

In the following example, the child spends significant periods with each parent.

While this option maximizes the time each parent has with the child, some children may have difficulty being away from the other parent for more than three days.

This option provides the children with equal time with each parent.

- Parent A has every Monday morning until Wednesday morning; Parent B has every Wednesday morning until Friday evening.
- Parents alternate weekends from Friday evening until Monday morning.



TIPS TO MAKE YOUR PARENTING PLAN SUCCESSFUL:

- Be cordial. Be a role model to your children by showing respect for each other as parents.
- Do not speak negatively about the other parent especially in front of your children.
- Respect the other parent's time with the children. Do not schedule activities during the other parent's time without prior agreement with the other parent.
- Be on time. Make sure all parenting plan changes are by mutual agreement. Notify the other parent if you are going to be late.

For copies of this and other brochures in the "Creating a Parenting Plan" series, contact Family Court Services at (213) 830-0835

To schedule a mediation appointment and for the online Our Children First Program go to: www.lacourt.org

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Creating A Parenting Plan

Children Three to Five Years



FAMILY COURT SERVICES



HOW TO PLAN FOR A CHILD FROM THREE TO FIVE YEARS OLD

Children in this age group are similar to younger children in that they need a consistent and predictable schedule and routine. They have not yet developed a concept of time. Long absences from one parent may create stress for them and they may continue to experience anxiety at separation from their primary caregiver. Some children may experience nightmares and show other signs of fearfulness about unfamiliar activities, places or people. These behaviors are typical of this age group and not necessarily indicative of problems with one or both parents.

Children may resist going with the other parent and may even become tearful at the transition from one parent to the other especially if they have seen their parents becoming hostile, tense and argumentative with one another. Helping to ease your child's anxiety at the transitions is key.

- Help your child express feelings such as fear, sadness and anger.

- Follow a predictable schedule to make transitions easier for your child.
- Provide your child structured time with other children in order to develop social skills and learn to feel safe and happy away from both parents.
- Allow your child to take a favorite toy when going between homes or between home and school. Transitional objects can be a source of comfort for children in this age group.
- Introduce change gradually.
- Consider having exchanges occur at school.
- Limit communication with the other parent in front of the child especially if your relationship with the other parent is likely to be tense or hostile.

SAMPLE SCHEDULES

These examples serve as a reference and may not fit the needs of all families.

In the following examples, the child resides in one home primarily but has predictable periods of time with the other parent.

Sample 1:

This sample ensures that the child has weekly contact with the non-residential parent.

- Every Saturday or Sunday for eight to ten hours.
- One weekday for a period of up to four hours.

Sample 2:

This sample provides the non-residential parent the opportunity to be involved with the child's bedtime rituals.

- Alternate weekends from Saturday morning until Sunday evening.
- One weekday for a period of up to four hours.

Sample 3:

This sample allows parents to be actively involved with pre-school and kindergarten activities.

- Alternate Friday evening until Sunday evening.
- One weekday for a period of up to four hours or one mid-week overnight from after school until the next morning before school.