

**OFFICE OF MIDLAND COUNTY FRIEND OF THE COURT**  
**CO-PARENTING PLAN**

October 1, 2013

It is strongly recommended that parents develop their own parenting schedule taking into consideration the unique circumstances of their family.

The sense of frequent access to both parents is essential to successful adjustment of children to the separation of their parents. The capacity to cooperate on behalf of children is often difficult for parents who live separately. Joint planning is difficult to achieve, and under circumstances where all efforts to establish time periods for each parent to be with the child(ren) have failed, the following schedule will be implemented.

The following schedule is mandated when efforts to work out times and dates through agreement and/or mediation have not been successful.

**The parenting schedule to be followed will be determined by the age of the oldest child of the family.**

**I. CO-PARENTING SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN BIRTH TO FOURTH BIRTHDAY:**

In a family where the oldest child is under the age of four, the parent exercising parenting time will have the children as follows:

- alternating weekends from 9:00 am Saturday until 6:00 pm on Sunday.
- the parent exercising parenting time will have access to the children a minimum of three (3) hours twice weekly.

**PERIOD OF EXTENDED PARENTING TIME:**

- during a calendar year, the parent exercising parenting time will have six (6) nonconsecutive one (1) week periods of parenting time. This time is defined as 9:00 am Saturday until 9:00 am the following Saturday to commence on their regularly scheduled weekend. During this time, the parent exercising parenting time will have access to the children a minimum of three (3) hours twice weekly. A 30 day advance notice of intent to schedule each of these weeks will be given by the parent exercising parenting time.

- See IV for the Holiday.

**II. CO-PARENTING SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN AGE FOUR - SCHOOL AGE:**

In a family where the oldest child is between the age of four to completion of kindergarten, the regular parenting schedule is as follows:

- each parent will have alternating weekends from 6:00 pm Friday until 6:00 pm Sunday.
- the parent exercising parenting time will have one evening each week for a **minimum** of three hours.

**PERIOD OF EXTENDED PARENTING TIME:**

- the parent exercising parenting time will be entitled to five consecutive days per month to occur following their first weekend of the regular alternating schedule each month. The parent exercising parenting time will be responsible for any child care expenses incurred during this period of time if the children's existing day care or pre-school programs are not utilized. During this time, the other parent will have access to the children one evening that week for a minimum of three (3) hours if the child is not out of town for a vacation.
- See IV for the Holiday schedule.

**III. CO-PARENTING SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN:**

In a family where the oldest child has completed kindergarten, all younger children will be included in this schedule:

- each parent will have alternating weekends from 6:00 pm on Friday until 6:00 pm on Sunday.
- the parent exercising parenting time will have one evening each week for a **minimum** of three (3) hours.
- See IV for the Holiday schedule.

#### IV. HOLIDAY SCHEDULE:

The following holiday parenting schedule applies to **all** children regardless of their age. The Holiday Schedule takes precedence over any other regular parenting schedule of the children.

- In **odd** numbered years, the Mother will have the following holidays:

- 1) Good Friday/Easter
- 2) Fourth of July
- 3) Thanksgiving
- 4) Christmas Day
- 5) Children's Birthday

- In **odd** numbered years, the Father will have the following holidays:

- 1) Memorial Day
- 2) Labor Day
- 3) Christmas Eve
- 4) Halloween

- In **even** numbered years, the Mother will have the following holidays:

- 1) Memorial Day
- 2) Labor Day
- 3) Christmas Eve
- 4) Halloween

- In **even** numbered years, the Father will have the following holidays:

- 1) Good Friday/Easter
- 2) Fourth of July
- 3) Thanksgiving
- 4) Christmas Day
- 5) Children's Birthday

**Hours for holidays are as follows:**

Easter – Thursday at 6:00 pm until Sunday at 6:00 pm

Memorial Day – Friday at 6:00 pm until Monday at 6:00 pm

Fourth of July – 9:00 am until 9:00 am the next day

If this holiday falls on a Friday or Saturday, then from the preceding Thursday at 6:00pm until Sunday at 6:00pm; If this holiday falls on a Sunday or Monday, then from the preceding Friday at 6:00pm to Tuesday at 9:00am

Labor Day – Friday at 6:00 pm until Monday at 6:00 pm

Thanksgiving – Wednesday at 6:00 pm until Sunday at 6:00 pm

Christmas Eve - December 23 from 9:00 pm until December 24 at 9:00 pm

Christmas Day - December 24 from 9:00 pm until December 25 at 9:00 pm

Weekends remain unchanged by the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day schedule.

Halloween Night - 5:30 pm until 8:30 pm

Children's birthday - for a minimum of three hours (time to be established by the parent exercising parenting time). This time also includes siblings. This time is in addition to, not in place of, regularly scheduled parenting time.

**MOTHER'S DAY** - each year the Mother will have Mother's day weekend from Friday at 6:00 pm until Sunday at 6:00 pm

**FATHER'S DAY** - each year the Father will have Father's day weekend from Friday at 6:00 pm until Sunday at 6:00 pm.

**Holiday Parenting Time to Take Precedence Over Other Scheduled Time**

**Whenever a defined holiday parenting time is scheduled, it shall take precedence over any regularly scheduled weekend parenting time. The parent who does not have the extended holiday weekend will be entitled to have the child(ren) the following weekend. The parents will then resume the previous alternate weekend schedule.**

**V. PERIODS OF EXTENDED PARENTING TIME:**

Once the oldest child of a family completes kindergarten, all children will be included in this schedule.

**Summer:**

One-half of the summer vacation is spent with each parent.

In the **odd** numbered years, the Mother will have the **first** half of the summer and the Father will have the **second** half.

In the **even** numbered years, the Father will have the **first** half of the summer and the Mother will have the **second** half.

Summer vacation is defined as 9:00 am the day after school recesses for the school year until 6:00 pm the day before the new school year resumes. The alternating weekend schedule will remain in effect throughout the entire year **with the holidays as an exception**. The midweek parenting schedule is in effect providing the parent with the children has no out-of-town vacation travel plans. (In the event existent child care arrangements are not utilized, the parent exercising summer parenting time shall be responsible for childcare arrangements and/or expenses incurred during this time).

**Christmas School Vacation:**

In the **odd** numbered years, the Father will have the Christmas school vacation.

In the **even** numbered years, the Mother will have the Christmas school vacation.

Christmas school vacation is defined as 6:00 pm the day school recesses until 6:00 pm the day before school resumes. The alternating weekend schedule remains in effect. The midweek parenting schedule is in effect providing that the parent with the children have no out-of-town vacation and/or travel plans.

**Spring school break:**

In the **even** numbered years, the Mother will have the Spring school break.

In the **odd** numbered years, the Father will have the Spring school break.

Spring school break is defined as 6:00 pm the day school recesses until 6:00 pm the day before school resumes. The alternating weekend parenting schedule remains in effect. The midweek parenting schedule is exercised during this extended period providing that the parent with the children have no out-of-town vacation plans.

**VI. OTHER RELATED INFORMATION:**

Parenting time shall include all minor children of the parties.

Extracurricular Activities – The parties should cooperate with each other when enrolling the child(ren) in extracurricular activities to ensure that the activities do not interfere with the ability of the parent to exercise parenting time with their child(ren). Neither the custodial parent nor the non-custodial parent should enroll the child(ren) in excessive activities which serve to interfere with the other's ability to spend time with the child(ren).

As children grow, they are involved in different activities. As their developmental needs change, both parents need to be flexible with their parenting time schedules and allow room for adjustment. Because continuity in activities is important, parents must be willing to alter the parenting time schedule. Parents should keep one another advised of all the child(ren)'s activities so the other parent has the opportunity to attend or participate in the activity, even if the activity occurs during the parent's off schedule.

Each parent is responsible to ensure the safety and well being of the child(ren). All written doctor's instructions including those concerning exposure to plants, animals, smoke and other elements should be followed.

The transportation of the children during the parenting time shall be the responsibility of both parents. If the parties are unable to agree as to the transportation arrangements for the minor children, then, the parent exercising **THEIR** parenting time will initiate the pick up of the child(ren) from the other parent's residence, unless otherwise agreed upon.

The parenting schedule will be exercised in a prompt manner. In the event of an unforeseen circumstance, a thirty (30) minute grace period is acceptable for picking up and returning the children.

A general itinerary and emergency telephone number will be provided to the other parent if an out-of-town vacation is planned. This applies to both parents.

The parent exercising their parenting time may designate a third party to transport the children in their stead.

## **VII. INTERNATIONAL CO-PARENTING**

Neither parent shall exercise parenting time in a foreign country/nation that is not a party to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, except as based on written agreement of the parties.

## **VIII. PARENTING PRINCIPLES**

1. We will affirm for our children that both parents love them.
2. We will always make our children our first priority.
3. We will not disparage our co-parent in the presence/hearing of our children nor keep our children in the presence of others who disparage the other parent.
4. We will communicate with each other directly as to issues regarding the children.
5. We will not ask our children to make adult decisions.
6. We will not discuss court/legal events with our children.
7. We will provide all major information to our children as a united front.
8. We will respect the other parent's right to determine what goes on in their household while seeking stability and consistency for our children in both households.
9. We will each be respectful of the other parent and communicate with them promptly about or be as flexible as possible with them when they communicate with us regarding needed scheduling adjustments, kids' possessions and any other children's issues.
10. We will respect and support the role of our co-parent as our children's parent, while respecting and supporting the role of stepparents in our children's lives.