Parallel Parenting Plan Template

A fill-in worksheet with the topics parallel parenting plans often spell out: one channel for messages, reply times, exchanges, who decides what, getting information directly, schedule changes, events, and what happens when parents disagree. Every line is a blank or a [placeholder]: blanks and neutral placeholders only; it does not say what to ask for or agree to.

Your court's form and your current order come first. Many courts require their own parenting plan form or specific wording, and some of these topics may already be decided in your current order. A filled-in worksheet is not an order. Check your court's forms page or self-help center, and consult a licensed attorney where you live if you can.

If there is abuse or a protective order. Parallel parenting is a structure for high conflict, not a safety plan. If a protective or no-contact order is in place, its terms on contact and exchanges come first. Do not put anything in this worksheet that conflicts with that order. A local domestic violence advocate can help with safety planning. In danger? Call 911. National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788 (thehotline.org).

How to use it

- Fill in only the topics that apply. Cross out the rest or write "Not covered".
- Write exact details where you can: days, times, places, numbers of hours.
- Use the same names for people and places all the way through.
- Put a draft date and version number on every copy, and keep each version.
- Don't sign or submit anything you don't understand. Ask for time, or ask a licensed attorney where you live.

Plan details

Parents: [Parent A full name] ("Parent A") and [Parent B full name] ("Parent B")

Children: [first names or initials, and birth years]

Case number, if any: [_____] Draft date: [_____] Version: [__]

1. Communication between the parents

Channel for non-emergency messages: [for example: email / a named co-parenting app] _____

Topics messages cover: _____

Reply time for non-emergency messages: _____ hours

What counts as an emergency: _____

How an emergency is communicated: _____

Length or format limits for messages, if any: _____

2. Exchanges

Regular exchange days and times: _____

Exchange location(s): [for example: school, childcare, a named public place] _____

Who provides transportation: _____

Lateness: how many minutes, and what happens after that: _____

Other adults who may do pickups or drop-offs: _____

Items that travel with the children (medicine, school things, devices): _____

3. Decisions

Day-to-day decisions during each parent's own time are made by: _____

Education decisions are made by: _____

Non-emergency medical, dental and counseling decisions are made by: _____

Activities: how they are chosen, and how costs are shared: _____

Religious upbringing, if the plan addresses it: _____

How a joint decision is proposed (channel, what the proposal includes) and the reply deadline: _____

If the parents disagree: _____

4. Information about the children

School: each parent's access to the portal, teachers and reports: _____

Medical: each parent's access to providers and records: _____

Activities: how schedules are shared: _____

Handoff update at each exchange (what it covers, how it is sent): _____

Travel: notice, itinerary and contact details shared before a trip: _____

5. Schedule changes

How a change is requested: _____

Notice needed: _____ days for planned changes; _____ hours for short-notice changes

Reply deadline: _____ If there is no reply by then: _____

Make-up time for missed parenting time, if the plan addresses it: _____

6. The children's contact with the other parent

Calls or video chats during the other parent's time (days, times, length): _____

Who sets up the call, and on which device: _____

7. Events and activities

School events, games and performances: who may attend, and arrival or seating arrangements: _____

Birthdays and celebrations: _____

Activities that fall during the other parent's time: how they are scheduled, who takes the children: _____

8. Conduct

What the plan says about passing messages through the children: _____

What the plan says about discussing the case or the other parent in front of the children: _____

Social media posts about the children or the case: _____

New partners (introductions, overnight guests), if the plan addresses it: _____

9. Reviewing the plan

When the parents will look at how the plan is working: _____

How changes to this plan are made: _____

Informal notes on this worksheet do not replace a court order. Check how orders are changed where you live, or ask a licensed attorney.

Regular schedule and holidays

This worksheet covers how parents communicate, exchange and decide. Write the regular parenting time schedule and the holiday schedule separately or attach them. The free holiday schedule worksheet and custody calendars at custodycommander.com/templates have blank layouts for both.

Notes and open questions

General template for organizing your own information. It is not legal advice and not a court-approved form. Court rules and required forms vary by state and county, so check your court's local rules and self-help center. Doing this by hand takes hours: Custody Commander organizes evidence, builds your timeline and exports court-ready PDFs. Free plan with no card, or try Full Suite free for 7 days, at custodycommander.com.