

PARENTING PLANS



Parenting Plans



Oregon Department of Justice

Oregon Child Support Program

Parenting Plans

A parenting plan is a written agreement between parents. It says when a child will be with each parent (parenting time) and how those arrangements are handled. Parents who do not live together can create a parenting plan.

Benefits of a Parenting Plan

- » Children can spend time with both parents on a regular schedule.
- » Parents and children know what to expect, and planning is easier.
- » Parents may have fewer disagreements about contact with the children and major decisions.
- » The parent without custody may feel more involved with and committed to the children.

How to Get a Parenting Plan

There are several options for creating a parenting plan.

- » Use the Oregon Judicial Department's online, interactive interview to create a parenting plan. Go to courts.oregon.gov/programs/family/children/Pages/parenting-plan-guide.aspx
- » Develop a written plan with the other parent.
- » Participate in mediation.
- » Call a lawyer for help. See osbar.org for info about the Lawyer Referral Service.
- » File a petition in court for custody and parenting time.

Mediation and a Parenting Plan

Mediation is a process that helps parents who disagree on issues reach an agreement through a neutral person trained to help in problem-solving. Mediators do not take sides or tell parents what they should do. Mediation may happen with everyone in the same room, in separate rooms, or over the phone. Each county in Oregon has some form of mediation available. Contact the family court in your county to find out what services are available. See the Oregon Mediation Association website at ORMediation.org for additional information.

A mediator can help parents come to an agreement about custody and parenting time. The mediator can:

- » Help parents talk about what will work for their children.
- » Give suggestions about schedules and other details of a workable plan.
- » Try to solve disagreements.
- » Write down an agreement, if reached.



Courts and Parenting Plans

A parenting plan can be just a written agreement signed by both parents. However, a court can force a parent to follow a written agreement only if it is an order signed by a judge in a court case. A written agreement that is not a court order does not establish legal custody rights. Depending on a family's situation, a parenting plan that is also a court order may be best.

You can get a court order by:

- » Contacting the family court in your county to find out if they have county-specific forms to use.
- » Reviewing the forms and self-help info available on the Oregon Judicial Department website at *courts.oregon.gov*.
- » Retaining an attorney to file a petition on your behalf.



Parenting Time and Child Support

In calculating child support, a credit for parenting time can be available. If parents have a signed parenting plan, the Oregon Child Support Program can use that agreement to help determine the appropriate child support calculation.

Keeping Children Safe

The safety of you and your children is important.

- » Professionals such as an attorney or a mediator can work with a parent to handle safety concerns and the child's contact with the other parent. Safety issues can be addressed in a parenting plan.
- » If you have a child support case, contact your local child support office to discuss precautions the program can take when handling your case. Statewide office locations are listed on OregonChildSupport.gov.

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Supporting Parents to Support Children



OregonChildSupport.gov

800-850-0228

