

Erie County Court of Common Pleas

Domestic Relations Division

Child Centered **Rules and Schedules** **For Standard Parenting Time Order**

A. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF STANDARD PARENTING TIME:

1. Preservation of the Parent/Child relationship:

- a. Raising children is both an amazing privilege and an awesome responsibility.
- b. Divorce, dissolution, or legal separation actions terminate or limit the legal relationship between parents only. Absent a specific court order the privileges and the obligations of a parent/child relationship remain intact. Unless special circumstances exist, both parents remain full parents, with rights, and just as importantly, with obligations and responsibilities, to their minor child(ren).

2. Co-parenting pursuant to a Standard Parenting Time Order can Reduce Risk to Children:

- a. In order for children to have a full parent/child relationship with each parent both parents must be engaged in the ordinary tasks of child rearing, including: providing meals; ensuring that homework is done; getting children ready for school; being involved in the children's routine activities; caring for the child when they are ill; and, attending school conferences as well as school activities.
- b. Positive involvement with both parents furthers the child's emotional and social development, academic achievement, and overall adjustment.

3. Parenting Time Rules and Schedules:

- a. Prior to adopting any parenting time schedule the parents are encouraged to openly and honestly consider matters such as their work schedules, schedules of their child(ren), the development and individual needs of their child(ren), and all other unique circumstances of their family to develop a plan tailored to them. Even then, parents will need to remain open to working with one another to modifying their agreements to address the inevitable challenges that life and children bring. No specific parenting schedule will satisfy the needs of a child and parents over the years.
- b. When parents cannot agree on times a written parenting time schedule can alleviate conflict by providing children and parents with predicable, consistent, positive contact.
- c. Accordingly, unless otherwise specifically ordered in the Judgment Entry which incorporates this document, or unless otherwise agreed by the parents in advance, the Standard Parenting Time Rules and Schedules contained herein shall apply.

B. TEN SIMPLE RULES GOVERNING PARENTING TIME:

There are ten (10) general rules for successful co-parenting that apply to most, if not all, families dealing with a divorce, dissolution, or legal separation. The rules may be simple to understand, but they can be difficult to consistently implement. Parents that co-parent under a parenting time schedule are encouraged to review the rules when disputes arise.

1. Parents need to mutually respect and support each other:

- a. ***Let go of the past.*** For some parents this may be the hardest rule to implement. Hurt and anger must be set aside for the child(ren)'s well-being. Your feelings may be valid or justified. However, co-parenting is not about your feelings or frustrations with the other parent. Successful co-parenting does not require that two adults apologize, forgive, or even like each other. It only requires that both parents are motivated to focus on the growth and well-being of their child(ren). The co-parent relationship must transition to a *child centered* relationship.
- b. ***Adverse feelings should not dictate parental behavior.*** While it may be natural to be hurt and angry, your feelings should not dictate your behavior. The behavior you display can detrimentally impact your child(ren).
- c. ***Model appropriate behavior.*** Good or bad, children learn from watching their parents. You are modeling and teaching your child(ren) how to deal with difficult situations. You are also teaching your child(ren) how to treat people, how to build honest and safe relationships, how to solve problems, how to communicate effectively, and how to repair hurt emotions.
- d. ***Be respectful of the other Parent.*** Speak about and act in a respectful manner toward the other parent in front of the child(ren), or when the child(ren) can hear conversations taking place.
- e. ***Learn to work together.*** Parents are encouraged to work together to establish rules and guidelines that make the companionship beneficial for both parents and the child(ren). Flexibility, cooperation, and mutual respect are key to successful parenting time schedules and exchanges.
- f. ***Learn to present a united front.*** Even though parents may have different parenting styles parents should work to present a united front in handling problems with a child. While in the presence of their child(ren) each parent shall refrain from taking a side with decisions or actions of the other parent has made.
- g. ***Support the other parent.*** Co-parenting will, at times, challenge you. Understand that it will also challenge your ex-partner. Expect that mistakes will be made along the way. Despite them, support the other parent.
- h. ***Inappropriate interactions can damage your child.*** Witnessing conflict between parents is damaging to a child. Parents are imperfect, but your child(ren) need and love them anyway. Conflicts or altercations between parents that a child observes or becomes aware of can cause anxiety or depression in the child.
- i. ***Inappropriate interactions can detrimentally affect the care your child(ren) receives.*** Parents cannot be their best when having to parent under duress. Consequently, a parent may not be able to fully focus on child-care while trying to process thoughts and feelings regarding a co-parent who is less than supportive of their role and relationship with their children.
- j. ***Don't try to "one-up" the other parent.*** Avoid buying excessive gifts or offering unusual freedoms to the child(ren) in an attempt to win favor.

2. Parents need to effectively communicate with each other:

- a. This may be the second hardest rule to implement. Many parents separate because they can no longer deal with one another. This, cannot be the case when it comes to the child(ren). Communicating with one another is necessary for the duration of your child(ren)'s childhood, if not longer.
- b. ***Commit to meeting/talking consistently.*** Do not ignore requests by the other parent to communicate about parenting issues. Ignoring texts, calls, app messages or other requests from your ex-partner seeking to address parenting concerns will only add to the anxiety when finally meeting.
- c. ***When possible communicate directly with your co-parent.*** Communicating through family members, new partners, or other third parties is an open invitation for miscommunication.
- d. ***Do not communicate through your child(ren).*** Even on simple issues, as tempting as it may be, do not communicate through your children. Further, do not involve your child(ren) in sending, receiving, for reading texts for you with the other parent.
- e. ***Communication should be outside the presence of the child(ren).***
- f. ***Select and agree on communication time and method.*** Some information can be easily conveyed through a quick text. Other issues require more lengthy conversation. Attempt to agree on a time during which you can have meaningful discussion outside the presence of the child(ren). If you absolutely cannot converse try communicating in writing through e-mail, text, or other app messaging. Be mindful that written communications can be misinterpreted. Read written communications carefully before sending them to make sure that they are appropriate.
- g. ***Communicate Effectively.***
 - i. ***Be concise and respectful.***
 - ii. ***Stay calm.*** It may seem impossible to stay calm when dealing with an ex-partner who has hurt you in the past or knows how to "push your buttons." If your negative emotions start to take over it can become very difficult to focus on your child(ren).
 - iii. ***Don't drag up the past.*** Parents should be able to openly discuss matters involving their child(ren) without fear that the other parent will begin raising personal or past issues.
 - iv. ***No name calling.*** If your communication deteriorates to the point where names are being used, take a step back, stop the communication, and agree to try again after the parties have time to de-escalate.
 - v. ***Actively Listen.*** Communicating with maturity starts with listening. Even if you disagree with the other parent, you should at least be able to verbally convey that you have understood their point of views. Listening does not signify approval. It simply gives your co-parent the opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions.
 - vi. ***Take turns speaking and avoid interruptions.*** If you are interrupting you are not actively listening.
- h. ***Matters to communicate about.*** No plan can outline all of the matters that need to be discussed by the parents as the child(ren) grow. A few critical issues include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - i. ***Current Contact Information.*** Each parent shall keep the other parent informed of their current residence address as well as provide the other parent with emergency contact information such as phone, e-mail, text.

- ii. **Upcoming Changes.** Keep the other parent informed of important changes in the parent's life that could potentially impact the child(ren), including but not limited to: moving to a new home, changing work hours due to a new job, a potential change in day-care providers, or introducing a new partner. Do this before talking to your children.
- iii. **Critical Information on child development.** If the parties are co-parenting an infant, in addition to medical appointments and information, it is important to communicate regarding the infant's developmental milestones; the proper integration of foods into the child's diet; the child's sleep schedule; as well as concerns regarding potential allergic reactions to things such as foods, medicines and environmental factors such as soaps or detergents. As the infant grows discussions need to be had on readiness and joint efforts for potty-training. Years later, the parties should discuss the child's readiness for school.
- iv. **Don't limit your conversations to problem issues.** You are co-parents. You should communicate about the joys as well as the challenges of raising your child(ren). Check in periodically with your co-parent simply to see how the child(ren) are doing. Further, convey positive things that the child(ren) have done or said.

3. Parents need to Compromise and Cooperate with each other:

- a. **Learn to compromise.** Newly married couples learn to compromise. Newly separated parents must learn to compromise as well.
- b. **Agree on basics.** Although parents are unlikely to agree on every decision, they need a basic level of agreement on material issues involving health, education and discipline. If each home has similar rules on matters such infant and toddler nap times and feeding schedules, bedtimes, chores, screen time, and discipline it will help the child(ren) adjust to transitions between the two households.
- c. **Accept that there will be differences.** Just because your co-parent isn't doing everything the way you would do it doesn't mean that they are doing it wrong. Parents may have different parenting styles and do not need to have identical rules.
- d. **Compromise does not mean renegotiating the critical terms of your parenting arrangement.**
- e. **Compromise opens the door to needed flexibility for life events.** Life happens. Emergencies arise. Children grown and develop in ways that we do not anticipate or plan for. Accordingly, adjustments should be made in the best interest of the child(ren).

4. Parents need to let their Child(ren) be Child(ren):

- a. **Don't involve children in adult problems.** Your child(ren) never need to know the details or reasons for your separation or your financial settlement or agreement. The focus should be on maintaining existing routines and relationships.
- b. **Shelter your children.** Shelter the child(ren) from the struggles that are properly the responsibility of their parents.
- c. **Never use your Child(ren) as messengers.** When you use your children to convey messages to your co-parent it puts them in the center of your conflict. The goal is to keep your child out of your relationship issues. Also, children are not always the best communicators. They may change or distort the message. They may not convey the message at all. Further, they may end up being the recipient of any angry or emotional outburst from the other parent. Avoid these potential problems by not using the child as a messenger.

- d. **Maintain your child(ren)'s community of support.** Maintaining existing relationships and routines with extended family members, friends, school, and other activities adds to children's sense of stability, continuity and predictability in their lives.

5. **Parents need to make exchanges less stressful for the child(ren):**

- a. **Select an appropriate exchange point.** Parents do not need to always use the other parent's home as an exchange point. If you and your co-parent are in high conflict and the previous strategies aren't helping, try to avoid face-to-face exchanges. Maybe you take your child(ren) to daycare or school in the morning, and the other parent picks them up in the afternoon.
- b. **Prepare for exchanges in advance.** Both parents shall, to the best of their ability, prepare the child(ren) physically and emotionally for all companionship contact. Check and make sure each child has all necessary items ready for the exchange. Items such as medicines, school materials, clothing, along with items the child wants to take or share should all be ready to go.
- c. **Stay positive prior to the exchange.** No one wants their child(ren) to be miserable. For your child(ren)'s sake, you should want them to have a great time with the other parent. Let them know that.
- d. **Model positive, appropriate behavior at the time of the exchange.** Avoid difficult conversations or comments when you exchange the child(ren). For the sake of the child(ren), exchanges of the child(ren) should be cordial rather than confrontational.
- e. **Don't burden your child with your emotions.** Saying things like, "I miss you" or "I am going to be lonely without you" might seem harmless, but it puts an emotional burden on your child. Your child should not feel obligated to make you feel better at a time that might be emotionally confusing or challenging for them.
- f. **Properly handle any opposition by the child(ren).** Some children become upset during exchanges. This behavior does not necessarily mean that the other parent is not a good parent or that the child does not want to be with the other parent. If a child indicates a strong opposition to being with the other parent, both parents are responsible for encouraging the child to have a positive relationship with both parents.
- g. Parenting time shall not be used by either parent to check on the other parent.
- h. **Don't interrogate the child(ren) after an exchange.** Neither parent shall interrogate the child(ren) during or following the parenting time as a means to gather information regarding the other parent or activities of the other parent. Gaining information in this manner can feed into parental anger and put the child(ren) in the middle. Children often feel manipulated by this practice and develop loyalty conflicts when being interrogated about the other parent.
- i. **Don't attempt to establish secret alliances.** At no time shall either parent ask the child(ren) to keep a secret or withhold information from the other parent.
- j. **Let your Child(ren) share special parenting moments without tension.** Your child(ren) should not feel guilty about sharing a positive experience they had with the other parent.

6. **Transportation:**

- a. The parent beginning their parenting time shall be responsible for picking up and transporting the child(ren) for the parenting time.
- b. The parent responsible for transportation may, in their sole discretion, designate a third party known to the child(ren) to transport the child(ren) on the parent's behalf. Further, if a child

- is a licensed, insured driver, the child may complete the transportation. Any person transporting the child(ren) for parenting time shall have a valid driver's license and be insured. Further, the child(ren) shall be properly restrained in the manner required by law during such transport.
- c. Parents are expected to be prompt for all parenting time exchanges. If a parent is going to be late, he/she must contact the other parent and give a reasonable estimated arrival time. The parent completing their parenting time shall not be required to wait longer than thirty (30) minutes for the other parent to appear.
 - d. Unless otherwise specifically directed herein, absent agreement to the contrary, the parent in possession of the child(ren) is responsible for providing the child(ren) with transportation to and from any appointment, activity or event scheduled for the child while in their care.

7. Illness, Emergencies, and medical issues:

- a. ***Child illness or emergency.***
 - i. Parents are expected to follow the parenting time schedule despite any illness of a child, unless both parents agree that this would not be medically advisable.
 - ii. A child who is confined to bed rest pursuant to a doctor's instructions is presumed too ill for parenting time exchanges to take place. Any parenting time that is missed due to the illness of a child shall be made up the following week or as the parties may mutually agree.
 - iii. Prescription medications and instructions for special care shall travel with the child.
 - iv. If a child misses school due to illness or due to an emergency such as a snow day or other emergency school closure, the parent who is exercising parenting time at the time of the child illness or emergency shall be responsible for arranging any substitute childcare necessitated as a result thereof.
- b. ***Medical treatment and appointments for the child(ren).***
 - i. Both parents shall timely give the other parent copies of insurance cards for medical/optical/dental/pharmacy coverage as well and advise the other parent of any changes in insurance coverage.
 - ii. Both parents shall keep the other parent advised of the names and addresses of current medical providers for the minor child(ren).
 - iii. Both parents are responsible for communicating dates and times of all routine medical, dental, vision, wellness, and behavioral health appointments for the child(ren) to the other parent.
 - iv. Both parents are encouraged to attend all medical/health/wellness care appointments for the minor child(ren) regardless of whose parenting time the appointment falls within.
 - v. Parents should not schedule non-emergency medical appointment during the other parent's parenting time without first discussing the matter with the other parent. If this cannot be avoided the parent scheduling the appointment shall be responsible for providing transportation for the minor child to and from the appointment.
- c. ***Parent Illness or emergency.*** If a parent needs to cancel their parenting time due to an unforeseen emergency or illness of the parent, then they need to let the other parent know as soon as possible so that proper arrangements can be made.

8. Supervision and care of the Child(ren) during parenting time:

- a. ***Minimize packing.*** Children living with a co-parenting plan should feel as if they have two separate places that they can call home. If a child's first activity when they get home is unpacking that can make the child feel like a visitor. Further, it can create stress for the child and the parent, trying to make sure that everything was packed. Consequently, successful co-parenting should strive for minimal packing.
- b. ***Clothing for the Child(ren).*** Each parent is expected to maintain suitable clothing for the child(ren) during their periods of parenting time.
- c. ***Supplies for the Child(ren).*** Each parent is expected to maintain necessary and customary supplies for the child(ren) to use while the child(ren) is in their care, including but not limited to such things as diapering products, toiletry and grooming supplies, normal over the counter medications and school supplies.
- b. ***Items belonging to the Child(ren).*** Toys, games, and clothing given to the child(ren) belong to the child(ren). As such, the child(ren) shall be freely allowed to take toys, games or clothing with them to the other parents house, regardless of who purchased the item for the child(ren). Each parent shall return all items that are sent with or brought by the child(ren) at the end of the parenting time.
- d. ***Child-care/Day-Care.***
 - 1. The parent in possession of the child(ren) is responsible for seeking, and covering the cost for, any child-care needed during that parent's parenting time.
 - 2. The parents are encouraged to use the same non-relative day-care provider.
 - 3. Except for children under age (3) as specifically addressed in Section C herein, the possessory parent may, but is not required, to ask the other parent to care for the child(ren) when the possessory parent is unable to care for the child(ren) during their scheduled parenting time.
 - 4. Absent agreement to the contrary, care for the child(ren) outside of the parent's regularly scheduled parenting time is not a substitute for them to care for the children during their regularly scheduled parenting time.
 - 5. If the parent being asked to care for the child(ren) is unavailable, they shall not be treated in a punitive manner, or asked for details and/or verification as to why they cannot watch the child(ren) during the requested time.

9. School and Activity Issues:

- a. Each parent must provide time for the child(ren) to study and complete homework assignments, papers or other school-assigned projects, even if the completion of this work interferes with the parent's plans with the child(ren).
- b. Both parents shall timely give to the other parent copies in their possession of grade reports, disciplinary notices and/or communications, including information regarding school pictures.
- c. Each parent is responsible to set up his or her own online access to school records and information, if available.
- d. Scheduled periods of parenting time shall not be delayed or denied because a child has other scheduled activities (with friends, work, lessons, sports, etc.). Accordingly, neither parent shall schedule activities for the child during the other parent's parenting time without first discussing the matter with the other parent in advance. It is the responsibility of the parents to discuss activities important to the child(ren) in advance, including time, dates, cost, and

transportation needs, so that the child(ren) are not deprived of activities and maintaining friendships.

10. Address Financial Issues Separate from Parenting time:

- a. ***Costs and Expenses must be addressed separately.*** The primary purpose of these “Child Centered Rules and Schedules for Parenting Time” is to allocate time between parents in the best interests of the child(ren) when the parents have not been able to allocate time by agreement. Except when specifically addressed in the schedules herein, the allocation of costs and expenses is a separate issue beyond the scope of these schedules and rules. To avoid conflict and successfully co-parent the allocation of costs and expenses cannot be ignored and must be addressed separately.
- b. ***Each parent is obligated to share in the financial responsibility of raising their child(ren).*** The responsibility in raising your child(ren) goes beyond spending quality parenting time together. Successful co-parents each share in the financial responsibility of raising their children.
- c. ***Plan ahead.*** Conflicts are avoided then parents agree in advance on a plan allocating costs and expenses rather than waiting to discuss payment after expenses have been incurred or are due.
- d. ***Reduce Agreements to writing.*** Parenting Plans or Shared Parenting Plans should address how costs and expenses are to be allocated between the parents for all expenses including but not limited to: school tuition; school uniform costs; school lunch costs; the payment of school fees and related expenses; extracurricular activity expenses; cell phone expenses; car insurance expenses; providing gas money or covering repair costs for a child(ren)’s vehicle; and, payment of an allowance to the child(ren).
- e. ***Address expenses when establishing child support.*** If the parties are unable to come to an agreement in a parenting plan or shared parenting plan then each party should address the allocation of expenses when establishing child support. Child Support can be adjusted (deviated) based on a number of factors, including but not limited to the allocation of expenses.
- f. ***Address expenses for health insurance and medical expenses.*** Finally, the parties must understand their obligations in providing health care coverage, paying cash medical, and paying for uninsured medical expenses.
- g. ***Submit shared financial responsibilities in a timely fashion.*** Most families need to budget and plan payment of expenses on a monthly basis. Conflicts can be reduced or avoided if shared expenses are provided to the other parent in a timely fashion rather than at the last minute when a bill is due. Each parent should understand and comply with the requirements for timely submitting bills for direct payment, or reimbursing the other co-parent.
- h. ***Timely meet your financial responsibilities.***
- i. ***Keep your child(ren) out of any financial disputes.*** Do not involve you child in serving as a messenger or asking about details regarding your co-parent’s financial obligations.
- j. ***Do not withhold parenting time as a result of unmet financial obligations.***

C. ORDINARY PARENTING TIME

1. In General:

- a. "Ordinary Parenting Time" does not address parenting time for vacation, holidays, or days of special meaning. Parenting time for those circumstances is addressed in Section D herein.
- b. If parents have children who fit into two or more "Ordinary Parenting Time" schedules, the parents may agree on which schedule(s) to follow. Some parents prefer that each child follow the schedule proposed based on the age of the child. Other parents prefer that all children remain together under one schedule. Absent an agreement of parents or a specific Court Order to the contrary, when the parties have children fitting into two or more schedules based on age, to avoid confusion, potential confrontation, and to keep the children together, the schedule for Kindergarten to age sixteen (16) shall be the single schedule applied to all of children.
- c. For the purposes of all Parenting Time Schedules, including those for vacation, holidays, and days of special meaning "Parent 1" is the residential parent and legal custodian and "Parent 2" is the other parent. If any part of this Standard Parenting Time Order is incorporated as part of a "Shared Parenting Plan" then "Parent 1" is the residential Parent for School Purposes, and "Parent 2" is the secondary residential parent.

2. Telephone/Email contact/other social media communication with the child(ren):

- a. Parents may communicate with the child(ren) during the other parent's scheduled parenting time, at least twice a week, but no later than 8:00 PM or as otherwise agreed.
- b. Each parent shall encourage free communication between the child(ren) and the other parent, and shall not do anything to impede or restrict that communication.

3. Ordinary Parenting Time for Infants through Toddlers (Birth to Age 3)

a. General Considerations for Infants through Toddlers:

- i. ***Building the bond between parent and child.*** The bond between a parent and child will continue to grow as long as the parent remains actively involved with the child. Babies become attached to parents and others through consistent, loving responses, such as holding, playing, feeding, soothing, talking gently and lovingly, stimulating, creating bedtime and bath time routines, and prompt attention to their needs. As such, each parent needs to consistently hold, bath feed, and interact with the child(ren) on a frequent basis.
- ii. ***Understanding the need for frequent contact.*** Babies cannot remember things they experienced over time – in other words, "out of sight, out of mind." Therefore, it is important that they have frequent contact with each of their parents and have a stable schedule and routine.
- iv. ***Developing routines.*** Babies have basic sleep, feeding and waking schedules. It is important to keep the baby on these schedules.
- v. ***Learning to have two homes.*** Beginning at nine (9) months the child(ren) should begin the transition from spending all nights in Parent 1's home to being comfortable spending equal amounts of time at each parent's home.

b. Right of First Refusal for Infants through Toddlers:

- i. Because the parties are not equally dividing time for children under 3, to further develop the bond between the child(ren) and the non-custodial parent, the non-custodial parent has the right of first refusal to care for the child(ren) in this age group when the custodial parent is unavailable to care for the child(ren) for any time period of four (4) consecutive hours or longer.
- ii. The custodial parent is required to contact the non-custodial parent as soon as the custodial parent learns of the need for substitute care, and give the non-custodial parent the option of caring for the child in the custodial parent's absence. Absent an emergency situation, notice on the same day that substitute care is needed is not reasonable and must be avoided.
- iii. The custodial parent shall not be treated in a punitive manner nor asked for details and/or verification as to the custodial parent need for substitute care.
- iv. The non-custodial parent shall not be treated in a punitive manner nor asked for details and/or verification as to why they cannot watch the child(ren) during the requested time.
- v. Absent agreement of the parties, parenting time obtained due to the right of first refusal is in addition, and not a substitute for, the schedule for ordinary parenting time for any child(ren) in this age group.

c. Tiered Schedule for Infants through Toddlers: To help assure that both parents maintain frequent contact with the child(ren) and that the child(ren) comfortably transition into spending equal amounts of time at each parent's home, the following tiered schedule for infants through toddlers shall be implemented.

- i. ***Birth to 9 Months. (22 hours over 4 days, no overnights)*** – After considering each parent's work schedule, the child's feeding and sleep schedule, as well as travel time, the parents shall agree on a minimum of twenty-two (22) hours each week, preferably spread over a four (4) day period, of which none must be overnight, for Parent 2 to exercise parenting time with the minor child(ren). Absent agreement by the parties Parent 2 shall have parenting time with the minor child(ren) shall occur during the following times:
 - a.) Tuesday evening from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (3 hours);
 - b.) Thursday evening from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (3 hours);
 - c.) Saturday morning from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (8 hours); and,
 - d.) Sunday from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (8 hours).
- ii. ***9 Months through 18 Months. (33 hours over 5 days, 1 overnight)*** - After considering each parent's work schedule, the child's feeding and sleep schedule, as well as travel time, the parents shall agree on a minimum of thirty-three (33) hours each week, preferably spread over a five (5) day period, with at least one (1) overnight, for Parent 2 to exercise parenting time with the minor child(ren). Absent agreement of the parties Parent 2 shall have parenting time with the minor child(ren) during the following times:
 - a.) Tuesday evening from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (3 hours);
 - b.) Wednesday evening from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (3 hours);
 - c.) Thursday evening from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (3 hours); and,
 - d.) Saturday evening from 5:00 p.m. to Sunday evening at 5:00 p.m. (24 hours over 2 days).

- iii. **18 Months to 27 Months. (54 hours over 5 days, 2 overnights)** - After considering each parent's work schedule, the child's feeding and sleep schedule, as well as travel time, the parents shall agree on a minimum of fifty-four (54) hours each week, preferably spread over a five (5) day period, with at least two (2) overnights, for Parent 2 to exercise parenting time with the minor child(ren). Absent agreement of the parties Parent 2 shall have parenting time with the minor child(ren) during the following times:
 - a.) Tuesday evening from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (3 hours);
 - b.) Wednesday evening from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (3 hours); and,
 - c.) Friday evening from 5:00 p.m. to Sunday evening at 5:00 p.m. (48 hours over 3 days).
- iv. **27 Months to Age 3 (72 hours over 5 days, 3 overnights)** - After considering each parent's work schedule, the child's feeding and sleep schedule, as well as travel time, the parents shall agree on a minimum of seventy-two (72) hours each week, preferably spread over a five (5) day period, with at least three (3) overnights, for Parent 2 to exercise parenting time with the minor child(ren). Absent agreement of the parties Parent 2 shall have parenting time with the minor child(ren) during the following times:
 - a.) Tuesday evening from 5:00 p.m. to Wednesday evening at 5:00 p.m. (24 hours over 2 days);
 - b.) Friday evening from 5:00 p.m. to Sunday evening at 5:00 p.m. (48 hours over 3 days).

4. **Ordinary Parenting Time for pre-school children (Age 3 - Admission to Kindergarten)**

- a. Beginning at the age of three (3), the parents shall equally share parenting time.
- b. Beginning at age three (3) the parents should begin alternating weeks. Parent 1 shall have the child the first full week following the child's third (3rd) birthday, with Parent 2 having the following week thereafter.
- c. The parent having the child for the week is deemed the "possessory parent." The other parent is the "non-possessory parent."
- d. Absent advance agreement by the parents, a week begins Sunday at 5:00 p.m. at which time the exchange of the child(ren) should take place.
- e. To aid the child(ren) in the transition to equal parenting time, while maintaining regular contact with each parent, the parent not possessing the child(ren) during the week may have parenting time with the child(ren) on two (2) evenings during the week. The parenting time for the non-possessory parent shall be from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.
- f. The non-possessory parent is responsible for providing dinner for the child(ren) during these parenting times.

5. Ordinary Parenting Time for younger school aged children (Kindergarten to Age 16)

- a. Once the child(ren) reach school age, evenings can be taken up with homework and preparation for school the next day. Accordingly, once the child reaches school age the non-possessory parent's weeknight visitation will change from two (2) evenings a week for three (3) hours, to one (1) weeknight evening for four (4) hours. Absent an agreement of the parties the parenting time for the non-possessory parent shall be Tuesday evening from 5:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.
- b. The non-possessory parent is responsible for providing dinner for the child(ren) during these parenting times as well as making sure that any homework for the evening is completed.
- c. During summer break from school, parents shall follow the standard parenting schedule. Each parent is responsible for any daycare, babysitting or supervision expenses during the exercise of their extended summer companionship, unless parents have already arranged, and agreed upon, daycare, babysitting, or supervisory providers
- d. Summer school necessary for the child(ren) to pass to the next grade, or as recommended by the appropriate school official, must be attended, and official notice of such requirement must be shared between the parents. In the event a parent elects to exercise their companionship time during summer school, they shall be responsible to make sure that the child(ren) attends summer school as necessary.
- e. Spring Break and Winter Break Parents shall continue to follow their established schedule, and no changes are needed unless a parent is taking a vacation with the child(ren), which is addressed in Section D below.

6. Ordinary Parenting Time for older school aged children (Age 16 to Age 18)

- a. An older child may be driving at age 16. The child may be working part time jobs and participating in extracurricular activities in addition to attending his school.
- b. By age 16 the child may also have begun formulating plans addressing the child's transition into adulthood. The child may begin exploring further college, military, or vocational options.
- c. Both parents have to be reasonable with their demands for their child to spend time with the parents, especially during weekends and summer holidays.
- d. Flexibility in scheduling is necessary due to the growing demands and activities of the child.
- e. Parents also need to begin adjusting to the older child's transition into adulthood, when the child will spend time with the parent when the child wants verses when the child is obligated to spend time with the parent. Consequently, when possible, the parents should consider the older child's wishes.
- f. Quality of time is more important than a rigid schedule.
- g. Parents shall continue to follow the established schedule, but make reasonable accommodation for the teenager's participation in academic, athletic, extracurricular and social activities or employment.
- h. As a result, the teenager may spend less than equal time with one parent. However, the teenager must spend at least ten (10) waking hours per week with each parent.

D. PARENTING TIME FOR VACATIONS, HOLIDAYS, AND DAYS OF SPECIAL MEANING

1. Vacations

- a. Absent special circumstances, starting at the age of 2, each parent is entitled to two (2) one week periods of uninterrupted vacation time with the child(ren) each year. The two (2) weeks can be taken separately, or together for one (1) two (2) week period. Where Parents are alternating weeks under the Ordinary Parenting Time schedule the following rules apply:
 - i. If a parent wishes to exercise vacation time in separate weekly increments, the vacation time shall be taken during the week that the parent is already scheduled to have the child(ren).
 - ii. If a parent wishes to exercise vacation time for one (1) two (2) week period, the alternating schedule shall be adjusted so that the parent missing their week of ordinary parenting time shall have the child(ren) the week immediately following the two (2) week vacation period in lieu of making up the missed week.
- b. Vacation time can occur in the summer, spring, or winter breaks for school-aged children, or at any time for younger children. Vacation time shall not interfere with school schedules.
- c. The parent wishing to take vacation time with the child(ren) must notify the other parent at least sixty (60) days before the proposed vacation dates.
- d. For any vacation travel, each parent must provide the other parent with information about the destination, times of arrival and departure, and method of travel.
- e. In case of a conflict in schedules, Parent 1's choice shall prevail in even numbered years, and Parent 2's choice shall prevail in odd-numbered years.
- f. Vacations shall not conflict with the holiday schedule.
- g. Vacations take precedence over the Ordinary Parenting Time but not holidays or days of special meaning.

2. Days of Special Meaning

- a. **Child's Birthday:** The child's birthday shall be spent with the parent who has regularly scheduled parenting time on that day.
- b. **Mother's Day and Father's Day:** Unless otherwise specifically agreed upon or ordered by the Court, Mother's Day shall always be spent with the mother, and Father's Day shall always be spent with the father. Unless the parties agree otherwise, the time shall be from 9:00AM to 7:00PM. Mother's Day and Father's Day shall take precedence and priority over Ordinary Parenting Time and vacations.
- c. **Other:** Parents are strongly encouraged to agree on division of time concerning other days of special meaning that are important to their individual families such as parent birthdays, annual family reunions, or family celebrations for grandparent birthdays or anniversaries.
- d. Parents shall encourage their child to remember the other parent on special occasions.

3. Holiday Parenting Time

- a. The holiday schedule takes precedence over the normal weekly schedule and vacations.
- b. Parents are encouraged to modify holiday companionship by agreement to reflect the customs and traditions of their family.

Holiday	Even-Numbered Years	Odd-Numbered Years	Time Period
Easter	Parent 1	Parent 2	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Memorial Day	Parent 2	Parent 1	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM
July 4 th	Parent 1	Parent 2	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Labor Day	Parent 2	Parent 1	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Thanksgiving	Parent 1	Parent 2	10:00 AM Thursday to 7:00 AM Friday
Christmas Eve	Parent 2	Parent 1	7:00 PM on 12/23 to 7:00 PM on 12/24
Christmas Day	Parent 1	Parent 2	7:00 PM on 12/24 to 10:00 AM on 12/26
New Year's Eve	Parent 2	Parent 1	7:00 PM on 12/31 to 10:00 AM on 1/1
New Year's Day	Parent 1	Parent 2	10:00 AM to 7:00 PM