

PARENTING TIME GUIDELINES for the Yavapai County Superior Court

Raising a child presents challenges for all parents. When parents live in separate homes, the challenges are greater because relationships become more complicated. Sometimes parents disagree about how much time a child should spend with each of them. The following information will help parents reach agreements (Parenting Plans) and assist Courts in fashioning reasonable orders for parenting time (visitation).

Children describe the loss of contact with a parent as the worst consequence of dissolution of marriage (divorce) or parental separation. Unless special circumstances exist, preserving a healthy, ongoing relationship between children and both parents is of utmost importance. Positive involvement by both parents furthers a child's emotional and social development, academic achievement, and overall adjustment. Each parent must be responsible in exercising parenting time and encouraging the other parent's parenting time with the child. Failure to act responsibly and in the best interests of children may result in orders limiting parenting time or a change of legal decision making.

The court prefers that parents voluntarily reach an agreed upon Parenting Plan. When parents reach a Parenting Plan on their own, they are more likely to exercise parenting time, encourage the other parent to do the same, and are more likely to remain cooperative with each another. A child does best when parents cooperate. Ongoing conflict between parents creates a high risk the child will suffer serious long-term emotional problems.

Written Parenting Plans provide children and parents with more assurance of meaningful contact and may prevent future conflict. Because each child is unique, parents may wish to establish different plans for children of different ages while making sure brothers and sisters spend as much time together as possible. Parents are encouraged to be flexible.

Decisions about parenting time depend on many circumstances, but the age of the child is very important. Information about what a child learns, feels, and needs at different ages is presented in Planning for Parenting Time: a Guide for Parents Living Apart, provided by the Yavapai County Conciliation Court in the Parent Education Class. Parents should read and consider this material. Suggested Parenting Plans for each age group are also presented.

Parents involved in a dissolution or legal decision making proceeding must have a Parenting Plan, either court-imposed or voluntary, before a decree of dissolution of marriage or legal decision making order may be entered.

Private and court-sponsored mediation services are available to assist parents in developing a Parenting Plan or to resolve disputes over parenting time. The court also requires parents to attend the parent-education program which is designed to provide information to parents about the impact on children of the dissolution of the parents' marriage. For information regarding mediation services, contact the Court's Alternative Dispute Resolution Services at (928) 771-3371.

If parents are unable to agree on a Parenting Plan, the court will order a Parenting Plan. The Guidelines which follow are based on "typical" family situations. Circumstances, events or holidays which are important to the parents but not addressed by these Guidelines should be included in the Parenting Plan if parenting time during these periods is desired or beneficial. Parents must also cooperate to arrange the child's attendance and participation in special events and occasions, i.e., weddings, funerals, anniversaries, graduations, etc.

Parenting time orders must be based on the best interests of the child. A.R.S. §25-403.

Parenting time plans should be based in part on the child's age and the distance between the parents' residences. As the child grows older, the parenting time to the child shall also increase according to these guidelines.

Definitions applicable to all Parenting Plans are located at the end of these Guidelines.

1. PARENT/CHILD PARENTING TIME - SHORT DISTANCE

When the driving distance between the residences of the parents is 150 miles or less, the Short Distance plans apply. If the driving distance is greater than 150 miles, the Long Distance plans apply.

(a) Birth to Six Months

Parent A (parent exercising parenting time) shall have time with the child as follows:

Ideally, parenting time should occur frequently throughout the week. For those parents whose schedules permit, parenting time is three times a week, three hours each for the early months. As a child progresses to age six months, one such period shall be increased to a four-hour period during a day on the weekend (or on Parent A's day off). Unless specified otherwise, the days and times shall be each Tuesday and Thursday from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and each Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. For parents unable to have frequent parenting time during the week, parenting time will be four hours on each day of the weekend (or on Parent A's days off).

Holidays: A period of four hours on Father's Day or Mother's Day (consistent with Parent A's gender). Also, in odd-numbered years for a four-hour period on Thanksgiving Day and December 24th, and in even-numbered years for a four-hour period on December 25th. This schedule shall be adjusted to accommodate breast-feeding infants or for situations where Parent A has no expertise providing for the daily care of an infant.

(b) **Six Months to Three Years**

Parent A (parent exercising parenting time) shall have time with the child:

If these Guidelines have been reasonably followed from birth to six months, parenting time from six months to twelve months will be two periods of three hours and one 24-hour period each week.

From six months to twelve months, unless otherwise specified in writing, days and times shall be each Tuesday and Thursday from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and each Saturday from 12:00 p.m. (noon) to Sunday at 12:00 p.m. (noon).

From twelve months to three years, parenting time shall progress to alternate weekends (Saturday 10:00 a.m. to Sunday 6:00 p.m.) and one 4-hour mid-week period each week by age two.

Holidays: A period of 8 hours on Father's Day or Mother's Day (consistent with Parent A's gender).

(1) Six months to twelve months

Parent A shall have parenting time:

Odd Numbered Years

Thanksgiving: a 24-hour period ending no later than 8:00 p.m. Thanksgiving Day.

Christmas Eve: a 24-hour period ending no later than 8:00 p.m. December 24th.

Even Numbered Years

Christmas Day: a 24-hour period ending no later than 9:00 p.m. December 25th.

Child's Birthday: a 24-hour period ending no later than 8:00 p.m. on the child's birthday.

(2) Twelve months to three years

Holiday parenting time shall alternate between the parents with Parent A having parenting time:

Odd Numbered Years

Thanksgiving: a 48-hour period inclusive of Thanksgiving.

Christmas: a 48-hour period ending no later than 8:00 p.m. on December 25th.

Even Numbered Years

Christmas: a 48-hour period beginning at 9:00 a.m. on December 25th.

Child's Birthday: a 48-hour period inclusive of the child's birthday.

From twelve months to three years, vacation periods shall be for 6 to 12 months, 3 days; for 12 months to 2 years, 5 days; and for 2 years to 3 years, 1 week.

This schedule shall be adjusted to accommodate breast-feeding infants or for situations where Parent A has no expertise providing for the daily care of an infant or young child.

If these Guidelines have not been reasonably followed from birth to six months, parenting time from six months to twelve months will be three periods of two hours each week. From twelve months to three years, parenting time will begin with three periods of three hours per week and, after a period of three months, during which Parent A has reasonably maintained parenting time according to these Guidelines, parenting time shall revert to those indicated above.

(c) **Three to Five Years**

Parent A (parent exercising parenting time) shall have time with the child:

1. Every other weekend, Friday, 6:00 p.m., to Sunday, 6:00 p.m. (Days/Times of the week may be adjusted to accommodate the schedules of parents and child.)

2. An overnight each week from Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. to Thursday at 8:00 a.m.

3. Two weeks, or two one-week periods separated by at least two weeks, each summer.

4. Each Father's Day/Mother's Day (consistent with Parent A's gender).
5. On odd-numbered years for Spring Break, Thanksgiving, and the second segment of Christmas Break, and in even-numbered years for the child's birthday, Fall Break and the first segment of Christmas Break.

(d) Six to Fourteen Years

Parent A (parent exercising parenting time) shall have time with the child:

1. Every other weekend.
2. Overnight each Wednesday from 6:00 p.m. (or after school, whichever is earlier and feasible) to Thursday at 8:00 a.m.
3. From age six to seven, two periods of two weeks separated by at least two weeks each summer.
4. From age eight to fourteen, six weeks, or two periods of three weeks separated by two weeks, each summer. If the child is in town during this period, Parent B may have the child for one weekend during each three week period with reasonable advance notice to Parent A.
5. Each Father's Day/Mother's Day (consistent with Parent A's gender).
6. In odd-numbered years for Spring Break, Thanksgiving and the second segment of Christmas Break and in even-numbered years for the child's birthday, Fall Break and the first segment of Christmas Break. Any other Intersession breaks shall be equally divided between the parents such that Parent A shall have the child for the first half in odd-numbered years and the second half in even-numbered years. Any additional school vacations or breaks shall alternate between the parents.

(e) Fifteen to Eighteen Years

Time with both parents is very important to the child's development and well-being. If there has been an established pattern of parenting time, that pattern should continue. However, consideration must be given to the school, athletic, employment, and other social commitments of the child.

In this age group, it is often difficult to mandate detailed parenting time periods, as such arrangements can create frustrations or tension because of conflicts with the child's activities. Nevertheless, arrangements must be made for regular parenting time of six or more days per month. Extended contact should be encouraged and time made available. The child should be substantially involved in scheduling parenting time and activities, but the parents must exercise final authority. Parents need to be extremely flexible in scheduling parenting time and must cooperate with each other to insure that the child maintains contact with both parents on a regular basis.

Unless otherwise specified in writing, parenting time days and times shall be every other weekend and an additional overnight each Wednesday from 6:00 p.m. (or after school, whichever is earlier and feasible) to Thursday at 8:00 a.m. (or the start of school, whichever is earlier).

Unless otherwise specified in writing, Parent A shall also have parenting time in odd-numbered years for Spring Break, Thanksgiving and the second segment of Christmas Break, and in even-numbered years for the child's birthday, Fall Break and the first segment of Christmas Break. Any other Intersession breaks shall be equally divided between the parents such that Parent A shall have the child for the first half in odd-numbered years and the second half in even-numbered years. Any additional school vacations or breaks shall alternate between the parents.

PARENT/CHILD PARENTING TIME - LONG DISTANCE

A parent cannot always relocate without court permission. Please refer to the Arizona relocation statute (A.R.S. 25-408) if considering a move of more than 100 miles. Special consideration may arise when a parent is required to move out of state. Long Distance child parenting time applies where the distance between the residences of the two parents is more than 150 driving miles. Parenting time shall be provided throughout the year at regular intervals. Parents must consider the age and maturity of the child as well as school schedules, parenting time schedules and schedules of other family members when deciding how often and how long parenting time periods will be.

Parents must also consider their financial ability to provide transportation and childcare when their child is visiting from out of town. If the court has not allocated travel expenses in the child support order, parents must do so in the parenting plan. If not specified, each parent shall pay one-half of the transportation cost of the child for parenting time.

If logistically possible, monthly parenting time should occur. Depending upon the actual distance between the parents' homes and availability of transportation, there shall be a minimum of four (4) parenting time periods each year. Parenting time shall occur in summer, during the winter holiday season, during Thanksgiving or Fall Break and Spring Break. If the child is attending school where there are intersessions (or equivalent), parenting time shall occur during the intersessions nearest to the Thanksgiving and Spring Break. Parenting time should also occur on or near the child's birthday. If the child's birthday falls during another scheduled parenting time period, an additional parenting time period shall be scheduled at another time.

As a child approaches age three, he or she becomes aware of holidays. Holidays can be a challenge to parents who live more than 150 miles apart. Parents must be flexible and cooperative so the child can enjoy holidays with both of them. To avoid disputes,

parents should schedule as many holidays as are meaningful to the family whether religious or national, in their Parenting Plan. Parents should also include family birthdays and annual parent day celebrations.

All plans presume that for infants, the parent with parenting time has appropriate baby supplies (infant seat, car seat, crib, diapers, toys, etc.), and that parenting time will take place in a child-friendly setting that is visually and intellectually stimulating while with that parent.

All plans including overnights presume that the parent exercising parenting time not only has caregiving experience but that the child is attached and accustomed to being in the care of that parent for fairly long periods.

(a) **Birth to Six Months**

Parent A (parent exercising parenting time) shall have time with the child:

1. Two periods of 4 hours per day, one weekend per month in the child's community. (Days of the week may be adjusted by agreement or court order to accommodate the schedules of parents.)
2. A 4-hour period during Christmas.
3. A period of 4 hours on Father's Day/Mother's Day (consistent with Parent A's gender).
4. This schedule shall be adjusted to accommodate breast-feeding infants or for situations where Parent A has no expertise providing for the daily care of an infant.

(b) **6 Months to 3 Years**

Parent A (parent exercising parenting time) shall have time with the child:

1. Eight 4-hour periods each month in the child's community (for all children in this age group). Days of the week may be adjusted by agreement or court order to accommodate the schedules of parents.

2. **Holidays**

6 to 12 Months:

- a. A 4-hour period each day for three days during the Christmas period, including Christmas day.
- b. A period of 4 hours on Father's Day/Mother's Day (consistent with Parent A's gender).

12 to 24 months:

- a. A 24-hour period during Christmas, which in odd-numbered years shall commence at noon December 26th and in even-numbered years shall conclude at noon December 26th. In odd-numbered years a 24- hour period that ends no later than 8:00 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day.

24 to 36 months

- a. A 72-hour period during Christmas, which in odd-numbered years shall commence at noon December 26th and in even-numbered years shall conclude at noon December 26th. In odd-numbered years a 72-hour period that includes Thanksgiving Day.
- b. A period of 8 hours on Father's Day/Mother's Day (consistent with Parent A's gender).
- c. Three consecutive days for a vacation period from age 12 months to 24 months; and five days from age 24 months to 36 months.

These schedules shall be adjusted to accommodate breast-feeding infants or situations where Parent A has no expertise in providing for the daily care of an infant or young child.

(c) **Three to Five Years**

Parent A (parent exercising parenting time) shall have time with the child:

1. One weekend each month in Parent A's own community.
2. One additional weekend each month in the child's community, which may be consecutive to Parent A's normal weekend parenting time. (Days/Times of the week may be adjusted by agreement or court order to accommodate the schedules of parents).
3. Two one-week periods separated by at least two weeks each summer at age three; a consecutive two-week summer period at age four; and a consecutive three-week summer period at age five.
4. Each Father's Day/Mother's Day (consistent with Parent A's gender).
5. In odd-numbered years Spring Break, Thanksgiving, and the second segment of Christmas Break. In even-numbered years for the child's birthday, Fall Break and the first segment of Christmas Break.

(d) Six to Fourteen Years

Parent A (parent exercising parenting time) shall spend time with the child:

1. One weekend each month in Parent A's community, preferably including a Monday or Friday holiday from school. (Days/Times of the week may be adjusted by agreement or court order to accommodate the schedules of parents and child.)
2. One additional weekend each month in the child's community, which may be consecutive to Parent A's normal weekend parenting time, preferably including a Monday/Friday holiday from school. (Days/Times of the week may be adjusted by agreement or court order to accommodate the schedules of parents and child).
3. Each Father's Day/Mother's Day weekend (consistent with Parent A's gender).
4. A consecutive four week period each summer at ages six and seven; and a consecutive six week period each summer at ages eight through fourteen. Summer parenting time may be divided into two equal periods separated by two weeks at Parent A's option. Parent B shall have the option of having the child on alternate weekends at Parent B's expense.
5. In odd-numbered years for Spring Break, Thanksgiving and the second segment of Christmas Break and in even-numbered years for the child's birthday, Fall Break and the first segment of Christmas Break. Any other Intersession breaks shall be equally divided between the parents such that Parent A shall have the child for the first half in odd-numbered years and the second half in even-numbered years. Any additional school vacations or breaks shall alternate between the parents.

(e) Fifteen to Eighteen Years

At these ages, time with both parents is still important to the child's development and well-being. If there has been a pattern of parenting time, that pattern should continue to the extent possible after parents consider the school, athletic, employment and other commitments of the child.

In this age group, it is often difficult to mandate detailed parenting time periods, as such arrangements often create frustrations or tension because of conflicts with activities. Nevertheless, arrangements must be made for regular parenting time of six or more days per month. Extended contact should be encouraged and time made available. The child should be substantially involved in scheduling and activities, but the parents must exercise the final authority. Parents need to be extremely flexible in scheduling parenting time and must cooperate with each other to insure that the child maintains contact with both parents on a regular basis.

Unless otherwise specified, Parent A shall also have parenting time in odd-numbered years for Spring Break, Thanksgiving and the second segment of Christmas Break and in even-numbered years for the child's birthday, Fall Break and the first segment of Christmas Break. Any other Intersession breaks shall be equally divided between the parents such that Parent A shall have the child for the first half in odd-numbered years and the second half in even-numbered years. Any additional school vacations or breaks shall alternate between the parents.

GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO ALL CHILD PARENTING TIME ARRANGEMENTS

1. Parent parenting time in any particular circumstance can be changed by agreement of the parents. However, parents are cautioned that any agreement for a permanent change in either legal decision making or the parenting time schedule must be in writing, signed by both parties, and approved by the court.
2. With respect to short-distance transportation, unless otherwise specified, Parent A (parent exercising parenting time) shall arrange for the child's travel at the beginning of the parenting time period and Parent B (parent with whom child customarily resides) shall arrange for the child's travel at the conclusion of the parenting time period. With respect to long-distance transportation, unless otherwise specified, Parent A shall arrange for the child's travel at the beginning and conclusion of the parenting time period, and both parents shall share the cost of travel. One-half of the time needed to travel for parenting time is included in the periods allocated for parenting time.
3. If the child is not attending school, parenting time periods shall coincide with the public elementary school calendar in the child's community.
4. The parents must communicate in a timely manner the details of the arrangements either of them has made for the beginning and conclusion of holiday, vacation and summer parenting time periods. Regarding holiday and vacation parenting time, Parent A must give Parent B thirty days advance written notice of the arrangements that parent has made. If no such notice is given, Parent B shall contact Parent A within seven days to request or discuss parenting time arrangements. If Parent A does not give Parent B notice of the parenting time arrangements within seven days thereafter, Parent B may cancel the parenting time period and no substitute parenting time will be required. With respect to summer and/or intersession parenting time periods of two weeks or longer, Parent A must give Parent B at least sixty days advance written notice of the arrangements that parent has made. If no such notice is given, Parent B shall contact Parent A within seven days to request or discuss parenting time arrangements. If Parent A does not give Parent B notice of the parenting time arrangements within seven days thereafter, Parent B may cancel the parenting time period and no substitute parenting time is required.

5. Parent A does not have to give Parent B notice of intent to exercise fixed alternating weekend parenting time. Both parents are expected to arrive promptly at the time designated to pick up or deliver the child. If one parent will be more than two hours late, he or she must give verbal notice to the other parent. If Parent A does not provide notice of the expected delay, then Parent B may cancel the parenting time after waiting the two hour period and no substitute parenting time is required. If Parent B does not provide notice of the expected delay, substitute parenting time by Parent A shall be provided.

6. In the case of afternoon, evening or overnight parenting time, unless a regular schedule is arranged or established, Parent A must give Parent B at least 48-hours verbal notice regarding the parenting time arrangements. In the absence of such notice, or in the absence of reasonably strict compliance by Parent A with the arranged schedule, Parent B may cancel the visitation and no substitute visitation is required.

7. All holiday, vacation, summer and birthday periods have priority over weekend parenting time periods. During those holiday, vacation, summer and birthday periods when Parent A is not scheduled to have the child, Parent B shall have the child and Parent A shall not exercise weekend or other visitation, with no substitution required. Parent A's holiday, vacation, summer and birthday parenting time shall be in addition to weekend parenting time if they fall on a time other than Parent A's scheduled weekend, and shall replace weekend parenting time if they fall on a scheduled weekend. It is anticipated that over a period of years, these losses and additions to scheduled weekend parenting time periods will equalize.

8. If there are two or more children of different ages, the parenting time guidelines regarding birthdays shall alternate such that in odd-numbered years, Parent A shall have all of the children on the oldest child's birthday, Parent B shall have all of the children on the second-oldest child's birthday, Parent A shall have all of the children on the third-oldest child's birthday, and so on. In even-numbered years, Parent B shall have all of the children on the oldest child's birthday, Parent A shall have all of the children on the second-oldest child's birthday, Parent B shall have all of the children on the third-oldest child's birthday, and so on.

9. For long-distance parenting time with children age three years or older, if there is more than one child, the parenting time periods shall coincide with the periods of the oldest child subject to parenting time, unless otherwise specified or ordered.

10. Regardless of whether Short Distance or Long Distance Parenting Plans apply, both parents shall allow and encourage regular telephone communication between the other parent and child, by arranging certain days and times each week for telephone calls to occur (for example, every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.). If the telephone calls will result in long-distance charges, the parents should alternate initiating the calls so that one time the parent calls the child, and the next time the child calls the parent, thus equalizing the costs of these telephone calls. In addition to telephone calls, the parents shall allow and encourage other forms of communication on a regular basis. This may include by mail and computer or other technology, such as e-mail, internet video teleconference and websites. The use of simultaneous communication such as video teleconferences should be arranged in advance to occur at regular times, just as would be done with telephone calls.

11. The exercise of parental parenting time is not dependent upon or legally related to the duty to pay child support. Parenting time shall not be withheld for any reason except by court order or, in an emergency situation, where Parent B reasonably believes that parenting time would seriously endanger the mental, moral, physical or emotional health of the child. In such a case, Parent B must, before the next scheduled parenting time period, petition the court for modification of parental parenting time so that a hearing may be held.

12. Both parents are required to consult reasonable and in good faith with each other in all decisions about the health, welfare, morals, safety, education and like matters affecting the child. If the child becomes ill or injured to the extent that the child is hospitalized or in bed for more than two days, the parent with whom the child is then living shall promptly notify the other parent.

13. For purpose of emergency medical treatment, Parent A may consent to medical procedures for the child recommended by a qualified medical practitioner.

14. Unless otherwise provided by court order or law, both parents are entitled to have equal parenting time to documents and other information concerning the child's education and physical, moral and emotional health including medical, school, police, court and other records directly from the custodian of the records or from the other parent. A parent who attempts to restrict the release of documents or information by the custodian without a prior court order is subject to appropriate legal sanctions.

15. Neither parent shall at any time speak to the child in a negative or derogatory manner regarding the other parent. This constraint extends to and is binding on any adult or minor over age fourteen who resides with either parent, and on any adult to whom either parent is married or may subsequently marry. A violation of this constraint by any such person shall be deemed to be a violation by the parent married to or residing with that person for purposes of contempt or modification proceedings.

PARENT-DETERMINED PARENTING TIME PLAN

Parent determined parenting time plan is the term describing a written parenting arrangement arrived at by agreement of the parties and approved by the court. Such arrangements result from cooperative action by parents who have made a decision to shield their child to the greatest extent possible from the turmoil of legal decision making proceedings. These types of parents recognize that each must remain active in the child's life and that each must cooperate in sharing the continued responsibility for raising the child.

A parent determined parenting time plan may differ greatly from some of the types of arrangements found in the Child Parenting time Guidelines. However, a voluntary parent determined parenting time plan has the advantage of permitting flexibility to formulate an agreement that precisely fits their individual situations. Most important, such an arrangement permits both parents to remain legally responsible for the child, including retaining the authority to secure medical treatment, select the school the child will attend,

decide on religious training and, in general, remain fully involved in the child's life. The end result, is that both parents continue to share in the upbringing of the child.

One key to a successful parent determined parenting time plan is the written agreement. No such agreement can be perfect and cover every contingency, but the more thought that is put into the agreement, the less room there is for later disagreement or misunderstanding. The following are categories which parents, attorneys and mediators should consider in drafting a voluntary parent determined parenting time plan. By no means should this listing be considered inclusive nor, by the same token, must every category be covered in every agreement.

1. Legal
 - (a) Do both parents wish to retain joint legal decision making?
 - (b) Will grandparents be provided visitation rights in the agreement?
2. Geographic Locations
 - (a) Where do the parents plan to live in relationship to each other?
 - (b) What are the precise addresses and telephone numbers of each parent?
 - (c) Does either parent plan a move in the near future?
 - (d) What public transportation, if any, is available between the residences?
 - (e) Where do the grandparents live?
3. Residential Arrangements
 - (a) Does either parent plan to or is either parent presently residing with any other person(s)?
 - (b) Are there any unrelated children in either parent's residence?
 - (c) How much time will the child be spending with each parent?
4. School and Summer Vacations
 - (a) Where will the child spend vacations and how will holidays be shared?
 - (b) Where will summer or intersession vacations be spent?
5. Miscellaneous
 - (a) Should the parents incorporate a dispute resolution mechanization into the agreement; e.g., agree to refer such disputes to Conciliation Court services or private mediation? If so, how will the parents share any costs?
 - (b) Should the arrangement have a provision for an automatic change in the parenting time schedule if the parents move from a short-distance category to a long-distance category, or vice versa?

MEDIATION

Parents and attorneys are reminded the Conciliation Court offers free mediation services to parents. The court maintains a panel of trained mediators who have a great deal of expertise in working with parents to reach a satisfactory agreement. The court often requires mediation before it will hear a contested legal decision making or parental parenting time matter. However, parents need not wait for court-ordered mediation, but they may request the assistance of a mediator at any time, even after a final Decree or Order regarding legal decision making has been entered. In addition, parents may retain and pay a private mediator in lieu of a court selected mediator.

The mediation procedure can be found in Rule 68, Arizona Rules of Family Law Procedure. Some aspects of this Rule are highlighted here. Parents should understand mediation proceedings are confidential in nature and no report is made to the court or to the attorneys of the discussions which occur during the sessions. If the parents successfully reach an agreement, the agreement is placed in writing and signed by each of the parents. If the parents do not reach an agreement, only that fact is reported to the Court, no fault is assigned to either parent for such failure, and neither parent may tell the Court what was said during mediation sessions.

Attorneys retain a veto power over the agreement or any portion of it. If the parents reach an agreement, each attorney involved receives a copy of the agreement and then may object to it in whole or in part.

Attorneys are expected to cooperate with the mediators and the mediation process. Attorneys should promptly notify their clients of the date and time set for the first mediation session, review any agreement, and promptly file any objection they may have with the

Court and copy the other party. Attorneys should also advise their clients that failure to appear at a scheduled mediation session subjects the client to possible sanctions, including contempt of court.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply in these guidelines:

(Note: Not all definitions are applicable to all parenting plans. The additional definitions may be useful if deviations from the parenting plans are agreed to between the parties or ordered by the court.)

1. Afternoon: 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
2. Christmas: This period is divided into two segments. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, the first segment commences at 6:00 p.m. the last day of school and concludes at Noon December 25th (if short distance) or December 26th (if long distance) and concludes at 6:00 p.m. the last day before school is to begin.
3. Day: 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
4. Evening: 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
5. Holiday or Vacation: The vacation periods during the school year which occur during Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring Break (or Easter) and Fall Break. These periods each commence at 6:00 p.m. the last day of school and conclude at 6:00 p.m. the last day before school is to begin.
6. Overnight: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m.
7. Parent A: The parent exercising parenting time with the child.
8. Parent B: The parent with whom the child customarily resides.
9. Parent-Determined Parenting time Plan: A written parenting arrangement arrived at by agreement of the parties and approved by the Court.
10. Parenting Plan: The agreement or order setting forth the terms by which parents coordinate residence, transportation and other provisions relating to the upbringing of their minor child.
11. Summer: The approximately 2-month period that usually occurs during the summer months. This period commences one week after the last day of school and ends one week before the day school is to begin. Note: If the particular school district which the child attends is on a staggered 12 month schedule such that the child's "summer vacation" actually occurs at some other time of the year, the definitions of Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring Break and summer contained herein may not apply. The court must be informed if this is the case and other provisions will be made.
12. Week: 6:00 p.m. Friday to 6:00 p.m. the following Friday.
13. Weekend: 6:00 p.m. Friday to 6:00 p.m. Sunday, unless a Monday school holiday follows, in which case the weekend extends to 6:00 p.m. Monday.