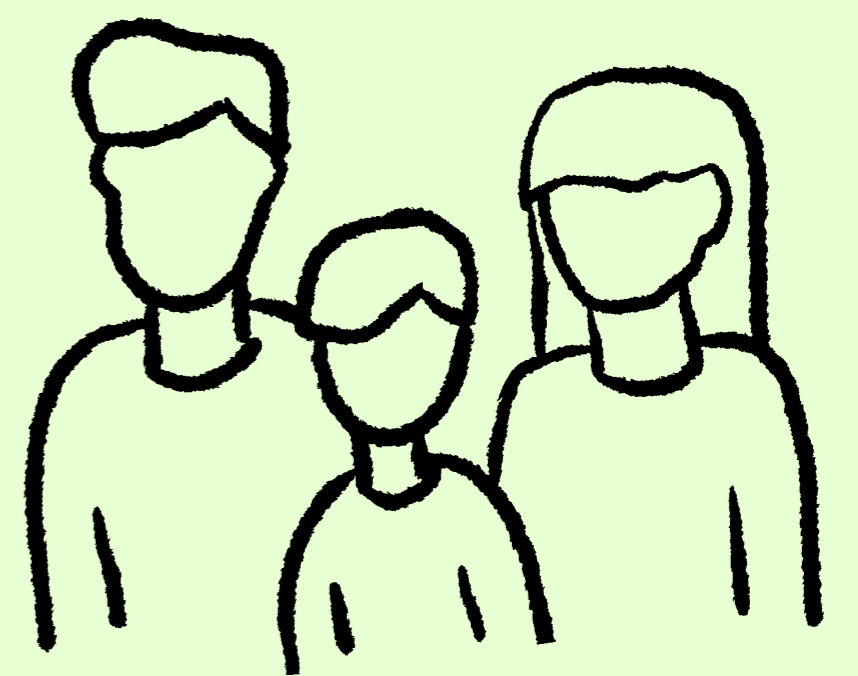


Parenting Plan Checklist

FOR COMPLEX FAMILY DYNAMICS



☞☞ You want to be super clear, almost like you're programming a computer, where you have to give every line by line instruction. Do not leave anything open to interpretation. What high-conflict people will do is they love gray areas because they can fight about it ☞☞

— **Ginger Gentile**

Founder & Divorce Coach at Reversing Parental Alienation

Divorce necessitates a thoughtful approach to co-parenting that protects children's well-being while managing parental dynamics. Let's compare two key strategies: Parallel Parenting and Cooperative Parenting. Each offers distinct approaches to reduce conflict and support stability in post-divorce family life.

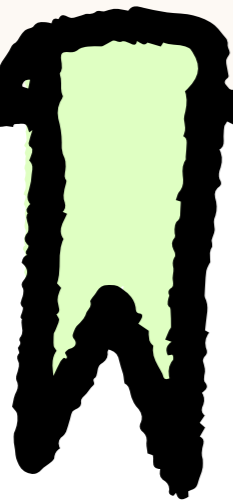
To better understand the distinctions between Parallel Parenting and Cooperative Parenting, the following infographic outlines key differences in various aspects of these co-parenting strategies.

| CHARACTERISTIC | Parallel Parenting | Cooperative Parenting |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| CONFLICT LEVEL | High; frequent disagreements and inability to resolve conflicts amicably | Low to moderate; capable of resolving conflicts constructively. |
| COMMUNICATION STYLE | Indirect and minimal; often facilitated through written communication or third-party apps. | Direct and open; frequent verbal and face-to-face interactions. |
| FLEXIBILITY | Low; strict adherence to schedules and rules to avoid conflict. | High; willing to adapt schedules and make compromises for the child's benefit. |
| DECISION-MAKING | Mostly independent; each parent makes day-to-day decisions during their own time without consulting the other. | Joint; parents consult each other on both major and minor decisions affecting the child. |
| INTERACTION DURING TRANSFERS | Minimal and formal; sometimes involves neutral locations and third-party facilitation. | Casual and direct; often takes place in personal spaces like each other's homes. |
| PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT | Separate but equal; parents engage with the child independently to avoid conflict. | Collaborative; parents often participate in activities and events together with the child. |
| USE OF MEDIATION | Frequent; mediators or therapists are often used to establish or modify parenting plans. | Occasional; may use mediation as a tool for improvement rather than necessity. |
| FOCUS | Reducing exposure of the child to conflict while ensuring parallel but separate parenting effectiveness. | Enhancing child's well-being through cooperative and consistent parenting across both homes. |

Parenting Plan Checklist for Complex Family Dynamics

A detailed parenting plan is crucial in high-conflict divorce situations to minimize conflict and ensure the child's well-being. However, in cases where parents maintain a cooperative relationship, there may be room for more flexibility in the parenting arrangements. Despite the level of conflict, thorough preparation in creating the parenting plan benefits all dynamics.

Parallel parenting is particularly beneficial for high-conflict scenarios, allowing parents to remain disengaged from each other while fully engaged in their child's life. This approach involves minimal direct interaction and uses structured communication methods.



The plan outlines specific schedules, handover protocols, and decision-making guidelines. These elements provide a stable routine for the child and reduce misunderstandings between parents, irrespective of their relationship's nature. Such a framework is essential to maintain a functional child-rearing environment that protects the child from parental conflicts.

01 Parenting Time Division

Co-parenting Arrangement

Consider which co-parenting arrangement might best suit your situation (equal shared parenting, parallel parenting, birdnest parenting)

Custody Schedule

Which type of custody schedule will you choose (50/50, 60/40, 70/30, 80/20)

Holiday Arrangements

Discuss plans for dividing the child's time during school breaks, summer vacations, school holidays, statutory holidays, and religious holidays. Determine whether the child will spend specific holidays with one parent consistently each year or if holidays will be alternated between the two households. Consider establishing a rotating schedule or agreeing on fixed holidays for each parent to ensure clarity and fairness.

02 Living Arrangements

Location Factors

Will both parents reside within a specified proximity to one another?

Transferring your child between residences

Detail the logistics for drop-offs and pick-ups, including specific times, days, locations, and the individual responsible for both picking up and dropping off the child.



Relocation Considerations

Address the scenario if one parent plans to move. Outline the protocol if a parent intends to relocate with the child. Specify the required notification period (e.g., 30, 45, 60 days), and the method of notice (e.g., email, written letter). Determine whether the other parent's consent is necessary for moving the child.

Staying in Touch

Outline how and through which mediums the child will communicate with the other parent during their time apart. Consider specifying the use of phone calls, emails, text messages, or video calls.

Adjustments to the Parenting Schedule

Address scenarios that may require alterations to the established parenting schedule, such as sickness, tardiness, social engagements, significant events, or unexpected occurrences. Detail how these schedule modifications will be coordinated, including the minimum notice period required for any change. Also, discuss if there will be opportunities for makeup time to compensate for missed visits.

Management of the Child's Belongings

Decide whether the child's possessions will travel with them between homes or if there will be duplicate sets of certain items in each home. Clarify which parent will be responsible for purchasing specific items for the child, such as clothing, school supplies, or toys.

The Child's Social Activities

Outline arrangements for how the child will maintain their social life, including spending time with friends. Detail who will be responsible for transporting the child to social gatherings like birthday parties or sleepovers. Additionally, specify which parent will handle the purchase of gifts for the child to give at these events.

03 Health Care Decisions

Healthcare Decisions

Define the process for making decisions regarding dental and medical care, including treatments, vaccinations, and other preventative measures. Clarify whether decisions will be made jointly or if one parent will have the final say, and how disagreements will be resolved.

Notification for Emergency Medical Treatment

Detail the protocol for informing each other in the event of an emergency requiring medical treatment for the child. Specify the preferred methods of communication for immediate situations (e.g., phone call, text message) and the timeframe within which the other parent should be notified.

Scheduling Medical and Dental Appointments

Specify which parent will be responsible for taking the child to routine doctor and dentist appointments. Consider how appointments will be scheduled in a way that accommodates both parents' schedules.

Care for the Child During Illness

Determine which parent will be responsible for taking time off work to care for the child in the event of illness.

Handling of the Child's Health Card

Decide who will keep the child's health card. Discuss whether the card will remain with one parent or if it will travel with the child between homes.

Medical Insurance Arrangements

Clarify whether the child will be covered by medical insurance and, if so, which parent will be responsible for securing this insurance. Detail the process for submitting insurance claims, including who will handle this task. Additionally, discuss how any additional costs not covered by insurance will be divided between the parents



04 Educational Decisions

Educational Decisions

Outline how decisions regarding the child's schooling will be made, including choices about changes in school, enrollment in special programs, addressing special educational needs, and arranging tutoring. Specify whether these decisions will be made jointly or if one parent will have primary responsibility.

Access to School Records

Establish a method for both parents to access and share the child's school records. Specify whether each parent will independently access records directly from the school or if one parent will obtain and disseminate the information to the other.

Participation in School Activities

Determine how attendance at parent-teacher conferences and other school events will be managed. Decide if both parents will attend together, or if they will alternate attendance based on the event or the child's preference.

Managing School Trips

Address the procedures for handling school trips, including the signing of permission forms, payment responsibilities, and parent attendance as chaperones. Determine which parent will be responsible for signing permission slips or if this task will be shared.

Handling School Absences

Define the circumstances under which your child may be removed from school, such as for medical appointments, family emergencies, or other significant reasons. Specify who will be authorized to pick up the child from school during these instances.

School Transports

Specify which parent is responsible for school drop-offs and pickups on designated days, considering each parent's proximity and schedule. Include a backup plan and communication protocol for changes or emergencies.



05 Travel Decisions

Notice of Travel with the Child

Define the expectations and procedures for notifying the other parent about travel plans with the child. Decide if notification is needed for all travel or only for significant trips that might affect the other parent's scheduled time or are beyond a certain distance. Determine what type of information should be shared when traveling (Dates of travel, Destinations, Modes of transportation, Accommodation details). Agree on how far in advance the traveling parent should inform the other parent about upcoming travel plans.

06 Grandparents

Family Visit Guidelines

For visits with extended family, determine the frequency and timing that suits the child's schedule and family dynamics. Decide which family members will be present during these visits to ensure a comfortable and supportive environment for the child. Establish how and when the child will communicate with their extended family, whether through phone calls, video chats, or other means, ensuring regular contact is maintained.



07 Communication Guidelines

Type of Information to Be Communicated

Establish guidelines for essential communications between parents, including sharing medical updates, school information, any changes in contact details or address, details about travel plans, and significant life events or changes in routines.

Communication Methods

Determine the preferred method of communication between parents, considering options such as email, a shared communication notebook, text messages, telephone calls, or specialized co-parenting apps.

Communication Schedule

Set a schedule for the frequency of communication between parents to ensure regular updates and ongoing coordination.

Child Contact Hours

Set specific hours during which communication between the child and the off-duty parent is permitted, taking into account the child's daily routine, school schedule, and bedtime.

08 Extracurricular Activities

Extra-Curricular Activities

Discuss and agree on the number and types of extra-curricular activities in which your child will participate. Consider factors such as the child's interests, their ability to balance schoolwork with other commitments, and logistical considerations such as travel and time.

Scheduling of Children's Activities

Establish guidelines on whether one parent can schedule activities during the child's time with the other parent. Determine who will be responsible for paying for these activities and for transporting the child to and from these activities.

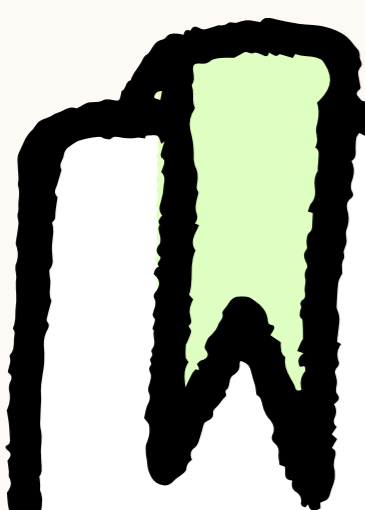
09 Modifications To Plan

Plan Revision Process

Develop a process for revising the parenting schedule or plan, involving regular reviews to adapt to changes in the child's and parents' lives. Agree on a method to propose and discuss changes, ensuring both parents can contribute to decisions.

In dealing with the challenges of co-parenting during a divorce, reaching an agreement is crucial for your children's well-being. At Divorce.com, we excel in turning conflict into constructive conversations through our professional mediation services. By opting for mediation, you can discuss and document detailed parenting plans in a neutral setting where your children's needs are the priority.

This approach reduces conflict and encourages a cooperative atmosphere that can help guide your co-parenting decisions. Ready to put your children's interests at the forefront of your agreements?



Visit [our mediation page](#) to learn more about how our mediation services can assist your family during this transition.

Let us help you move forward together, even when apart.