

Parenting Plan Checklist

Our family dispute resolution practitioners can help you develop a parenting plan that is in the best interests of your children, which can form the basis of a Family Court Consent Order. The following is a checklist of possible matters you might want to consider as you construct your parenting plan. It is unlikely that all points will be relevant to your particular circumstances and you may have other concerns not listed.

Living arrangements (short term / long term)

- How much time should each child spend with his / her mum and dad?
- How structured and how flexible should these arrangements be?
- If changes are needed how much notice is required?
- How will we organise holidays (ours and theirs)?

What arrangements will we make for Special days?

- Mum's birthday and Dad's birthday, Mother's Day and Father's Day
- Christmas, Easter etc.
- Child / children's birthdays
- Other important days in our family

Maintaining Contact with the Children

- Do we need to discuss how and when the children will maintain contact with each of us when with the other (eg phone calls, letters, online contact, Skype etc)?

Other family members

- Do we need to discuss how the children will maintain their relationships with other extended family members (eg grandparents, uncles and aunts, etc)?

Communication with each other

- How do we want to communicate with each other about the children?
- How soon do we need to let each other of changes to the regular schedule, or to attend special events or alter arrangements?

Interstate/Overseas Travel

- How shall we organise travel for the children with each parent?
- What type of details does each of us need in regards to travel? E.g. departure/return dates and times, flight numbers or detail of other mode of travel, destination name, address and phone number.
- How soon do we need this information?

Children's Activities

- How can we facilitate the continued participation of our children in their cultural and sporting activities?
- How can we maintain a normal daily routine to help our children feel secure?

Transportation

- How will the children move between houses and their activities?

Education (short term / long term)

- What are the children's present and future educational needs?
- What type of school would we wish them to attend?
- How much will each of us be involved in school activities?
- Will both of us receive information from the school?
- How will homework be managed?
- How will we show our children that their education is valued and supported?

Medical (short term / long term)

- How will we notify each other if something happens? An emergency?
- How will we share the responsibility of the children's medical needs?

Resourcing the children (short term / long term)

- How will the day-to-day and periodic costs be shared?
- On what basis will we decide these figures?
- Will the Child Support Agency assessment be taken into account?
- How / when will payments be made?
- How will miscellaneous educational costs be met (eg camps, uniforms, etc)?
- How will we meet health care costs (health insurance, dental, prescriptions, etc)?
- How will pocket money be handled?
- Will CPI increases be taken into account?
- How will other unexpected costs be met?

Housekeeping

- Will we share responsibility for washing of clothes?
- How and by whom will they be fed during the week?
- Will any of the children's belongings be shared between households?
- Will we share in the purchase of presents?

Parenting Decisions

- What parenting decisions do we feel require joint consultation?
- How will we discuss these decisions and, if we disagree, how will we resolve our differences (eg return to mediation)?
- Do we need to set up regular meetings to discuss parenting matters?
- Do we need to discuss how we will communicate about parenting matters?
- Should we include our children in these discussions?
- Do we need to discuss how we talk to the children about the other parent?
- Do we need to review this plan and, if so, how will we go about it?

***In case of our deaths**

- What our wishes are for the continued nurturing of our children?
- Do we need to change our wills?

Are there any other matters we need to discuss that will benefit our children, eg

- Religious
- Special health needs
- Important values and principles