Read Asking for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order for information and instructions. www.courts.ca.gov/1264.htm.

HRN may be able to assist you with restraining orders paperwork and domestic violence support.

HUMAN RESPONSE NETWORK

24 Hour Phone Line Support

(530) 623-4357 (COLLECT CALLS ACCEPTED)

<https://www.hrnrtrinity.org/>

If there is a Restraining Order or a Declaration of Domestic Violence, that person has the right to request:

- Separate mediation (to meet with the mediator without the other parent present)
- A support person may be present in mediation. (To provide moral and emotional support for the protected party)
- Address & phone number will be kept confidential

Children are affected in negative ways when there is violence between their parents.

Effects of Domestic Violence on Children:


Domestic violence can have very harmful effects on children. First, when there is domestic violence in the home, children are at greater risk of being abused or neglected.

But even when they are not “directly” abused, children who witness violence and abuse by 1 parent against another can be affected in ways similar to children who are physically abused. Seeing or hearing violence at home can hurt children emotionally, psychologically, and even physically because of the stress they suffer.

Read more about how domestic violence hurts children in:

The Facts on Children and Domestic Violence by the Family Violence Prevention Fund. <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/Facts-children-domestic-violence.pdf>.

Behind Closed Doors: The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children by UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/protection/files/BehindClosedDoors.pdf>.

[Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence](#) , article posted by National Resource Center on Domestic Violence .
https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/NRC_Children.pdf

Custody Laws and Domestic Violence

There are laws that deal with custody and visitation rights of parents in cases of domestic violence. First, the judge must decide if there is domestic violence, and if there is, the judge must follow special rules to decide custody of the children.

The judge will treat your case as a domestic violence case if, in the last 5 years:

- A parent was convicted of domestic violence against the other parent;
OR
- Any court has decided that 1 parent committed domestic violence against the other parent or the children.

Usually, when a judge decides that your case is a domestic violence case, the judge CANNOT give custody (joint or sole custody) to the parent who committed domestic violence. But that parent can get parenting time with the children (visitation rights).

A judge CAN give joint or sole custody to the parent who committed domestic violence if the parent who was abusive:

Proves to the court that giving joint or sole custody of the children to him or her is in the best interest of the children.

For additional information please refer to Family Code Section 3044

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=FAM§ionNum=3044.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

WHAT IS A DRUG? A **drug**, broadly speaking, is any substance that, when absorbed into the body of a living organism, alters normal bodily function.

Two types of drugs:

- ✚ Legal: Prescription medications, alcohol, marijuana
- ✚ Illegal: Meth, speed, cocaine, heroin, and prescription medication not prescribed to you, etc.

Using drugs or alcohol can negatively affect your ability to parent even if they are prescribed or recommended by a physician. Drug use can also directly affect your child. Parental substance abuse interrupts a child's normal development, which places these youngsters at higher risk for emotional, physical and mental health problems. Therefore, in order to ensure your children's best interest are maintained, the Court will take any allegations of drug and/or alcohol use/abuse very seriously.

AODS Alcohol and Other Drug Services

1450 Main Street
Weaverville, CA 96093
Phone...(530) 623-1362
Fax.....(530) 623-1447

Legal Context

Family Code Section 3011 (d) requires consideration of parents "habitual or continual illegal use of controlled substances, the habitual or continual abuse of alcohol, or the habitual or continual abuse of prescribed controlled substances by either parent." in determining the best interest of the children.

Share any concerns regarding controlled or illicit substance use and/or abuse to the Child Custody Recommending Counselor at the time of your appointment.

As a prerequisite to considering allegations of abuse, the court may require substantial independent corroboration, including, but not limited to, written reports by law enforcement agencies, child protective services or other social welfare agencies, courts, medical facilities, or other public agencies or private nonprofit organization.



Developmental Needs of Children

Infants, Toddlers and Pre-School

- Tend to have a primary bond but can bond to several people
- Need a consistent schedule and lots of nurturing
- Have difficulty tolerating long separations from the primary caregiver
- The schedule should provide more frequent, shorter periods of time with the other parent

School Age Children

- Need an emotional foundation that provides confidence and self-worth
- The schedule should allow them to focus on school

Pre-Adolescents

- Need help with school and peer problems
- The schedule should allow them to spend time doing organize activities and communicating with friends

Adolescents

- Want their plans to be important, too
- May prefer to have a “home base”
- Need consistent rules in both households
- The schedule should be flexible
- Want to spend time with their peers, rather than their parents

Teenagers

- Emotional stability and maturity of the part of both parents
- Adequate, but flexible and age-appropriate parental controls
- Home base with one parent, a mixture of scheduled and spontaneous overnights, shorter visits with the other parent

Tips for Easy Transition

Traveling between homes may be difficult for your children. Each transition requires your children to make several adjustments. Although they may be anticipating being with the other parent, they may also experience some sadness about leaving you. When they leave the other parent, they may experience the same emotions' once again. Each exchange between homes requires your child to say hello and good-bye several times within a brief period of time.

1. Prepare for departure:

- a. Talk to your child about what will happen while he/she is with the other parent. Tell the other parent the reason you are asking for this information. Do the same for the other parent so he/she might be able to prepare your child in the same way.
- b. Establish and maintain a routine. Before your child leaves from the other home, read a book, play a game or watch a short video together.
- c. Establish and maintain a "good-by" ritual. For example, give your child three kisses and a hug each departure and say, "See you soon. Love you forever."
- d. Pack a "comfort bag." Your child may want to transport favorite items such as a stuffed animal, a blanket, a book or an item that reminds him/her of the other parent. Place a card or note in the bag for your child to discover at a later time.

2. During transition:

- a. Have your child adequately prepared and ready to leave on time. If you are transporting your child, be on time for dropping off and picking up.
- b. Be courteous to the child's other parent. Avoid arguments and exchanging inappropriate information. Do not send information through your child.
- c. If your child is taking medication, be sure to transfer this medication and provide adequate instructions for how it is to be administered.
- d. Consider a neutral exchange site if you or the other parent have difficulty refraining from arguing or trading insults in front of your children.
- e. Your child may have difficulty separating from one or both parents. Establishing rituals for departure and arrival will ease some of the anxiety.

3. Prepare for return:

- a. Recognize that your child may need some time to be alone after returning home. Allow them to spend quiet time alone if they choose.
- b. Establish and maintain a "hello" ritual. Once your child has unwound from his arrival, play a game, read a book, watch a favorite video or bake cookies.

Two Models of Parenting after Separation

COOPERATIVE PARENTING

1. Parents work together in raising their children in 2 homes.
2. Parents talk regularly.
3. There is more consistency between homes.
4. Major decisions are made together.
5. There is more flexibility for both children and parents.
6. Transitions are usually smoother for children.

ADVANTAGES: All of the above!

DISADVANTAGES: None. (Unless the parents are in high conflict.)

PARALLEL PARENTING

1. Each parent raises the children independently of the other parent.
2. Parents talk to one another only in an emergency.
3. There is little consistency between homes.
4. There is less flexibility for both children and parents.

ADVANTAGE:

Conflict is avoided between high-conflict parents.

DISADVANTAGE:

Children need to act as if the other parent does not exist.

Resolving Conflict between Parents

Children need two parents who can work together by putting aside their feelings for the sake of their children.

You and the other parent are parents together. It is not possible or desirable to eliminate the other parent from your child's life. Your child needs both parents to find a way to raise him/her together.

1. Communicate with your child's other parent because you love your child and care about his/her future. Don't try to "win," but do try to solve the problem(s) at hand.
2. Focus on your child's best interest, rather than your own needs.
3. Try to make sure that you understand the purpose of the communication so that your conversation stays on track.
4. Don't argue. Find another time to talk or start over.
5. Avoid provocative remarks.
6. Politely end prolonged arguments.
7. Apologize for your mistakes.
8. Look for something you can agree on.
9. Look for a partial solution.

How to Develop a Successful Co-parent Relationship

As co-parents, you and the other parent are in the “business” of raising your child in separate homes.

Remember...

1. Treat the other parent with respect (just as you would want to be treated)! Be business-like.
2. Respect and encourage your child’s relationship with the other parent.
3. Talk regularly with the other parent about the child. Make an appointment to discuss concerns, rather than when you exchange the child.
4. Communicate directly with the other parent. Resolve conflicts between you without putting the child in the middle.
5. Be specific. Don’t make assumptions.
6. Don’t insist on something that doesn’t work. Do what is in your child’s best interest.
7. Share the tasks of parenting.
8. Remember to express appreciation, when appropriate, for things the other parent has done.
9. Keep emotions to a minimum. Stay focused on the issue(s) at hand.
10. Look to other people in your life for support and validation; don’t expect it from the other parent.

Factors' to Consider When Making a Parenting Plan

- The child's age, developmental stage and needs
- The child's temperament and how the child deals with change
- The child's attachment to each parent and to his/her siblings
- Safety concerns: domestic violence, child abuse, substance abuse
- Previous parenting arrangements
- The child's school, extracurricular, and social activities
- Both parents' strengths and weaknesses
- Providing a consistent, simple, and predictable schedule with smooth transitions between the parents' homes
- Ensuring that the child has "frequent and continuing contact" with both parents
- Where both parents reside and their work schedules
- The level of conflict between the parents. (Higher levels of conflict require more detailed parenting plans.
- **Remember: This is about the children!**

IMPORTANT TERMS TO UNDERSTAND

Legal Custody: The rights and responsibilities of parents to make decisions relating to the health, education and welfare of the children.

Joint Legal Custody: Both parents share in the right and responsibility to make decisions for their children.

Sole Legal Custody: One parent has the right and responsibility for making decisions for the children.

Physical Custody: How much time the children spend with each parent; where the children live; how day-to-day responsibilities are fulfilled.

Joint Physical Custody: Children spend a significant amount of time with each parent. This does not mean parenting time must be equally spent. (One parent may have primary physical custody)

Sole Physical Custody: Children reside mainly with one parent, and may or may not have visitation with the other parent.



Pre-Mediation Checklist:

Father: Mother: Guardian: Please circle yes or no to each of the following statements:

- Yes No** The parents shall share joint legal custody. The parents shall consult and cooperate with each other in making decisions and sharing information related to the health, education, and welfare of the child(ren). Each parent shall have access to medical and school records pertaining to the child(ren) and be involved with them. It is each parent's responsibility to request report cards, parent-teacher conferences, progress reports, school calendars, and the like, directly from the child(ren)'s school.
- Yes No** Holidays shall be shared and mutually arranged between the parents.
- Yes No** Transportation to or from parenting time shall be shared and mutually arranged between the parents.
- Yes No** Each parent shall have reasonable phone access to the child(ren) when they are in the other parent's care.
- Yes No** Both parents shall speak only positively to and about the other parent, and encourage third parties to do the same in order to encourage positive feelings in the child(ren) for the other parent. Both parents shall encourage the child(ren) to spend time with the other parent. Neither parent shall discuss the legal proceedings with the child(ren).
- Yes No** Each parent shall communicate directly with the other parent only as necessary regarding the welfare and visitation of the child(ren), not involve third parties, or relay messages through the children.
- Yes No** Each parent shall keep the other parent informed of his/her current address and telephone number to be used only regarding the welfare and visitation of the children.
- Yes No** When either parent schedules a medical, dental, or counseling appointment for the child(ren), that parent shall notify the other parent at least 7 days in advance with the date and time of the appointment, along with the name of the person that the child(ren) is seeing.
- Yes No** Each parent shall ensure that the child(ren) is/are not exposed to any expression of extreme conflict or domestic violence.
- Yes No** Each parent shall ensure that the child(ren) is/are not in the care or presence of, or transported by, any person who is possessing, using, or who is under the influence of any illicit drug or alcohol.
- Yes No** Each parent shall ensure that the child(ren) is/are not cared for by anyone who uses physical punishment on the child(ren).
- Yes No** If either parent plans to take the child(ren) out of the state, but not out of the country, for a trip during his/her time with the child(ren), the traveling parent shall notify the other parent at least 14 days in advance with the location they are visiting and an emergency telephone contact number.
- Yes No** If either parent plans to take the child(ren) out of the country during his/her time with the child(ren), the traveling parent shall notify the other parent at least 30 days in advance, with the location they are visiting and an emergency telephone contact number and obtain the other parent's written permission.
- Yes No** Neither parent shall move *with the child(ren)* out of the County without the written permission of the other parent or further orders of the Court.
- Yes No** Each parent shall take the Court recommended workshop "Kids in the Middle" [(650) 403-4300 extension 4500] and provide written verification upon completion to Family Court Services.
- Yes No** Changes to the parenting plan may be mutually agreed upon in advance, in writing, between the parents.

Parent Plan Worksheets

Please use the next three forms to the best of your ability and bring copies of them or notes about the content with you to your initial appointment. The documents are not an official declaration, but rather serve as a tool to assist you in gathering your thoughts in a clear and brief fashion. The two main parts of a parenting plan (also called a custody and visitation plan) are:

- Parenting Schedule: sets out specific days and times for children to be with each parent; who will transport the children, where will the transfer happen, who will pay for any travel necessary for visits.
- Decision Making: sets out how decisions will be made with respect to health, education and social issues for children. Will the parents make them together or should one parent have decision making authority?

Proposal:

I, _____ propose the following child sharing plan:

- The children will stay with their mother:

Mon. - Fri. (during the school year) ____ (all year) ____
or
____ weekends per month from _____ to _____
(time)(day) (time)(day)
or
Alternate weekends from _____ to _____
(time)(day) (time)(day)
and/or
Weekday(s): From _____ to _____
(time)(day) (time)(day)

- The children will stay with their father:

Mon. - Fri. (during the school year) ____ (all year) ____
or
____ weekends per month from _____ to _____
(time)(day) (time)(day)
or
Alternate weekends from _____ to _____
(time)(day) (time)(day)
and/or
Weekday(s): From _____ to _____
(time)(day) (time)(day)

Parenting Plan Holiday Worksheet

HOLIDAY /SUMMER SCHEDULE	TIME (FROM WHEN TO WHEN)	Every year	Even years	Odd years
Christmas Eve				
Christmas Day				
Winter Break (first half)				
Winter Break (second half)				
Spring Break				
Presidents' Week				
Thanksgiving Day				
Thanksgiving Weekend				
Summer Break, first half				
Summer Break, second half				
Summer Break, every other week				
Summer Break, _____ weeks non-consecutive				
OTHER:				

Other Alternatives:

MONTH-AT-A-GLANCE CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

MONTH-AT-A-GLANCE CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday