

# CO-PARENTING PLAN WORKSHEET

Created by: Leah Nathan, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>

Licensed Psychologist/Divorce Coach

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This worksheet is designed to be a tool to help you brainstorm various options when it comes to custody schedules and other issues related to the care and co-parenting of your children. It is for your own personal use. It is not intended to serve, nor should it be used, as a template for a contract between you and your co-parent. Instead, it should be utilized to help you gather your thoughts and prepare for discussions with your co-parenting partner, counselor, mediator, and/or lawyer.

Keep in mind that, as children grow, their developmental needs change. You may want to build flexibility into some sections of your co-parenting plan in order to adapt to new circumstances.

## LET'S GET STARTED

This worksheet applies to the following child (ren):

Name	Date of Birth	Age

Deciding on a custody schedule is one of the major roadblocks that divorcing clients face. Parents often wonder what options are available to them. Before we dive into creating your own custody schedule, let's take a look at some options below. Your schedule can be customized to what works best for you, your co-parenting partner, and your children.

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<sup>1</sup> *In collaboration with Heather A. Cooper, Esquire*

### Sample Custody Schedules:

\*M= Mom; D= Dad

#### Week on/Week off

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
M	M	M	M	M	M	M
D	D	D	D	D	D	D
M	M	M	M	M	M	M
D	D	D	D	D	D	D

#### 2-2-5-5 SCHEDULE

*Very popular among families, good 50/50 schedule, good for older kids*

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
M	M	D	D	M	M	M
M	M	D	D	D	D	D
M	M	D	D	M	M	M
M	M	D	D	D	D	D

#### 2-2-3 SCHEDULE

*Good for younger kids but involves more transitions*

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
M	M	D	D	M	M	M
D	D	M	M	D	D	D
M	M	D	D	M	M	M
D	D	M	M	D	D	D

#### 3-1-3 SCHEDULE

*Less common*

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
M	M	M	D	M	M	M

D	D	D	M	D	D	D
M	M	M	D	M	M	M
D	D	D	M	D	D	D

**NOW, IT'S YOUR TURN TO DIVE IN...**  
**THINK ABOUT YOUR IDEAL CUSTODY SCHEDULE.**  
**What will it look like? Draft it in the space below.**

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Week 1:							
Week 2:							
Week 3:							
Week 4:							

### TRANSFERS/ EXCHANGES OF KIDS

Parents agree to ensure that all transfers of children from one parent to the other are calm and civil. If a parent is running late, he/she will call the other parent (not one of the children) to alert him/her of the estimated time of arrival.

Parents will make every effort to prepare the children in advance of the transfer, both by gathering their belongings ahead of time and by saying only positive things about upcoming time with the other parent.

Transfer will take place at the following locations as follows (*consider weekday, weekend, and holiday exchanges*):

Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

If a parent is unavailable for their time with the child(ren), who will explain this to the child(ren) and how will this be explained to the child(ren)?

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Will the “non-custodial” parent be entitled to communicate with the children while they are in the custody of the other parent? How (e.g., phone calls, text messages, FaceTime, etc.)? How often?

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### **COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL**

*(This can be used for discussion of specific issues or for general communication between parents)*

Communications will be brief and relate only to the issue at hand. Communication occurs by and between parents, not through or by the children. Children will not be asked to deliver notes or messages for parents.

The parents will communicate with each other through:

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Face to Face: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **THE KIDS’ BIRTHDAYS**

<b>Things to think about:</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Should the parents alternate having custody of a child on the child’s birthday (e.g., odd and even numbered years)?	
Who is responsible for planning the birthdays? Who is responsible for paying for the party?	
Will both parents attend this party?	
Will extended family attend this party?	
How will gifts be managed?	

## PARENTS' BIRTHDAYS

Do the parents want to spend their own birthday with the kids? \_\_\_\_\_

## HOLIDAYS

Holidays can be stressful, but jotting down your thoughts will help you to brainstorm some options.

Holidays	Mom	Dad	Other Thoughts
New Year's Eve/New Year's Day			
Federal Holidays (President's Day, MLK Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day)			
Spring Break and Easter			
Passover			
Mother's Day			
Father's Day:			
Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur			
Halloween			
Thanksgiving			
Christmas/Hanukkah and Winter Break			
July 4th			
Other Holidays			

**Summer vacation:**

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**Right of first refusal:**

If the parent who is scheduled for custodial time must forego his/her time with the children due business or social obligations, will “other parent” will be given the first choice to go on duty for the kids before any other third party is presented with this option?

Should there be a minimum amount of time that the parent will be unavailable for care that “triggers” the obligation to offer the right of first refusal to the other parent (e.g., number of hours, overnight, etc.)?

Will a custodial parent be entitled to offer care of the children to a close family member (such as a child’s grandparent, a stepparent, etc.) before offering to the other parent?

List below any mutually agreed third parties who are trusted to care for the children if the other parent declines the right of first refusal:

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**Make-up time:**

In the event that time with the child is missed to illness, travel, or business obligations, will the missed time be made up? If so, within what period of time? How will make-up time be scheduled?

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**Parental attendance at child-related events** (e.g., sports, graduations, appointments, teacher conference, etc.):

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**Decision-making** (*discuss the meaning of “joint legal custody” with your attorney; if you feel strongly that you should be able to make decisions about significant issues related to the children ~ either with or without your co-parent’s input – use the blanks below to make notes as to those reasons*):

Medical care: \_\_\_\_\_

Mental health care: \_\_\_\_\_

Education: \_\_\_\_\_

Child care programs: \_\_\_\_\_

Extra-curricular activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Religious observance or education: \_\_\_\_\_

Other:

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**Developmental needs of the children that may change** (*e.g. extracurricular activities, adjustment from childhood to teenage, etc.*):

Child's Name	Anticipated Developmental Change

**Introduction of new significant others to the children:**

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**Relocation** (*Note that once a custody order is entered by a court, each parent must give the other parent and the court at least 30 days' advance notice of any intended relocation*):

Do the parents want to commit to residing in the same vicinity for the children's minority? Do the parents want to expand the "notification period" of any intended relocation so as to provide ample time to discuss adjustments that may become necessary to the custody schedule?

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**International travel:**

Will a parent be entitled to travel internationally with the children during his/her custodial time (such as vacation periods) without the other parent's prior consent? How much notice should be given by the traveling parent to the other parent prior to international travel? Who is responsible for applying for, holding and/or renewing the children's passports?

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**Dispute Resolution:**

Are there specific issues that will require communication-decision making on a regular or routine basis, and about which disagreement and/or discord is anticipated? (*e.g., ongoing treatment for child's physical or mental health issue*)? If yes, identify the issue(s):

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How will communication of those issues take place?

The parents will communicate with each other through:

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Face to Face: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

In the event that the parents are unable to resolve any particular issue, should they attempt to resolve the matter through one (or more) of the following before commencing litigation? (*Select all that apply*):

Counseling with: \_\_\_\_\_

Mediation with: \_\_\_\_\_

Collaborative Family Law with: \_\_\_\_\_

Lawyer: \_\_\_\_\_

Parental Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How will payment for sessions with the above professional(s) be handled? (e.g., *equally divided? in proportion to incomes?*): \_\_\_\_\_