

The Benefits of a **SHARED CUSTODY SCHEDULE**



Clients are often surprised to hear that the courts favor a custody schedule that gives equal time to both Mom and Dad. Of course, not every set of circumstances allows for or would warrant a finding for shared custody. But, if it is possible, the law, judges, and many, if not most, practitioners favor this arrangement, and here is why:

1. It benefits your children: Studies have shown that children are best served when they equally share their time between the homes of two divorced or separated parents, rather than living with just one parent. Of course, there are still challenges to the child/children. The back and forth can

be very stressful. But, it has been shown that children have better emotional health, perform better academically, have fewer behavioral problems, have better physical health, and form more meaningful relationships with parents, stepparents and grandparents when they equally share their time with both parents. Additionally, a shared parenting arrangement means that your children are able to grow up with the influence of both parents. Each is likely to bring different strengths to the table, and a combination of influences will allow children to flourish developmentally.

2. It benefits you: Being a parent can take its toll on you, both physically and mentally. However, a joint custody arrangement gives parents that much-needed “time off” to enjoy some personal days. Whether your idea of “me time” is catching up on some much-needed sleep, reading a good book, or getting back out into the dating scene, having that time is healthy for your own well-being.

3. It encourages cooperation between parents: Sharing custody does not guarantee that the two parents are going to get along. But, it does encourage parents to work together to try to come up with the best solution for their child/children. When one parent has primary or sole custody, he or she often “runs the show” and does not feel the need to cooperate with the non-custodial parent.

4. It allows for cost sharing: In a joint custody arrangement, parents are much more likely to share in the daily costs incurred on behalf of the child/children. Why? Because a child’s needs tend to arise organically, and on a daily basis. Rather than one parent paying for these constant extra expenses, as would be the case in a single-parent scenario, shared custody requires both parents to contribute when these expenses pop up during their custody time. So whether it’s the glue and pencils your child needs for class, or money for the school field trip you just found out about, a shared custody arrangement certainly gives rise to the opportunity for sharing these expenses.

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