



CHILD FIND of AMERICA

PARENT HELP

Parenting Apart Packet

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This packet provides you with information useful to creating a workable and thoughtful parenting plan.

- ✓ Discussion Points for Parenting Apart:
 - *Locally*
 - *Interstate / Long Distance*
- ✓ Parenting Time Calendar
- ✓ Holiday & Special Occasion Worksheet
 - ✓ A Child's Fundamental Rights
 - ✓ Communication Skills Sheet
 - ✓ Values Worksheet

Founded in 1980 to ensure that every child thrives in a safe, healthy & legal environment, Child Find's mission is to resolve and prevent cases of missing children augmented by programs and services that promote healthier family environments and strengthen parents – the key to child well-being.

A Child's Fundamental Rights:

A Document for Parents Living Apart

AS A CHILD WITH PARENTS LIVING APART, I HAVE THE RIGHT ...

- to love both my parents with joy, and be proud that both love me.
- to joyfully love *all* the people who are important to me.
- to never face rejection by a parent.
- to be safe, to be respected, to be cared for in every way.
- to always have my developmental needs and challenges taken into account.
- to be protected from hearing unnecessary and hurtful details about an adult conflict.
- to have parents who are flexible about different rules, and respect all safe parenting styles.
- to have parents who check in with each other on these rules when consistency is crucial.
- to have my needs and interests come first when decisions about my schedule are made.
- to be disciplined wisely, calmly and compassionately.
- to be free from any blame for the break-up.
- to never be asked to take a side in an adult argument.
- to have parents who do what they can to stay emotionally healthy, and who will see to my emotional health.
- to talk about things openly without fear of punishment or guilt; to keep my feelings private if I choose to.
- to see my parents as good role models for how to be respectful of others, even when there's a disagreement.
- to not be asked to report on what is happening in one parent's life to the other parent.
- to have parents who talk to one another without asking me to act as messenger.
- to just be a child without being responsible for the well-being of an adult.
- **to have parents who will work at making the best of a very difficult situation.**



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BRINGING KIDS HOME • KEEPING THEM SAFE

PARENTING APART : HOLIDAYS & SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Use this form or the blank sheet on the next page to create your own schedule.

	DATE AND YEAR (WRITE THE PICK-UP DATE & TIME TO THE RETURN DATE & TIME IF NECESSARY)	WHERE THE CHILD/REN WILL BE	TYPE & FREQUENCY OF CONTACT BETWEEN CHILD & OTHER PARENT
Example: Parent B'day (Dad)	02/13/09 Friday from 5 P.M. to Sat. 11 A.M.	Grandma Jane's	Text msg. to Mom by 8 pm Fri
New Year's (Eve/ Day)			
Martin Luther King Day			
President's Day			
Passover			
Valentine's Day			
Good Friday			
Easter Sunday			
Mother's Day			
Memorial Day			
Father's Day			
4th of July			
Labor Day			
Rosh Hashanah			
Cinco de Mayo			
Epiphany			
Dia de Muertos			
Yom Kippur			
Columbus Day			
Halloween			
Election Day			
Veterans Day			
Thanksgiving			
Chanukah			
Christmas Eve			
Christmas Day			
Greek/Ukranian Easter			
Child's Birthday			
Parent B'day ()			
Parent B'day ()			
Other B'days: (step family, siblings, grandparents, etc.)			
Ramadan			
Eid al Fitr			
Eid al Adha			
Kwanzaa			
Spring Break			
Winter Break			
Summer Break			

PARENTING APART - *DISCUSSION POINTS*

1. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS CUSTODY:

Custody means 2 things:

A-Where **child/ren live**, known as residency. You may hear “primary residence” or “physical residence”

B-Who makes **important decisions** and has access to records? You may hear “legal” or “decision making”

HERE ARE THE BASIC CHOICES FOR CUSTODY:

Sole (Full) custody	- decision making by one parent, residence with one parent
Joint custody	- shared decision making & access to records, but reside mostly with one parent
Shared custody	- shared decision making, annual parenting time divided exactly 50/50
Split custody	- children divided into different homes, e.g., twin children split into two homes

2. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS ACCESS (PARENTING TIME, VISITATION) * *see Holidays & Special Occasions worksheet*

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| ✓ Weekends | ✓ Summer vacations |
| ✓ Weekdays | ✓ Our birthdays |
| ✓ Holidays / long weekends | ✓ Child/ren's b'days |
| ✓ School recesses | ✓ Other special occasions |

3. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS ACTIVITIES

What activities do our children like to do? What activities need the consent of both parents? What activities have they been involved in? Who will pay? What happens if there's a scheduled event our child wants to attend and it's during the non-custodial parent's time? When will our child/ren make decisions?

4. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS GEOGRAPHIC RESTRICTIONS and CHANGES

What happens if there's foreign and/or out-of-state travel? What about relocating with children, when is the other parent notified about intentions to travel?

5. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS ACCESS TO RECORDS / SCHOOLS / PROFESSIONALS

Who will bring the child/ren to doctors, dentists, who makes appointments, how do we notify one another? Who will be notified of school functions, who will attend parent-teacher conferences?

6. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS HOW WE WILL REACH ONE ANOTHER

What info do we share and how do we contact one another? /Do we require confirmation that a message was received? We need to share addresses, landline and cell phone numbers, email addresses. We need emergency contact info.

7. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS WHEN WE WILL REACH ONE ANOTHER

Notice of changes – how do we notify one another that WE MAY NEED to change a scheduled visit?
how much notice do we give?

How and when is information regarding illnesses and accidents shared?

How often will each parent speak on the phone with the child when apart? What times? What happens if the parent with the child/ren cannot be reached? Will the child/ren have cell phones? SKYPE? Who pays?

8. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS GRANDPARENTS / EXTENDED FAMILY TIME w/CHILD/REN

9. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS SUPPORTING THE CHILD/REN FINANCIALLY

Will we open a child support case, will the money come directly from the non-custodial parent's paycheck?

Who will pay for child care expenses? Who will provide the child care? Who provides insurance? What about elective procedures, dentists, therapists, prescriptions, glasses? Who will pay the co-pay?

10. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS HOW WE WILL HANDLE FUTURE DISPUTES

Will we try mediation first? Will we get attorneys? Who will pay legal fees?



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PARENT HELP

LONG DISTANCE & INTERSTATE

PARENTING APART - *DISCUSSION POINTS*

1. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS CUSTODY: **Custody means 2 things:**
 - A -Where **child/ren live**, known as residency. You may hear “primary residence” or “physical residence”
 - B-**Who makes important decisions** and has access to records? You may hear “legal” or “decision making”

HERE ARE THE BASIC CHOICES FOR DISTANT PARENTING CUSTODY:

Sole (Full) custody	- decision making by one parent, residence with one parent
Joint custody	- shared decision making & access to records, but reside mostly with one parent
Shared custody	- shared decision making, parenting time 50/50 (<i>only for non-breastfeeding/ non-schoolers</i>)
2. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS HOW TO CREATE MEANINGFUL TIME WITH THE NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT
Possible times for longer visits: Holidays (which ones do we celebrate), long weekends, summer vacations
3. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS SPECIAL EVENTS * *see Holidays & Special Occasions worksheet*
What can we come up with to make sure that the child/ren are able, whenever possible, to spend time with the non-custodial parent for important events? What are those important events? What activities and occasions will the non-custodial parent be invited to?
4. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS GEOGRAPHIC CHANGES
What happens if one of us needs to move even farther away? Do we go back to court to modify the order? Can we work things out between us without help, or do we want to go to mediation?
5. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS THE EXPENSES INVOLVED WITH DISTANT PARENTING VISITS
Who will do the driving, will we get a court order, who will pay for the other expenses related to travel (air fare, train/bus fare, etc.). What can we come up with that will not be too stressful on our child/ren. What can we come up with that will not make us feel resentful about the move?
6. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS ACTIVITIES
What activities do our children like to do? What activities need the consent of both parents? What activities have they been involved in? Who will pay? What happens if there's a scheduled event our child wants to attend and it's during the non-custodial parent's time? When will our child/ren make decisions?
7. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS HOW THE CHILDREN WILL COMMUNICATE WITH THE NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT
Will the children communicate via email, webcams, SKYPE, regular mail, texting/ cell phones (who pays). How often will contact be made? What if the child is not willing or able to speak during a scheduled time?
8. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS HOW WE WILL REACH ONE ANOTHER
What info do we share and how do we contact one another? How do we confirm receipt of a message? We will need to share addresses, landline and cell phone numbers, email addresses, emergency contact info.
9. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS WHEN WE WILL REACH ONE ANOTHER
How do we notify one another about the need to change a scheduled visit, how much notice do we give/need? How and when is information regarding illnesses and accidents shared? While we need to agree that day-to-day decisions will be in the hands of the parent who is with the child/ren, what if there's a need for emergency treatment and/or a big decision to be made?
10. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS GRANDPARENTS / EXTENDED FAMILY TIME w/CHILD/REN
How will we find a way to honor step parents and other important parties in the child/ren's lives?
11. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS SUPPORTING THE CHILD/REN FINANCIALLY
Will we open a child support case, will the money come directly from the non-custodial parent's paycheck? Who will pay for child care expenses? Who will provide the child care? Who provides insurance? What about elective procedures, dentists, therapists, prescriptions, glasses? Who will pay the co-pay?
12. WE MAY NEED TO DISCUSS HOW WE WILL HANDLE FUTURE DISPUTES
Will we go to mediation? Will we get attorneys? Who will pay legal fees?





Point out what you have in common: *"We're both worried about [Jessie's cursing]."*

Ask for help: *"I need your input on [the cell phone] problem."*

Ask for advice: *"What do you think about [Chris getting a weekend job]?"*

Be honest about how you're feeling: *"I won't say this doesn't upset me, but I'll listen to you."*

Be UNassuming: *"Are you upset about [what the kids ate at my house]?"*

Admit you got it wrong: *"I misunderstood what you were telling me."*

Take responsibility: *"I shouldn't have said it that way."*

List what you CAN do and plan the rest: *"I can deal with [curfew] now. Can we decide on the [driver's permit when Jamie turns 16?]"*

Acknowledge your responsibilities: *"I know it's my job to work out the [transportation], but can we discuss some details?"*

Take a step back and reflect: *"Why do you think we keep fighting about [Rory's homework]?"*

Melt the blame: *"No one meant for this to happen."*

Don't assume the worst of intentions: *"I know you didn't intend to sound [mean], but when you talk like that I get [sad]."*

Brainstorm together: *"What [bedtime] rules would work for both us and the kids?"*

Admit the limitations: *"We'll never agree about [chores]; maybe we should each do our own thing."*

Drop the defense: *"I know I'm not your favorite person."*

Recognize touchy topics: *"I know it's a sensitive issue, but can we discuss [how Alex disciplines Jordan]?"*

Acknowledge how important the other person is: *"What you say matters to me."*

Bring respect back into the mix: *"I think you're a good parent. I like the way you [talk to] the kids."*

Don't shut down for good: *"Can we talk about this Monday? I need to think about it over the weekend."*

Validate concerns: *"I understand why [you worry] when [I don't answer the phone]."*

Name the other person's value: *"I know [honesty] matters to you."*

Name your own value: *"[Being on time] is important to me."*

Use "I feel _____ statements" GENUINELY:

"I feel [upset] when you [laugh at my cooking] because [the kids have been doing the same thing]."

MY VALUES LIST: WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO ME?

Make a copy for each family member involved in making parenting plan decisions. Each person should circle up to ten important values.

If your child is not old enough to do this, write your child/ren's top values below. Compare all answers.

Then brainstorm: "What plan can we come up with that will honor these values?"

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Accomplishment | Control | Flexibility | Leadership | Persuasiveness | Selflessness |
| Accountability | Coolness | Forgiveness | Legacy | Philanthropy | Serenity |
| Accuracy | Cooperation | Frankness | Lightheartedness | Piety | Seriousness |
| Activeness | Courage | Freedom | Logic | Playfulness | Serendipity |
| Adaptability | Creativity | Friendliness | Love | Popularity | Sex |
| Adventure | Culture | Friendship | Loyalty | Power | Sexuality |
| Aggressiveness | Curiosity | Frugality | Making a difference | Preparedness | Social skills |
| Apologies | Decisiveness | Fun | Manners | Privacy | Solidarity |
| Ambition | Dependability | Generosity | Masculinity | Professionalism | Solitude |
| Approachability | Devotion | Gentleness | Maturity | Public service | Spirit |
| Assertiveness | Discretion | Hard work | Mellowness | Punctuality | Spirituality |
| Beauty | Diversity | Health | Mercy | Quiet | Stability |
| Being the best | Dominance | Honesty | Moderation | Recognition | Social status |
| Belonging | Drive | Honor | Modesty | Refinement | Strength |
| Calmness | Duty | Hospitality | Money | Relaxation | Success |
| Career | Education | Humility | Mysteriousness | Reliability | Support |
| Challenges | Efficiency | Humor | Nutrition | Religion | Tact |
| Charm | Energy | Hygiene | Obedience | Reputation | Teamwork |
| Cheerfulness | Enthusiasm | Idealism | Open-mindedness | Resilience | Thankfulness |
| Clarity | Equality | Independence | Openness | Resolving conflict | Thoroughness |
| Cleverness | Excellence | Identity with place | Optimism | Resourcefulness | Tolerance |
| Commitment | Excitement | Individuality | Orderliness | Respect | Tradition |
| Communication | Extravagance | Integrity | Originality | Responsibility | True to yourself |
| Community | Faithfulness | Intelligence | Outrageousness | Reverence | Trustworthiness |
| Compassion | Fame | Justice | Passion | Role Modeling | Variety |
| Competence | Family | Keeping promises | Patience | Romance | Vision |
| Competition | Fashion | Keeping secrets | Patriotism | Sacrifice | Warmth |
| Confidence | Fearlessness | Kindness | Peace | Safety | Winning |
| Conformity | Femininity | Knowledge | Perceptiveness | Scheduled time | Wisdom |
| Consideration | Financial stability | Lawfulness | Perfection | Security | Work ethic |
| Consistency | Fitness | Learning | Perseverance | Self-respect | Youthfulness |



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Our child/ren's values: