

Directions for Completing This Parenting Plan Worksheet

As the parents (and thus as the two people who can truly protect your children at this critical time), you should, if reasonably safe and possible, prepare a single version of this Parenting Plan Worksheet. If you cannot prepare a single version of the worksheet, you may prepare separate ones.

You will be helped in completing this Worksheet by first doing the work on the www.UpToParents.org website. (If you are open to the possibility of reconciliation, you can substitute the work on www.WhileWeHeal.org. Never-married parents can use www.ProudToParent.org.)

For help in completing, reviewing, and filing this PPW, you can receive free assistance by contacting the Domestic Relations Counseling Bureau (DRCB) at (574) 235-9662.

1. We have reached the following agreements:
 - A. How will you as parents be making the important decisions in your children’s lives? Please state whether you will be using cooperative joint decision-making (sometimes called “joint legal custody”) or whether one of you will be making the final decisions on such major matters as the children’s residence, school selection, medical care, and religious upbringing. _____

 - B. The children’s declared legal residence for school and legal purposes will be: _____

 - C. Our parenting time schedule for the children to be with each of us will be:

D. Child support: _____

E. Responsibility for the children's medical insurance will be as follows:

F. Other:

2. This is how we will be relating as parents in order to protect our children from having to see, hear, or take any responsibility for our conflict.

Example A: We are getting along well enough that we can use courteous face-to-face discussions about the children's issues and needs. The children saw us get through the difficulty of our physical separation in a cooperative fashion. All of us worked together to move some of Dad's stuff to his new apartment. With the counseling we are receiving, we think we can continue to relate well.

Example B: Our recent interaction has been quite strained. We have decided to limit our conversations to the telephone and to our counseling appointments until our interaction improves. Together we have told the children that they are not responsible for our fighting, and we have promised not to do so in front of them again. To carry that out, we have agreed that temporarily we will be dropping the children off at their grandparents' home, and we will not be having a lot of face-to-face meetings. We have agreed that when we are all together, we will limit our conversations to a few courteous sentences.

3. These are the resources we will be using to achieve and keep a child focus, courtesy, and cooperation between us. For example:
- (a) Redoing the www.UpToParents.org, www.WhileWeHeal.org, or www.ProudToParent.org website work.
 - (b) Additional co-parenting classes, including re-attending the basic class or attending high-conflict classes.
 - (c) Mediation.
 - (d) Confidential therapeutic assessment of the parents by DRCB to develop a set of recommendations for their improved interaction. (The Court's order may specify that the recommendations either be shared immediately with the Court or be shared with the Court only if problems continue.)
 - (e) Individual, joint, family, or child counseling.
 - (f) Appointment of a psychologist or parent coordinator to work with parents.
 - (g) Appointment of a child legal representative (CLR) or guardian ad litem (GAL) for the children involved.
 - (h) Completing a new Parenting Plan Worksheet (PPW).

Example: We will continue to read regularly from our Agreed Commitments from the www.UpToParents.org website. We have also agreed to use at least four sessions of closure counseling over the next two months to try to help our children and ourselves adjust to our separation. We have agreed that we will use mediation or counseling should we have any differences. Our pastor has also agreed to be available to us.

4. We will be using these additional measures to protect our children at this critical time for them. (Circle all that apply and add any additional ones.)
- a. Remembering that our children will experience any attack between us as an attack on them.
 - b. Appreciating that for our children we will always be family.
 - c. Using every contact we have as an opportunity to create goodwill.
 - d. Bringing kindness to every occasion when we are all together.
 - e. Recalling that our children's only job is to be children, not our messengers, spies, counselors, confidants, or carriers of our hurt.
 - f. Being sure to remember that our love for our children is greater than any issue we could ever have with each other.
 - g. Regularly sharing compliments and positive memories about each other with our children.
 - h. Celebrating positive things they do with the other parent.

- i. Regularly encouraging them to call the other parent for a friendly talk.
- j. Respecting each other's parenting time while also being flexible, so the children's lives can be as normal as possible.
- k. Educating our extended families and close friends that they need to make peace as well.
- l. Paying special attention to keep our appointments and schedules with each other—and calling promptly if any problems come up.
- m. Others.

Father's name (typed or printed)

Mother's name (typed or printed)

Father's signature

Mother's signature

Date

Date

Signature of father's attorney

Signature of mother's attorney

*Children have no defense against their parents' anger.
 –Dr. Ross Campbell*