

Parenting plan

For the online and fully interactive version of this plan and guidance on how to successfully complete the plan please visit the Cafcass website, www.cafcass.gov.uk.

A parenting plan is a written agreement worked out between parents (and sometimes grandparents and other family members) after they separate. The plan covers the practical issues of parenting. It asks you to think about your children and, based on their sex, ages and personalities, what they are likely to need. A parenting plan must put the best interests of the child first and set out a shared commitment to your children and their future

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A question about safety

Whilst it is important for children to maintain a loving relationship with both parents, the children's safety and their physical and emotional wellbeing should always come first.

Creating a plan like this is an opportunity to agree how far you can share the roles and responsibilities of parenting. This should always be done with safety in mind.

If any of the following are occurring and you do not feel safe to continue with the parenting plan, then please do not go ahead.

- Any form of domestic abuse or violence
- Any actual or attempted child abduction
- Any child abuse
- The abuse of drugs, alcohol or other substance misuse
- Any other safety or welfare concerns that place anyone at significant risk of harm.

1. Getting started

We are the parents / carers of:

Child's name:	Date of birth:

We respect each other as parents / carers and our significance in the lives of our children.

We have drawn up this Parenting Plan to assist us in providing a loving, stable, caring and safe environment for our children, in line with their age and needs.

Signature of parent/carer:

Date:

Signature of parent/carer:

Date:

2. Before you start

Considering our children's points of view

What our children need and want

Before making any proposals in the parenting plan, use a separate piece of paper to make a list of the things that your children tell you they need and want from any future arrangement. This will be a helpful reminder as you go through and make or review proposals in the parenting plan.

3. Agreements

General statements of responsibility

These statements set out some basic principles that are essential to establish if there is to be a successful outcome to the parenting plan process. Please read carefully and indicate your acceptance or otherwise using the checkboxes below.

Our joint responsibilities

We will keep our children safe and loved even though we are no longer together.
We respect each other as parents and our significance in the lives of our children.
We recognise our children's rights to:

- Emotional and physical safety, stability and security;
- Feel loved by both of us and significant family members;
- Know and be cared for by both of us and significant family members;
- Develop independent and meaningful relationships with each of us.

As parents we accept responsibility for:

- Our children's physical care, health and safety;
- Our children's emotional stability;
- Our children's changing needs as they grow and mature;
- Protecting our children so they are not exposed to harmful parental conflict that is prolonged or aggressive;
- Co-operating with each other to make decisions in our children's best interests; and
- Respecting our children's relationship with each of us.

Our behaviour in front of children

We agree to treat each other with respect and kindness in front of our children.

We must ensure that they know we are trying to work together for them.

Talking about each other in front of children

We agree to only speak positively about each other in front of the children.

We will always try to ensure that our children are not caught in the middle.

Reviewing plan

We agree that our children's needs will change and that this plan may require review to ensure those needs are met.

4. Decision making

General decision making

How will we make decisions on matters that are not specifically mentioned in this plan?

- ☐ All decisions will be made together
- ☐ _____ will make these decisions and inform _____.
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Dispute resolution

How will we settle differences and disputes?

- ☐ Find a time to communicate our differences in a safe way
- ☐ Agree to attend mediation
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Emergencies

What do we do about emergencies, (for example, medical, dental, or accidents)?

- ☐ Address emergency and then contact our co-parent as soon as practical
- ☐ Contact our co-parent straight away
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Rules for children

Are there any important rules that we consider essential for the children, (for example, bedtimes, when homework is done, staying out late)? Do we agree that these rules are followed?

☐ We don't need to address this question

Big decisions

How will we work together to make the big decisions, (for example, school, course selection and careers advice)?

- ☐ All decisions will be made together
- ☐ _____ will make these decisions and inform _____.
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

5. Communication involving children

Children's say

How do we find out what our children want to happen, and make sure that they have a say in what we decide?

- ☐ Write a joint letter to our children asking about their wishes and feelings
- ☐ Schedule a joint conversation to hear what our children want
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Informing the children

How will we talk to our children about the arrangements we have made?

- ☐ Write a letter
- ☐ Share the parenting plan with them
- ☐ Schedule a joint conversation where we all meet up to share our plans and get their feedback
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

How to communicate

When we are not spending time with them, how will we communicate with our children (by phone, text, email etc)?

☐ We don't need to address this question

When to communicate

When is the best time to call/message our children?

☐ We don't need to address this question

6. Communication with each other

Information sharing

How are we going to share important information with each other, (for example, school reports, health issues)?

- ☐ By email
- ☐ In person

- ☐ By phone
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

When to communicate

When is the best time to call/message each other about our children?

7. Living arrangements

Where do our children mostly live?

- ☐ With _____
- ☐ Both
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

School holidays

Where do our children mostly live?

- ☐ With _____
- ☐ Both
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Handover belongings

What clothes, toys and other belongings will be taken and returned at changeover?

Getting around

Who is responsible for taking and collecting the children to and from where they need to be?

- ☐ _____
- ☐ The parent who is spending time with the children
- ☐ We don't need to address this question

☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Holidays

Will we both have holiday time with the children?

Pets

Are there arrangements needed for the family pets?

8. Childcare

Alternate carers

If neither of us can look after our children, who will be the alternative carers?

External care

Will anyone else look after our children (for example, childminders, babysitters, relatives, new partners, friends and neighbours)? If so, when?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, no one else will look after the children
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

9. Community, culture, family ties

Support network

How do we make sure that our children stay in contact with supportive friends and relatives, including grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins?

Sibling time

How do we make sure that our children have enough time with their brothers and sisters?

Special days

How do we make sure that our children can share special days, for example, birthdays and religious festivals, with both of us?

New partners

How will we introduce new partners into our children's lives?

Note: You and your co-parent are encouraged to have a discussion about how this information will be shared, when and by whom.

Religious practice

What do we agree about religious practice and upbringing?

Cultural issues

Are there any other cultural issues that we need to make sure are respected?

Extracurricular commitments

Are there any sporting or artistic commitments that we need to account for?

10. Education

School notices

How will we arrange with schools that notices, reports, invitations and other materials are sent to both of us?

- ☐ Ensure school has contact information (phone, email, addresses) for both of us
- ☐ Set up a joint email account
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

School involvement

How can we each get involved in school life?

School communication

Do we need to contact school about our situation, and its impact on our children, so that they can be supported in school as needed?

- ☐ Yes, we will
- ☐ No, we don't need to
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ Add any other comment or proposal here

11. Health

Routine health issues

Who organises routine health appointments and treatment?

- ☐ _____
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Long term health issues

How will we meet any additional health needs, including long term or emergency care?

12. Money

Day-to-day costs

How will we share day-to-day costs for clothes, school trips and larger items like computers and musical instruments?

- ☐ _____ is responsible
- ☐ Even split between us
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Pocket money

How will pocket money be handled?

- ☐ _____ will be responsible for pocket money
- ☐ Even split between us
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Change to our finances

Add additional arrangements below:

13. Other

Add additional arrangements below: