

Basic Assumptions and Goals

This schedule assumes that the parents are prepared to share the difficult responsibility of raising children in separate homes and are mature and responsible enough to do so. Shared parental responsibility means each parent has full rights and duties with respect to their child. The parents must confer with each other so that major decisions affecting the child are made jointly. Issues dealing with school, discipline, religious upbringing, and health are examples of areas where the parents must confer. Each parent is entitled to the child's medical, dental, and school records. Florida Statute Section 61.13 (2)(b)(3) specifically requires that "access to records and information pertaining to a minor child, including but not limited to medical records may not be denied to a parent because the parent is not the child's primary residential parent."

This schedule is designed to help accomplish three goals: 1) to assure that children of parents who do not live together will have an opportunity to develop a relationship with each parent that will be loving and meaningful, 2) to permit each parent to spend as much quality time with their children as is consistent with the child's developmental needs, and 3) to give guidance to the parents as to what is expected of them regarding their obligations to the other parent.

If this Parental Time Sharing Schedule is not successful, the relationship between the parents must be businesslike. **THE CHILD IS NOT TO BE EXPOSED TO HOSTILITY, CONFLICT, RECRIMINATIONS, OR ARGUMENT BETWEEN HIS OR HER PARENTS. FURTHERMORE, THE CHILD IS NOT TO BE USED AS A MESSENGER SERVICE THROUGH WHOM THE PARENTS COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER.** Thus, the parents shall be courteous, low-key, and respectful of each other. The goal of the parents should be to provide the child a safe, secure, loving environment in which his or her development as a human being is the priority of those who brought him or her into the world.

"Reasonable" time sharing with the child of the parties shall take place at such times and places as the parties may agree upon. If the parties are unable to reach an agreement as to the details of the time sharing, the time sharing schedule set forth below shall apply.

PARENTAL TIME SHARING SCHEDULE OUT OF STATE

1. Primary Residential Parent:

- Weekdays: Every Monday from the beginning of school through Friday at the end of school. When there is no school, every Monday from 8:00 a.m. to Friday at 6:00 p.m. Weekday time sharing does not apply during the Secondary Residential Parent's summer time with the child.
- Weekends: Every weekend from the end of school on Friday afternoon until the beginning of school on Monday morning except the first full weekend of each month. When there is no school, every weekend except the first full weekend of the month from Friday afternoon at 6:00 p.m. until Monday at 8:00 a.m. Weekend time sharing does not apply during the Secondary Residential Parent's summer time with the child.
- Summer: Even Years: From 6:00 p.m. on the eighth Sunday following the conclusion of school until the resumption of school. Odd Years: From the

end of school until 6:00 p.m. on the third Sunday following the conclusion of school and from 8:00 p.m. on the Sunday prior to the resumption of school through the resumption of school.

2. Secondary Residential Parent:

Weekends: The first full weekend of each month from the end of school on Friday afternoon until 8:00 p.m. Sunday night. When there is no school, the first weekend of the month from Friday at 6:00 p.m. until Monday at 10:00 a.m. If there is a long weekend during any month as a result of an unspecified holiday (example: teacher planning day), the Secondary Residential Parent may have time sharing with the child on that long weekend instead of the first weekend of the month if the Secondary Residential Parent notifies the Primary Residential Parent at least 60 days in advance. Weekend time sharing does not apply during the Primary Residential Parent's summer time with the child.

Summer: Even Years: From 6:00 p.m. on the last day of school through 6:00 p.m. on the eighth Sunday following the conclusion of the school year. Odd Years: From 6:00 p.m. on the third Friday following the conclusion of school until 8:00 p.m. on the Sunday prior to the resumption of school.

3. Holidays:

Holiday time with the child preempts normal weekday, weekend and summer time with the child. The normal weekend rotation resumes immediately following any holiday interruption. Thus for example, if the Primary Residential Parent has a weekend with the child and the following weekend, which would normally be the Secondary Residential Parent's weekend with the child, is a holiday (the Secondary Residential Parent's holiday with the child), then the weekend following the holiday, the Secondary Residential Parent will have normal weekend time with the child.

A. Winter Vacation:

Secondary Residential Parent - Even Years: From 6:00 p.m. on the Friday beginning school vacation through 8:00 a.m. on December 26. Odd Years: From 8:00 a.m. December 26, through the resumption of school.

Primary Residential Parent - Odd Years: From 6:00 p.m. on the Friday beginning school vacation through 8:00 a.m. on December 26. Even Years: From 8:00 a.m. December 26 through the resumption of school.

B. Spring Vacation:

Secondary Residential Parent - The entire Spring Vacation from the end of school until the resumption of school.

C. Thanksgiving:

Secondary Residential Parent - Odd Years: The entire holiday from the end of school until the resumption of school.

Primary Residential Parent - Even Years: The entire holiday from the end of school until the resumption of school.

D. Mother's Day/Father's Day:

To be spent with the parent being honored by the holiday in question from 8:00 a.m. on Sunday until 8:00 a.m. the following Monday morning. This time sharing preempts contact as otherwise set forth in this schedule.

- E. Child's Birthday:**
Birthdays shall be celebrated with the Parent entitled to contact on that day.
- F. Labor Day Weekend:**
Secondary Residential Parent - Even Years
Primary Residential Parent - Odd Years
- G. Memorial Day Weekend:**
Secondary Residential Parent - Odd Years
Primary Residential Parent - Even Years
- H. Fourth of July:**
Secondary Residential Parent - Even Years from 10 a.m. on the 4th of July through 10:00 a.m. on the 5th of July.
Primary Residential Parent - Odd Years from 10 a.m. on the 4th of July through 10 a.m. on the 5th of July.
- I. Halloween:**
Secondary Residential Parent - Even Years from 3:30 p.m. on Halloween until 8:00 a.m. the following morning. If the day after Halloween is a school day the Secondary Residential Parent shall return the child to school in the morning.
Primary Residential Parent - Odd Years from 3:30 p.m. on Halloween until 8:00 a.m. the following morning. If the day after Halloween is a school day, the Primary Residential Parent shall return the child to school in the morning.
- J. Non Specific Holidays:**
Should the parents jointly recognize a holiday not specifically mentioned each parent shall cooperate with the other in providing contact on alternating years with the other parent for the entire holiday and in working out beginning and ending times for such contact.
- 4. Time Sharing Exchanges:**
Arrangements for time sharing exchanges shall be determined by agreement of the parties or by order of the court.
- 5. Telephonic Communication:**
Each party shall allow open telephonic communication between the child and the other parent on a daily basis.
- 6. Out-of-Town Travel:**
If either parent plans to travel out-of-town with the child for more than (1) day, the parent must provide the other parent with a general itinerary including the dates of departure and return and addresses and telephone numbers for the locations where the child will be staying.
- 7. Emergencies:**
Each parent shall notify the other immediately (no later than 3 hours) of any emergency pertaining to the child of the parties.
- 8. Exchange of Information:**
Neither parent shall conceal the whereabouts of the child of the parties, and each parent will keep the other advised at all times of the residential addresses and phone numbers where the child will be staying while in the care of the other parent. In addition, each parent shall make the other aware of the name, address, and telephone number of all day care providers and health care providers.
- 9. Effective Date:**

This time sharing schedule shall become effective immediately following the signing of this agreement. The Secondary Residential Parent shall have time sharing on the first weekend following the effective date of this schedule.

10. Cancellations:

The Secondary Residential Parent may cancel time sharing periods which are 72 hours or less in duration by providing the Primary Residential Parent notice no less than 14 days prior to the time sharing period which the Secondary Residential Parent wishes to cancel. Cancellation of a specific time sharing period of longer than 72 hours in duration can only occur with the consent of both parents. The request for cancellation of a specific time sharing period longer than 72 hours in duration must be given to the other parent at least 3 days in advance of the time sharing period for which cancellation is requested. If the cancellation of a specific time sharing period of longer than 72 hours in duration is not agreed to by both parents, the parent seeking to cancel time sharing must arrange and pay for babysitting, child care or other appropriate supervision of the child for the time sharing period.

**GENERAL AND SPECIFIC TIME SHARING ISSUES
FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN OF DIVORCE**

Following a divorce or separation, parents need to cooperate in their efforts to help their children continue to grow emotionally, socially, and intellectually, and to insure that their children continue to have meaningful relationships with both the parent with whom they primarily live (the "primary care giver" or "primary residential parent") and with their other parent (one of their "secondary care givers" or their "secondary residential parent").

The Model Parental Time Sharing Schedule is intended to minimize the harm done to children when their parents divorce or separate. It is written from the standpoint of the children's needs and attempts to guide parents seeking to meet the best interest of their children.

In developing schedules for contact between children and their parents following a separation or divorce, the following factors need to be considered:

A. MINIMIZE LOSS

Children experience divorce as a series of significant losses. To a child, divorce means losing home, family life, loving parents who care about each other, pets, financial security, relationships with extended family, familiar schools, sports activities, and a daily schedule. Children often feel abandoned and uprooted. The disrupting effect of divorce on their lives can have profound consequences for children as they reach adulthood. Respect your children's pain by eliminating as many changes and losses as possible.

B. MAXIMIZE RELATIONSHIPS

Encourage all relationships which existed between your children and others before the divorce (both parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, close adult friends, etc.). Your children will most likely keep the feeling of family when they continue to have pleasant, free access to both parents and extended family. Your children's identity depends on their feeling that they belong to both families. This identity requires that your children spend time with both sides of the family. If your children lose contact with parts of their family, their sense of identity can be distorted, even crippled. Treasure involvement of extended family in your children's lives.

Encourage and support the other parent in accepting an active parenting role. Share the burden of responsibilities (laundry, transportation, doctor visits, teacher conferences, etc.) as well

as the joyous occasions (holidays, birthday parties, movies, sports outings, trips, etc.). Respect the basic nature or temperament of your children, as well as the temperamental match or fit between each child and each parent. Consider the match of each parent's interests and each child's activities. Provide as much direct contact and positive involvement as possible between each child and each parent. When parents are able to remain in the same geographical location, relationships are more likely to be maximized.

Never make your children feel guilty about enjoying their time with the other parent; enjoyment of that time is a tribute to the security that both you and the other parent have instilled in your children and suggests that your children are learning to trust and explore a wide range of healthy relationships.

Reassure your children that they are not to blame for the divorce and that both parents still love them. Try to avoid blaming the other parent (it is destructive to children's security and self concepts when they are compelled to "take sides" after a divorce). You should also avoid confiding details of your marital problems to your children; although they may initially want the details and may want to alleviate your pain/anger by "taking sides" with you, they may ultimately resent you for confusing them and increasing their anxieties about their freedom to love and relate comfortably to both parents.

C. INCREASE SECURITY

Your children are likely to feel protected from losses when allowed to remain in the safety, consistency, and support of old familiar surroundings. Children feel secure when they have positive time with both parents, the familiarity of established family rules, as well as being allowed to continue in previously established religious, school, and related activities. Children do best when their parents live in close proximity, especially if they share the same school district. Children can have the reassurance of familiar after-school friends at both parent's homes. Children also feel most secure when their parents share responsibility for their afterschool care. Parents need to talk about ways to build certainty, structure, and stability in their children's lives.

D. AVOID CONFLICT

Scientific research verifies that your children will suffer both now and later if they frequently see their parents in conflict. Raised voices, arguing hateful remarks, and physical altercations are not suitable for child viewing. Children are also harmed when they hear one parent say bad things about the other parent. If one parent directly or indirectly creates an image of the other parent that is in any way negative, the child's own self-image will be assaulted. Children will only feel as good about themselves as they do about each parent.

A good procedure for divorced/separated parents to follow is to never try to discuss child issues and adult issues in the same conversation. When you are talking with your former spouse about child issues (scheduling visits, vacations plans, school or medical problems, etc.), stick to those topics and do not allow the conversation to drift into discussions of problems between yourself and your former spouse (money, angry issues, etc.). Save these topics for another discussion at another time and never discuss them in the presence of your children. If you and your children's other parent simply cannot avoid fighting and arguing when you begin/end visits, you might want to consider enlisting the help of another person (grandparent, mutual friend, babysitter, etc.) who will agree to serve as a "neutral zone" where both parents can bring the children for transfer and avoid contact with each other.

E. AGE RELATED NEEDS

Children of different ages need and benefit from different parenting arrangements. Parents should try to be flexible and should try to tailor their schedules as much as possible to reflect their children's developmental needs and individual requirements. You can expect that as your children get older, you will need to be more flexible and will need to work hard on communicating effectively and compromising fairly with both your children and their other parent.