

Checklist - Ideas on Things You Can Cover in Your Parenting Plan

Time Spent with Each Parent

- *What time will the children spend with each of you?*
- *If the children are sleeping in two houses, what day/days will changeover be?*
- *How will children travel between homes (for eg, will it be through school, and if so, will they take their bags to school or will they be dropped by parents?).*
- *Where will the children's possessions and toys be (will there be two sets of clothes and toys etc?)*

Changes

- *How fixed or how flexible do you want this schedule to be?*
- *Who will look after the children when you are not able to? The other parent? Or is it up to each of you to find alternative care?*
- *How much notice will you provide the other parent if you are not able to take the children for an agreed time?*
- *When would you like to review these arrangements? Will you agree to come back to mediation after a certain timeframe or see how it all goes?*

Communication

- *What are your agreed guidelines for respectful communication?*
- *How will you communicate with each other in front of your children? How will you talk about the other parent to the children?*
- *How will communicate about daily requirements for the children?*
- *How will you notify each other of changes or emergencies? (is this different to regular communication?)*
- *How and when will you communicate about big things to do with your children's wellbeing? (eg if they're struggling with a peer issue, a learning difficulty or anything else that they need extra support with). Will that be a regular meeting time or meet as need be?*
- *How will the children communicate with you when they are with the other parent? Will you make a scheduled time or will you have an open line? Will that interfere with the child's activities with the other parent?*
- *Do you agree that arrangements must be made through the other parent, and not through children (ie children must not be made to be go-betweens or messengers)? Or is it OK to make direct arrangements?*

Decisions

- *How will you decide together about big decisions - such as which school a child attends or what spiritual faith they will follow?*
- *How will you decide about other issues - eg extra-curricular sports or what age they're allowed to have a sleep-over?*
- *How will you go about introducing new partners to the children?*

Special Days

- *What will happen on the children's birthdays?*
- *Who will organise birthday parties? Will the cost of the party be shared?*
- *Will you buy individual presents or joint presents (eg for big items)?*
- *What will happen on parents birthdays?*
- *What will happen on mothers day, fathers day and other important days in the family?*
- *Where will the children spend Christmas? (eg half day with each parent, alternate years etc)*
- *How will the children spend their school holidays?*

Financial Arrangements

- *Do you want to make any special financial arrangements outside of any arrangements with the Child Support Agency?*
- *For eg, who will pay for school fees, uniforms, school excursions, vacation care, extra curricular activities, health insurance, medical expenses and so on.*
- *Will the children receive pocket money, and if so, when and where?*

Extended Family

- *How will the children maintain relationships with important people in their lives - for example, grandparents and other extended family?*