

NEW GUIDELINES VISITS

EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2023

PARENTING PLANS

When implementing temporary or permanent parenting plans, it is the court's desire to encourage a strong relationship of both parents with their children. In addition to the court utilizing the factors under RCW [26.09.187](#) and [197](#), the court may consider the following guidelines for residential time.

(a) Alternate Residential Guideline. The court is not required to follow this guideline, but may use the following schedule as a guideline in setting residential time, based on the child's age:

- (1) *Zero months to one year:*
 - (A) Three hours, two times per week and six hours, once per week.
 - (B) Overnight residential time is not usually recommended.
- (2) *One year to five years:*
 - (A) Two hours, twice per week; and alternating weekends from Saturday at 9:00 a.m. until Sunday at 6:00 p.m.
 - (B) The holidays listed in the parenting plan form should be alternated even/odd for each year to allow each parent to have half of the holidays each year. Each holiday visit shall be for eight hours. This shall also include Easter, Halloween, and any other significant holidays for the parents.
 - (C) Summer residential time: Two non-consecutive one-week periods. Unless otherwise stated, Summer Schedule shall start based on the school schedule where the primary parent resides.
 - (D) If there has been a lack of relationship or inconsistent contact in the past, the parenting plan may include a phased-in schedule of increasing time.
- (3) *Five years and older:*
 - (A) Every other weekend from Thursday after school (or at 6:00 p.m. if there is no school that day) until Sunday at 6:00 p.m. If Monday is a school holiday, the weekend ends Monday at 6:00 p.m.
 - (B) Two weekday visits on the alternative week from the end of school (or 5:30 p.m. if there is no school) until 7:30 p.m.
 - (C) The preference of the court is that holidays should be split equally.
 - (i) Spring Break: Each parent has the children for the half of break attached to their weekend. The children must be exchanged on Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.
 - (ii) All holidays which create three-day weekends shall be included in the time for that parent's weekend.
 - (iii) The parents shall alternate Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays on an even/odd year rotation consistent with Winter Break (below).

(iv) Winter Break: One parent's residential time starts from the day school lets out until Christmas day at noon. The other parent shall have the remaining portion of the winter break with the school schedule resuming the day before school is scheduled to return.

(v) Parents shall alternate all other holidays including Easter, Halloween, and any other significant holidays for the parents.

(D) Summer residential time: Week on / Week off schedule.

(b) Father's/Mother's Day. Regardless of the residential times suggested above, the mother shall have residential time of at least eight hours on Mother's Day, and the father shall have residential time of at least eight hours on Father's Day.

(c) Birthdays. Each parent shall be allowed to spend at least four hours with the child to celebrate the child's birthday, and that parent's birthday, within two days of that birthday.

(d) Telephone/Video Contact. Reasonable telephonic or video conferencing contact with the child is usually appropriate, and should not be less than once per week for each parent during that parent's nonresidential time.

(e) Different Age Groups. When children of different age groups are involved, the preference shall be to follow the guideline for the oldest child, so that the children remain together.

(f) Cancellation. For visits, the primary parent shall make the child available for 30 minutes after the scheduled starting time. If the other parent does not pick up the child within that time, then the visit shall be deemed canceled.

(g) Exchange Times. All times listed above shall be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the parents' work schedules.

(h) Best Interests. These provisions are designed to encourage each parent to maintain a loving, stable, and nurturing relationship with the child. Each parent shall encourage the parent/child relationship of the other parent, and shall make residential arrangement decisions which are in the best interest of the child.

(i) Records. Both parents shall have equal access to medical and school records. Both parents shall be listed as emergency contacts whenever these are required.

[Adopted effective September 1, 2020; Amended effective September 1, 2023.]