



Breaking up – Parenting Plans

A Canadian Bar Association series supporting legal wellness

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This Legal Health Check gives tips for making a parenting plan setting out how children's care might be shared after separation. Parenting plans can be brief or detailed, depending on the needs of the child(ren) and the parents' circumstances. They can be an informal guide, or they can be part of a written agreement or court order.

When you develop a parenting plan, consider:

- the age of each child
- each child's specific needs for time with each parent
- whether the child is old enough to voice their own wishes
- whether there are other children (step brothers or sisters, etc) or extended family members who should have ongoing contact with the child

Include things like:

- Who makes decisions
 - Some decisions may be made by one parent alone. Others may be made by both parents together. Consider decisions on education, medical care, childcare, schooling, religion, cultural celebrations and extracurricular activities, as some examples.
- Time each parent has with each child
 - Beyond the regular schedule for parenting, you may want to include time the child spends with each parent during special occasions, holidays and birthdays. Some parents may prefer to be less formal if they are able to talk about these events as they come up without a specific schedule.
- Details about travelling with the child.
- Some parents even include financial arrangements for the child in the parenting plan.

For more information on creating a parenting plan, see: Justice Canada:

<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fl-df/parent/plan.html>

A family law lawyer can assist you to develop a parenting plan that will meet your child's needs.

For links and resources, visit cba.org/healthcheck



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