



16TH CIRCUIT COURT – MACOMB COUNTY
PARENTING TIME GUIDELINES

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INTRODUCTION

The Macomb County Circuit Court Family Division and the Friend of the Court are proud to serve the families of Macomb County. It is the obligation and responsibility of each parent to facilitate and encourage parenting time. Both parents should support the other parent's relationship with their children, and children should be encouraged to engage in a relationship with both parents.

Parents may adopt one of Macomb County's standard parenting time schedules for their use. These parenting schedules are guidelines and not an order of the court unless adopted as a one. These schedules may be modified to fit the ages of the children, different religious holidays, distance between the parents, the parents' work schedules, and the individual needs of the children. This is particularly true for parents who do not enjoy traditional Monday through Friday work weeks, and in cases where longer distances separate the parties. In these cases, electronic contact (video and voice calls, texts and e-mails) may be appropriate to assist in maintaining a relationship. In these circumstances, flexibility between the parents is key to success.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PARENTING TIME

1) Parenting Time Priority: Specific holiday, school break, and summer parenting time take priority over the regular schedule. Make-up parenting time (whether court-ordered or mutually agreed upon) takes priority over all other parenting time.

2) Electronic Contact: Reasonable electronic contact (phone, text, email or video call) between parents and children is permitted during the other parent's parenting time. "Reasonable" contact is a brief contact that does not interfere with plans the other parent has with the child during their time. For instance, calls during meal times, right before bed at night or school in the morning can be disruptive for the other parent and cause the parent and child to be late for activities. Parents should discuss the best time for these calls so they are consistent, beneficial and not disruptive to the child's schedule. Parents should also encourage and facilitate contact between the child and the other parent during their parenting time.

3) Belongings: Children's personal items such as toys, clothes, and medicine belong to the children. They should easily go back and forth with the children to and from the parents' homes. Weather and activity appropriate clothing should be provided to and from parenting time. All efforts should be made to return clothing and personal items clean and undamaged. Parents are allowed to set their own house rules for the children's use of belongings they bring with them during their parenting time. For example, parents may prohibit use of cellphones or other electronics during their parenting time, and may ground the child from use of those items for breaking rules, regardless of who paid for the electronic or who pays the phone bill. At the end of their parenting time, parents must still return the item(s) with the child(ren).

4) Special Occasions: Parents should be flexible in allowing children to attend special occasions such as weddings, funerals, and birthday parties for friends and relatives which occur during their parenting time. However, the parent seeking the accommodation must be prepared to provide make-up parenting time in exchange for the accommodation.

5) Timeliness: Parents are expected to be on time for exchanges. Children are disappointed if parents do not arrive as expected, and it is not fun for kids to sit for long periods of time waiting to be picked up. However, it is understandable that unforeseen circumstances (such as traffic accidents, bad weather, and work emergencies) can unexpectedly delay a parent's arrival. If you are going to be late or need a special accommodation on an exchange day, you must be courteous and notify the other parent as soon as you are aware of the delay or change. In these cases, the other parent should allow some flexibility. Unless your order states otherwise, it is generally not considered a violation of a parenting time order if the other parent arrives within 30 minutes of the specified time due to an unexpected circumstance. If a parent is over 30 minutes late and has not timely communicated their whereabouts, then the parent who is waiting is free to go about their business with the child. Every effort should be made however, to facilitate some portion of the parenting time, especially if it involves an overnight or there are extended periods between parenting times. Parents who are routinely late for exchanges are cautioned however, that their parenting time order could be modified to prevent future inconvenience to the child and the other parent.

6) Conduct at Exchanges: Parenting time exchanges are a time for children to be happily greeted by the other parent. They are not the time to discuss bills, child support, co-parenting disputes or personal issues. Information necessary for proper care and success of the child(ren) such as medicines, sleep/ feeding schedules, school activities, and homework should be shared freely. Appointments and other information that you would normally write down or place on a calendar should be shared with the other parent in writing.

INFANT PARENTING TIME SCHEDULES 0-18 MONTHS

INTRODUCTION

Parents of infants should establish a parenting time schedule that is consistent, predictable and routine in nature, as the primary developmental task of an infant is to establish a sense of trust in their environment and the people around them. Depending upon a parent's availability and caregiving history, the noncustodial parent of an infant should have short but frequent parenting time. This allows the infant to build a relationship without overwhelming the infant with too much change in routine and environment. For parents who live far apart, the noncustodial parent of an infant should plan to travel to the residential area of the custodial parent or to a nearby location where the infant feels comfortable. It is important that an infant have consistent nighttime caregiving.

Parents may do the following to help their infant:

- Establish a consistent, predictable and routine parenting time schedule.
- Interact with the child at a location where the child feels secure and comfortable.
- Gradually increase the duration of parenting time.
- Send along personal items such as blankets, stuffed animals and photos of the other parent.

PLAN A

This Plan is best suited where one parent has not been the child's primary caregiver and/or is unable to provide extensive care-giving due to an inflexible work schedule or other circumstances.

1. The noncustodial parent shall have three (3) visits of two (2) hours spaced throughout the week. If the parents cannot agree, then the parenting time shall take place each Monday and Wednesday from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. and Saturday 12 p.m. to 2:00 pm.
2. After nine (9) months of consistent parenting time, the non-custodial parent shall be entitled to additional parenting time consisting of one overnight per week as agreed between the parties. If unable to agree on the day/time, then the parenting time shall take place from Saturday 12 p.m. until the immediate following Sunday 12:00 p.m.
3. Holiday parenting time shall take place on the day of the actual holiday from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. unless specified otherwise. Holiday parenting time supersedes regular parenting time.

Father will have these specified holidays in all odd-numbered years, and Mother will have these holidays in all even-numbered years:

- Memorial Day
- Labor Day
- Christmas Eve
- Easter Sunday

Father will have the following holidays in all even-numbered years and Mother will have these holidays in all odd-numbered years:

- Fourth of July
- Halloween
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

Mother's Day and Father's Day

The child will be with the Mother for Mother's Day and with the Father for Father's Day from 3:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Transition to the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit Court of Michigan Family Division General Parenting Time Schedule

Upon the minor child(ren) reaching the age of eighteen (18) months, absent a court order to the contrary, Plan A shall transition to the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit Court of Michigan Family Division General Parenting Time Schedule on the first Friday following the child(ren) reaching 18 months. Orders containing different terms may be entered by consent of the parties or by filing a motion with the Court.

PLAN B

This plan is best suited for parents who have been involved in the day-to-day care of the child and who want greater contact than is involved in Plan A. This plan may be used when schedules or conflict make more frequent exchanges difficult.

1. The noncustodial parent shall have two (2) six (6) hour visits spaced throughout the week. If the parents cannot agree, then the parenting time shall take place each Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m.
2. After nine (9) months of consistent parenting time, the non-custodial parent shall be entitled to additional parenting time of one evening per week as agreed between the parties. If unable to agree on the day/time, then the parenting time shall take place on Wednesdays from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. In addition, the non-custodial parent shall have one overnight per week as agreed between the parties. If unable to agree on the day/time, then the overnight parenting time shall take place from Saturday 10:00 a.m. until the immediate following Sunday at 4:00 p.m.
3. Holiday parenting time shall take place on the day of the actual holiday from 10:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. unless specified otherwise. Holiday parenting time supersedes regular parenting time.

Father will have these specified holidays in all odd-numbered years, and Mother will have these holidays in all even-numbered years:

- Memorial Day
- Labor Day
- Christmas Eve
- Easter Sunday

Father will have the following holidays in all even-numbered years and Mother will have these holidays in all odd-numbered years:

- Fourth of July
- Halloween
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

Mother's Day and Father's Day

The child will be with the Mother for Mother's Day and with the Father for Father's Day 10:00 a.m. to 7 p.m.

**Transition to the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit Court
of Michigan Family Division General Parenting Time Schedule**

Upon the minor child(ren) reaching the age of eighteen (18) months, absent a court order to the contrary, Plan B shall transition to the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit Court of Michigan Family Division General Parenting Time Schedule on the first Friday following the child(ren) reaching 18 months. Orders containing different terms may be entered by consent of the parties or by filing a motion with the Court.

PLAN C

This plan is best suited for parents who have been involved to a significant extent in the day-to-day care of the child and desire frequent contact.

1. The noncustodial parent shall have three (3) visits of four (4) hours and one overnight spaced throughout the week. If the parents cannot agree, then the parenting time shall take place each Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 5:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. and every Saturday from 10:00 a.m. until Sunday 6:00 p.m.
2. Holiday parenting time shall take place on the day of the actual holiday from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. the following day. Holiday parenting time supersedes regular parenting time.

Father will have these specified holidays in all odd-numbered years, and Mother will have these holidays in all even-numbered years:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| • Memorial Day | • Christmas Eve |
| • Labor Day | • Easter Sunday |

Father will have the following holidays in all even-numbered years and Mother will have these holidays in all odd-numbered years:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| • Fourth of July | • Thanksgiving Day |
| • Halloween | • Christmas Day |

Mother's Day and Father's Day

The child will be with the Mother for Mother's Day and with the Father for Father's Day 10:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.

**Transition to the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit Court
of Michigan Family Division General Parenting Time Schedule**

Absent an order to the contrary, the Infant Parenting Time Schedule shall transition to the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit Court of Michigan Family Division General Parenting Time Schedule on first Friday following the child's first birthday. Orders containing different terms may be entered by consent of the parties or by filing a motion with the Court.

THE 16th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT OF MICHIGAN, FAMILY DIVISION
GENERAL PARENTING TIME SCHEDULE

REGULAR PARENTING TIME

- A. Weekend Parenting Time** - Every other weekend from 6:00 p.m. Friday until 7:00 p.m. Sunday (during the school year), and 8:00 p.m. Sunday (during the summer).
- B. Weekday Parenting Time** – One evening per week from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (9:00 p.m. during the summer months) to be determined by the parties. If unable to agree, it will be on Thursday.

HOLIDAY AND BREAK PARENTING TIME

Holiday and school break parenting time supersedes regular parenting time. Upon holiday or break parenting time ending regular parenting time resumes. Regular rotation for weekends do not change because of holidays or school breaks but remain the same.

If a child is not of school age or is homeschooled, then for all school breaks and holidays, the school vacation schedule of the district where the child resides controls. The holiday and school break schedule may not be appropriate for infants and toddlers and parents may wish to customize the holiday and school break schedule for their children.

C. Holidays

1. **Memorial Day Weekend:** The non-custodial parent shall have the holiday every year from Friday at 6:00 p.m. until Memorial Day at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Labor Day Weekend:** The custodial parent shall have the holiday every year from Friday at 6:00 p.m. until Labor Day at 7:00 p.m.

Father will have the following holidays in all even-numbered years and Mother will have these holidays in all odd-numbered years:

3. **Fourth of July** from July 3rd at 6:00 p.m. until July 5th at 7:00 pm.
4. **Halloween** from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. on October 31st.
5. **Thanksgiving weekend** from 6:00 p.m. the Wednesday evening before Thanksgiving until 7:00 p.m. Sunday.

D. Mother's Day and Father's Day

The child(ren) will be with the Mother for the entire Mother's Day weekend and with the Father for the entire Father's Day weekend from Friday at 6:00 p.m. until Sunday at 7:00 p.m.

E. Christmas/Winter Break

In all odd-numbered years, Father's Christmas parenting time will be from 6:00 p.m. on the last day of the child(ren)'s school until 9:00 p.m. on December 24th. Mother's Christmas parenting time will be from 9:00 p.m. on December 24th until 7:00 p.m. on January 1st. Thereafter, regular parenting time resumes.

In all even-numbered years, Mother's Christmas parenting time will be from 6:00 p.m. on the last day of the child(ren)'s school until 9:00 p.m. on December 24th. Father's Christmas parenting time will be from 9:00 p.m. on December 24th until 7:00 p.m. on January 1st. Thereafter, regular parenting time resumes.

F. Easter/Spring Break and Mid-Winter Break

Father will have the Easter/Spring Break in even-numbered years and Mid-Winter Break in odd-numbered years. Mother will have the Easter/Spring Break in odd numbered years and Mid-Winter Break in even numbered years. Spring and Mid-Winter parenting time begins at 6:00 p.m. the day school recesses and concludes at 7:00 p.m. the evening before the school resumes. **In the event that the Easter/Spring Break is divided into two breaks, the parent awarded Easter/Spring Break for that year will get both breaks.**

G. Summer Parenting Time

Each parent will have a total of three (3) weeks (only 2 weeks consecutive):

- A single week shall consist of seven (7) consecutive overnights to begin on Friday at 6:00 p.m. of your regular alternating weekend.
- A two-week period shall consist of 14 consecutive overnights to begin on a Friday at 6:00 p.m. of your regular alternating weekend.

Parents are to exchange summer parenting time dates with the other parent by May 15th of each year. Failure to submit a summer parenting time request to the other parent will not result in a forfeiture of summer parenting time but may result in the parent who submitted late having to choose alternate weeks. In the event the parents have a conflict with summer parenting time, by having chosen the same weeks, they must timely notify Friend of the Court and the other parent, in writing, of the conflict and a proposed resolution.

H. Extracurricular Activities

Each parent is responsible for taking the child(ren) to extracurricular and sporting activities which are scheduled during their parenting time. Parents should communicate with each other prior to enrolling the child(ren) in extracurricular and sporting activities.

I. Transportation

Unless ordered otherwise, the non-custodial parent shall provide transportation to effectuate his/her parenting time.

J. Children's Birthdays

Parents shall alternate the children's birthday from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with Mother being awarded odd numbered years, and Father being awarded even numbered years. In the event the birthday conflicts with a court ordered holiday or school break, the holiday or school break will supersede the birthday.

K. Relationship to Child Support

A parent may not deny parenting time because child support is behind or not being paid. In addition, a parent may not stop the payment of child support because he/she alleges a denial of parenting time.

L. Same Sex Parents

In the event of same sex parents, Plaintiff shall follow the Mother's schedule and Defendant shall follow the Father's schedule.

JOINT CUSTODIAL TIME SCHEDULES (182.5 OVERNIGHTS)

Unless your Order states otherwise, all joint schedules follow the 16th Judicial Circuit Court General Parenting Time Schedule in regards to holiday parenting time and school breaks. The party receiving the child (at the beginning of his/ her parenting time) provides transportation. Exchanges shall occur at the other parent's residence unless indicated otherwise in your order.

Also, if your regular exchange time is **earlier** than the time specified for the **start** of a holiday or school break, use your regular exchange time. For example, if your pick-up time is normally "after school," but your children have ½ day of school on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, then your Thanksgiving holiday begins when school lets out on Wednesday, not at 6:00 p.m. as stated in the 16th Judicial Circuit General Parenting Time Schedule. Likewise, if your regular drop-off time is "at school on Monday morning" and the 16th Judicial Circuit General Parenting Time Schedule ends at 7:00 p.m. on a Sunday, then follow your regular drop-off at school on Monday. This will avoid unnecessary exchanges for short periods which are more disruptive than meaningful time spent with the children. These schedules may result in the child(ren) being with one parent for an entire week or more depending on how the holidays fall.

OPTION A: 2/5/2 SPLIT (ALTERNATES WEEKENDS)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
DEFENDANT	PLAINTIFF	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	DEFENDANT	PLAINTIFF	PLAINTIFF
PLAINTIFF	PLAINTIFF	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	DEFENDANT	DEFENDANT	DEFENDANT
DEFENDANT	PLAINTIFF	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	DEFENDANT	PLAINTIFF	PLAINTIFF
PLAINTIFF	PLAINTIFF	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	DEFENDANT	DEFENDANT	DEFENDANT

OPTION B: 2/2/3 SPLIT (ALTERNATES WEEKDAYS and WEEKENDS)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
DEFENDANT	PLAINTIFF	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	DEFENDANT	PLAINTIFF	PLAINTIFF
PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	DEFENDANT	PLAINTIFF	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	DEFENDANT
DEFENDANT	PLAINTIFF	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	DEFENDANT	PLAINTIFF	PLAINTIFF
PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	DEFENDANT	PLAINTIFF	PLAINTIFF	DEFENDANT	DEFENDANT

OPTION C: WEEK ON/WEEK OFF

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
DEFENDANT						
PLAINTIFF						
DEFENDANT						
PLAINTIFF						

LONG-DISTANCE PARENTING TIME SCHEDULE

This schedule applies when a parent must travel over 100 miles one-way to pick up the child(ren).

Liberal parenting time for both parents with their child(ren) is encouraged. The court recognizes that, if at all possible, parents should create their own schedule for parenting their children. This sample parenting schedule is available for your review and consideration to assist you in the creation of your own parenting schedule. As parents, you are encouraged to review this schedule to determine what is in the best interests of your child(ren).

1. The non-custodial parent shall have one weekend per month from Friday at 6:00 p.m. through Sunday at 6:00 p.m. If the parties cannot agree on the weekend, it shall be the first full weekend of the month. In addition, if there is a 5th full weekend in any given month the non-custodial parent shall be awarded that weekend from Friday at 6:00 p.m. until Sunday at 6:00 p.m.
2. The non-custodial parent shall have the spring school vacation in even-numbered years. Spring school break is defined as 6:00 p.m. the day school recesses until 6:00 p.m. the day before school resumes. Easter is only included in years that Easter is a portion of the break.
3. The non-custodial parent shall have the first half of the summer school vacation in even-numbered years and the second half of summer vacation in odd-numbered years. Summer vacation is defined as 9:00 a.m. two days after school recesses for the school year until 6:00 p.m. two days before the new school year resumes. A general itinerary shall be provided to the other parent if the child(ren) are on a trip away from either parent's home.
4. The non-custodial parent shall have the Thanksgiving holiday in even-numbered years. Thanksgiving shall be defined as 6:00 p.m. the Wednesday before Thanksgiving until 6:00 p.m. on Sunday.
5. The non-custodial parent shall have the Christmas school vacation in odd-numbered years. Christmas school vacation is defined as 6:00 p.m. the day school recesses until 6:00 p.m. the day before school resumes.
6. Responsibility for transportation costs for Spring, Summer, Thanksgiving, and Christmas parenting time shall be agreed upon between the parties. If there is no agreement as to transportation, then the parties shall file the appropriate motions.
7. The non-custodial parent shall have additional overnight and weekend parenting time upon a minimum of seven days advanced, **written** notice whenever the non-custodial parent is in the geographical area of the child(ren). The custodial parent must cooperate with a reasonable request.
8. Whenever the child(ren) are in the area of the non-custodial parent, the custodial parent must notify the non-custodial parent and offer reasonable time for the child(ren) to be with that parent.
9. The non-custodial parent shall have weekend parenting time whenever the child(ren) has a Friday or a Monday school holiday including but not limited to: Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, Labor Day, and Memorial Day. The non-custodial parent shall be solely responsible for transportation during these parenting time periods. The custodial parent shall provide a copy of the school calendar to the non-custodial parent every fall so that arrangements for extended weekend parenting time can be made in advance.
10. The children shall have reasonable telephone or electronic contact (i.e. Facetime or Skype) with the parent who is not exercising parenting time.