

TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
FAMILY LAW DIVISION

Instructions and Overview
For Your
BASIC PARENTING PLAN*

(These instructions are intended to be used while completing a Basic Parenting Plan)

**Legal matters can be very complex. If you have questions or concerns about the use of these forms, instructions, or your legal rights, it is strongly recommended that you talk to an attorney. All instructions and forms distributed by the Twelfth Judicial Circuit are provided merely to serve as a guide. The Twelfth Judicial Circuit does not guarantee that either the instructions or the forms will achieve the result desired by the parties or ensure that an individual judge will follow the procedures exactly or accept each and every form drafted. Any person using these forms and/or instructions does so at their own risk, and the Twelfth Judicial Circuit shall not be responsible for any losses incurred by any person in reliance on the instructions and/or forms.*

For best results, complete the assessment in the 12th Judicial Circuit's "Instructions and Assessments for your Parenting Plan" prior to using the Basic Parenting Plan.

Step One: Getting Started

1. Before you fill in any part of the Basic Parenting Plan, you should make a copy of the blank form. Save this copy for when you are ready to fill out a final version to file with the Court.
2. At the top of the first page fill in the county where the plan is being filed or where the original action took place. This is the County of original jurisdiction, Sarasota, Manatee, or DeSoto.
3. On the top left side of the page, fill in the names of the Petitioner and the Respondent on the lines provided. If you have an existing court case, use the labels and names as they appear on the original documents filed with the court. If you do not have an existing court case, then it does not matter who is the petitioner or respondent until the case is filed.
4. On the top right side of the page, enter your case number and division, if you have one. If the Parenting Plan you are submitting is agreed upon by both parents, write "Both" otherwise, fill in the name of the parent who is proposing the Parenting Plan where it says "Parenting Plan of:".

Step Two: Identification of the Parties

1. List the names of the Father and the Mother; as well as, their contact information.
2. List the minor children involved in this parenting plan, including their date of birth, current address, and future address, if known, or if the address is unknown then a location (ex. Albuquerque, New Mexico).
3. List any minor children that are not addressed by this plan. Include their date of birth, who they live with (ex. Aunt, Grandfather, etc.) and address.

Step Three: Choose your Options

A. Contact Section

Weekly Contact: Determine when your child(ren) will be in the care of each parent. Create a schedule for weekdays and for weekends. Also indicate whether this schedule will continue during the summer, or if you will have a different schedule for the child(ren) during the summer months.

Holiday Contact: Determine how the child(ren) will be spending time during holidays. Fill in the blanks by writing the appropriate parent's name to show where the child(ren) will be for the holidays. You may add other special occasions you celebrate below the printed list. Remember to write in beginning and ending dates and times if the selected option has blanks.

Summer Contact: Remember if you are agreeing to a schedule other than one provided options, remember to clearly explain the terms of your agreement.

B. Communication Section

Virtual Communication: Select all options that apply. Remember to write in specific days and times that communication will take place or number of times per week, etc.

Communication: List the means of communication. (Ex. Unrestricted, phone, email, etc.)

C. Exchange and Travel Section

Carefully read all of the options in each of the sections and check ALL that apply. Fill in the appropriate blanks and describe in detail your plan for exchanging the child(ren).

D. Information Sharing Section

Provide each parties' complete information. Review the information provided, about sharing information between parents, school and involvement in other activities.

E. Other Terms Section

Describe any other provisions you would like to include in your parenting plan.

F. Dispute Resolution

Decide whether you will agree to resolve any disputes that may arise in the future through mediation or other means.

Step Five: File with the Court

If the plan is proposed by only one parent, then that parent alone should sign. If the plan is agreed to by both parents, both parents must sign the parenting plan and have their signatures witnessed by a **notary public** or **deputy clerk**. After completing the plan, you should file the original plan and a Notice of Filing with the Clerk of Court in the county where the petition was filed and keep a copy for your records. **NOTE:** If an agreed parenting plan is not filed by the parties, the Court shall establish a plan.

Even if you and your child(ren)'s other parent are unable to come to an agreement on a parenting plan, please complete the assessment to determine which parenting plan may be right for your family. Purchase the appropriate parenting plan from the Clerk of Court, or download the plan from the 12th Judicial Circuit's website at www.jud12.flcourts.org. Prepare as a draft in the event your case is referred to mediation.

The Do's and Don'ts of Parenting
Both Parents

DO:

- Maintain healthy communication with your child(ren).
- Make it a priority to communicate regularly with the other Parent.
- Religiously follow the parenting plan to make the process routine, easy and positive for your child(ren).
- Strive to keep your word to the child(ren).
- Contact the other Parent immediately if there is an emergency involving the child(ren) while they are with you.

DON'T:

- Be uncooperative. The child(ren) will suffer consequences if their parents do not cooperate.

Parent A

(The parent with whom the child has more time-sharing)

DO:

- Share information about school, teachers, activities, friends and relatives with the other Parent.
- Be flexible and supportive of the child(ren)'s relationship with the other Parent.
- Encourage excitement for the anticipated communication and/or travel with the other Parent.

DON'T:

- Edit, coach, monitor, or otherwise interfere with the child(ren)'s communication with the other Parent.
- Take it personally if the child(ren) do not wish to call you regularly when they are with the other Parent.