

Parenting Plan Checklist

1. Communication between parents:

- How will you safely communicate about the children? Text, email, in person, telephone, third party, internet tool/app
- What are the time lines for a response to a request, a change in the schedule, the sharing of information? What process to follow if there is no response?
- When will you communicate about the children? Daily, weekly etc.
- Special considerations for an infant or toddler such as providing up to date information on routine, toileting, eating, sleeping, sickness, medications etc.
- Children's interests and preferences
- Children's behaviors and moods
- Children's special needs
- Children's health: ear infections, fever, diarrhea, medical appointments etc.
- Communication between children and parent: What are the expectations for communication and contact between the children and their parents

2. Parenting responsibilities related to decision making:

Health

- Do you have the names and contact information of all health care providers?
- Do you have copies of all health insurance documents?
- Who will take the children to their appointments?
- Who will provide care for the children when they are sick from school?
- How will you share information with the other parent?
- How will you make medical decisions if you do not agree? Braces, surgery, medication etc.
- How will you make changes to health care providers?
- How will you share uninsured medical costs?
- Who is your alternate contact person in case of an emergency when you are unreachable?
- Emergency: How will you inform the other parent?

Education

- What are your education values for the children related to language, religion or culture?
- How will you decide which school the children will attend depending on their individual needs and location?
- How will you share information about the children's education related to notes from school, homework, permission slips, payment for activities, sick from school, contact with other professionals etc.?
- How will you share education costs such as school supplies, school clothes, fees, tuition?
- How will you ensure the school has your updated contact information?
- How will you ensure you receive a copy of report cards

- How will you attend parent/teacher meetings or other meetings? Together or separately?
- When should new partners attend meetings?
- How will you manage attendance to school events?
- Who will provide childcare when there is early dismissal, school closures and in-service days?
- Who will be listed as a contact in case of an emergency if you are not available?
- How will both parents contribute to post-secondary education?

Religious training and cultural upbringing

- How will you decide on which faith or spiritual education for your children?
- How will you accommodate important family and cultural traditions?

Activities

- How will you decide which activities the children will participate in?
- Who will register and share the information with the other parent?
- How will the activity affect the children's time with each parent?
- How will you share the costs including equipment costs?
- How will you share in the transportation?
- How will you include the children's expressed preference?
- How will you decide who will attend the activity?
- What will you do if one parent volunteers or coaches?
- How will you share information about invitations to birthday parties, sleepovers, and such?
- How will you share the costs of the friend's birthday gift?

Dispute Resolution

What if you have parenting differences that you cannot resolve on your own? How will you resolve an issue?

- Will a parent have final say on certain issues after best efforts to resolve?
- Will parents divide having final say on major decisions?
- Will parents follow the advice of someone trusted or knowledgeable about an issue?
- Mediate or return to mediation?
- Seek help from a family counsellor, parent coach or other support?

3. Parenting Time

- What will your parenting schedule look like?
- What day and time are the transitions?
- How will you share in the transportation?
- How will you accommodate changes to the schedule?
- How much notice is reasonable for making changes to the schedule?
- What will you do if a parent is early or late?

Holidays and Special Occasions:

How will the children spend their time during the following?

- Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day; New Year's
- Easter, Passover, Ramadan
- Thanksgiving
- Other religious or cultural events
- Mother's Day
- Father's Day
- Children's birthdays
- Parents' birthdays
- Halloween
- Long weekends (Louis Riel Day, Victoria Day, Terry Fox Day)
- Canada Day
- Spring Break
- Summer school break
- Winter Break
- Special family events/reunions
- Weddings
- Funerals
- Graduations
- Travel

4. Mobility

- How will the move of a parent affect their relationship with the children?
- Giving required notice of a move

5. Travel

- When do you tell the other parent about travel plans (within or outside the province; outside Canada)?
- How will you exchange a copy of the Recommended Consent Letter for Children Travelling Abroad when travelling outside of Canada?
<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/children/consent-letter>
- Who will take the lead on applying for the passports or the renewal of passports?
- Who will keep the passports?
- How will you exchange the children's passports?
- How will you share information about the location, lodging, departure and arrival time if flying, contact and emergency information etc.?
- How will the children have ongoing contact with the stay at home parent?

6. Child Support

- How are both parents contributing to the children's expenses?
- Is there an exchange of child support based on the Manitoba Children Support Guidelines? <https://www.gov.mb.ca/familylaw/money/child-support-guidelines.html>

- How are you sharing the Children's Special Expenses related to childcare, uninsured health expenses, education, post-secondary costs and activities?

7. Other Things to Consider

Daycare

- How will you decide which daycare/babysitter for the children if parents require childcare?
- How will you share in the costs?
- Who will be listed as a contact in case of emergency if you are not available?

First option of refusal

- How will you decide to offer to the other parent the opportunity to care for the children when you are unavailable?
- When will you use extended family and babysitters?
- Who is responsible for arranging alternate care?
- Who will be responsible for the costs?

Clothing/haircuts/toys/pets

- How will you share the costs of higher priced items such as winter clothes, boots, bicycles, cell phones, etc.?
- Will there be any items or clothing that can be shared between households?
- Can toys and gifts the children receive go back and forth?
- What do we do with pets?

Consent forms

- How can you ensure that all consent forms for children's services, counselling, medical/dental procedures etc. are signed in timely ways?

Parenting values and rules

- Have you discussed safety and supervision concerns?
- What non-negotiable safety issues have you agreed to, such as the use of car seats, life jackets, helmets; a ban on impaired or distracted driving, drug or alcohol use/misuse, viewing pornography when caring for the children; posting images of the children online?
- When is it ok for children to play in the neighborhood park on their own or with friends, stay at home alone, babysit, ride the bus on their own, hang out with friends?
- Are there limits to the use of cell phones, video games, social media, networking and the internet?

- When is it ok to ride a motorcycle, snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle?
- Learn to drive and use the car
- Have you talked about discipline or consequences for undesirable behavior?
- How will discipline be handled in both homes, will the consequence follow to the other home?
- Have you shared information about the expectations and routines in your home, such as curfew times, bedtimes, naptimes, homework, chores, responsibilities, screen time?
- When is it ok for children to date, have tattoos or piercings, wear make-up, dye their hair, clothing choices
- How do you plan to provide guidance regarding responsible decision-making as it relates to alcohol, use of cannabis etc; safety in the cyber world? Healthy relationships?

Involvement of the extended families

- How will the children maintain relationships with extended families?

Dating and role of new partners

- When will you inform the other parent when you re-partner?
- When is it appropriate to tell the children?
- How will you explain to your partner their role in the children's lives?
- What will the role of the new partner be in relation to parenting, childcare, setting the rules and discipline?

Disability or death of a parent

- What financial and childcare arrangements have been made?
- How will you maintain ongoing contact for the children with the extended family of the deceased parent?
- Who will have legal guardianship if both parents are deceased or incapacitated in some way?

Reviewing or making changes to the parenting plan

- How and when will you make changes to the parenting plan?

How will parents resolve future differences?

- Family Counselling
- Mediation
- Collaborative Practice
- Parenting coach
- Lawyers
- Court

