

## Sample 2:

This option may work well for families where parents live far apart or where a parent's work schedule or other factors make mid-week contact between the child and the non-residential parent impractical.

- Alternate Friday evening until Sunday evening or Monday before school.

**In the following examples, the child has significant periods with both parents.**

## Example 1:

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

- Parent A has every Monday before school until Wednesday before school; Parent B has every Wednesday before school until Friday after school.
- Parents alternate weekends from Friday after school until Monday before school.

## Sample 2:

This option minimizes transitions so that the parent assuming care and the child can settle into a routine before the week begins.

- Parents alternate weeks from Friday after school until the following Friday after school.

## TIPS TO MAKE YOUR PARENTING PLAN SUCCESSFUL:

- Assure regular contact for each parent by following a consistent time-sharing schedule.
- Establish telephone rituals so that your child can maintain frequent contact with the other parent.
- Protect your child from exposure to parental conflict, especially at the time of exchange.
- Never use your child as messenger or spy. Establish a means of communicating with the other parent such as e-mail or letters, so that your child does not become the messenger.
- Keep adult matters and court issues away from your child.

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

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# Creating A Parenting Plan

Children Ten to Thirteen Years



FAMILY COURT SERVICES



## HOW TO PLAN FOR A CHILD FROM 10 TO 13 YEARS OLD

These years in a child's life mark a significant transitional period when the child may feel he or she is no longer a child, yet not fully a teenager either. At times the child may crave the security that comes from family connections, while at other times behave dismissively toward one or both parents. In contrast, peer relationships are growing in importance. Children of this age are also learning to master social rules, express their feelings and improve academic skills. They are able to understand readily time and schedules and the rules and expectations of each parent. These children may also have different relationships with each parent and prefer one parent to assist in one area and the other parent to help in another area.

When faced with their parents' separation or divorce, children in this age group may be angry or embarrassed by what they see as the break-up of their family and may attempt to resolve the crisis by siding with one parent and blaming the other parent. They often have an intense desire to please their parents and to have a plan that seems "fair."

Where there is high conflict between the parents, these children may feel overwhelmed and frustrated because

they are unable to fix the problems. Some children may act out by failing in school, lying or stealing. Others may attempt to be "perfect" and provide companionship to one of the parents. Physical complaints like stomach aches and headaches are also common.

To help your child through this transition, consider these factors when creating a parenting plan:

- Develop a neutral, child-focused and age-appropriate explanation for the separation or divorce.
- Encourage pre-teens to express their feelings about the separation or divorce.
- Reassure your child that the problems between you and the other parent are not his or her fault.
- Introduce changes slowly and provide opportunities to discuss changes in advance.
- Support your child's need to spend time with the other parent and allow your child to express positive feelings about the other parent.
- Allow your child to express his or her thoughts or concerns about the schedule, but be clear that you and the other parent together will make the final decision.
- Consider your child's school and extracurricular activities when making the schedule. Many children in this age group have busy social and school schedules which

depend on the parents being available to transport them to school and other events.

- Help your child balance time among parents, other family commitments, friends, school and outside activities.
- Seek the assistance of a counselor if your child refuses to see the other parent.

### SAMPLE SCHEDULES

These examples serve as a reference and may not fit all families. Options for younger children may also be suitable for this age group.

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

#### Sample 1:

This option keeps the non-residential parent involved with school and extra-curricular activities; limits contact between parents with all transitions occurring at school; and provides both parents the opportunity to participate in morning and bedtime routines.

- Alternate Friday evening until Sunday evening or Monday before school.
- One mid-week overnight from Wednesday after school until Thursday to school.