

Our Family Plan

Our Family Plan is a written agreement to support a co-parenting approach that covers the practical issues for your child. It allows you to set out a plan with your co-parent over arrangements and includes your child.

The plan should help your child to learn about what to expect on a day-to-day basis, or over the course of the next few years. It has a specific focus on what, where and who is important to them, and encourages you all to think about what makes your family special and unique.

Co-parenting relationships should use communication which is focused on improving the experiences for your child. However if this still feels like a difficult process for you try and take stock of how you feel, and remember that this process is about finding ways to put your child first.

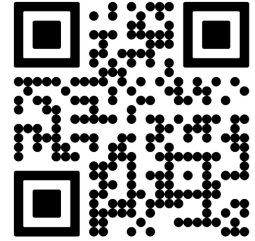
1. Getting started

Our Family Plan for:

Child's name:	Age:

We respect each other as parents / carers and our significance in the lives of our children.

We have drawn up this Our Child's Plan to assist us in providing a loving, stable, caring and safe environment for our children, in line with their age and needs.



2. Before you start

Considering our children's points of view

What our children need and want

Before proceeding it is important for you to think about your child's needs, and to consider how those needs can best be met now and in the future.

First and foremost, this is a plan that aims to make sure your child is as happy as they can be.

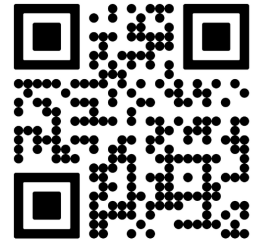
Step 1: Ask your child if they have any activities they want you to be aware of when planning spending time with you and your co-parent. Ask them when they'd like to see friends and family members, and what they would like to be included in the plan.

Step 2: Make a note on the next page of your child's responses - this will be used to remind you of what is most important as you proceed through the plan.



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3. Agreements

General statements of responsibility

What's this?

Co-parenting can be stressful, worrying, and overwhelming. If you have felt these things, then your child will have too. This is why it is important that both parents agree to some basic principles when thinking about creating Our Child's Plan together.

Please read the statements below carefully and indicate your acceptance or otherwise using the checkbox below.

Our joint responsibilities

We will keep our children safe and loved even though we are no longer together.

We respect each other as parents and our significance in the lives of our children.

We recognise our children's rights to:

Emotional and physical safety, stability and security;

Feel loved by both of us and significant family members;

Know and be cared for by both of us and significant family members;

Develop independent and meaningful relationships with each of us.

As parents we accept responsibility for:

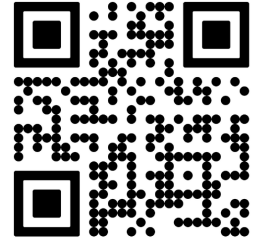
Our children's physical care, health and safety;

Our children's emotional stability;

Our children's changing needs as they grow and mature;

Protecting our children so they are not exposed to harmful parental conflict that is prolonged or aggressive;

Co-operating with each other to make decisions in our children's best interests; and



Respecting our children's relationship with each of us.

☐ I agree with the statement above

Our behaviour in front of our child

We agree to treat each other with respect and kindness in front of our child.

We must ensure that they know we are trying to work together for them.

☐ I agree with the statement above

Talking about each other in front of children

We agree to only speak positively about each other in front of our child.

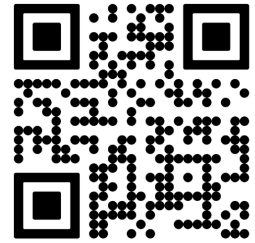
We will always try to ensure that our child is not caught in the middle.

☐ I agree with the statement above

Reviewing plan

We agree that our child's needs will change and that this plan may require review to ensure those needs are met.

☐ I agree with the statement above



4. Decision making

General decision making

How will we make decisions on matters that are not specifically mentioned in this plan?

Note

It is not possible to agree a plan which will cover all eventualities. Sometimes, things will happen which are not addressed in Our Child's Plan.

- ☐ All decisions will be made together
- ☐ _____ will make these decisions and inform _____.
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Dispute resolution

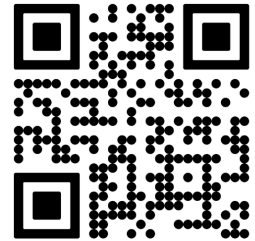
How will we settle differences and disputes when we are finding it hard to reach agreement or when conflict keeps arising?

- ☐ Find a time to communicate our differences in a safe way
- ☐ Agree to attend mediation
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here



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Emergencies

How will we manage emergencies? This could include medical or dental emergencies, crime, a death in the family, or a child going missing

- ☐ Address emergency and then contact our co-parent as soon as practical
- ☐ Contact our co-parent straight away
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Rules for children

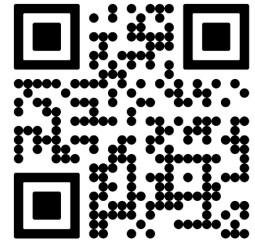
What are the important family principles we both agree to uphold across our child's family homes (such as around school work, screen time, bed times and so on)?

Note



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Remember, different parents care for their children in different ways. Exactly how we care for our child may differ, but it might help them to learn about our shared views on some important things.

☐ We don't need to address this question

Big decisions

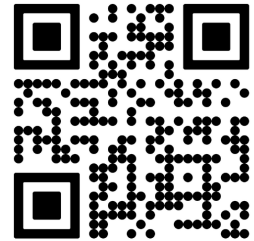
How will we work together to make the big decisions? These could include choosing nurseries or schools, choosing a caregiver or nanny, making large purchases such as mobile phones.

☐ All decisions will be made together

☐ _____ will make these decisions and inform _____.

☐ We don't need to address this question

☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here



5. Communication involving children

Involving our child in decision making

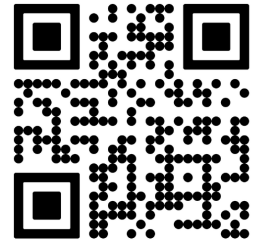
How do we find out what our child wants to happen, and make sure that they have a say in what we decide?

Note

Our Child's Plan is more than just the plan for day-to-day life, but a way to show your child how you are working together for them. To do this, you need to have a good understanding of what is really important to your child otherwise they may feel that they have been misunderstood. This could leave them feeling worried, upset or confused. You might want to tell your child that you are working hard to agree on a plan which will help them enjoy all the things that are important to them, and invite them to think about what they would like included in their plan. Or, you might want to let them know that you have not always got things right, but you are sorry, and that they are loved by all of their family, which is why you are creating Our Child's Plan.

Remember that they may have worries, questions or opinions. By supporting them to understand how positive it is that you are creating a plan together, they will feel reassured.

- ☐ Write a joint letter to our child asking about their wishes and feelings
- ☐ Schedule a joint conversation to hear what our child wants
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here



How to communicate

How we will each stay in touch with our child when we are not spending time with them?

Note

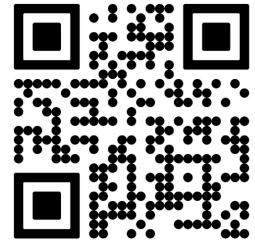
Some children may want to keep in regular contact with their parent when they are not with them, and some will not. Some children enjoy sending and receiving messages, and some prefer to video call. Before you make arrangements about how you want to keep in touch with your child, think about what your child wants and ask them about it. It is very important that any agreement you and their other parent make about this does not place a burden on your child. For example, sticking to day-to-day arrangements that make them unhappy or that they will find too hard to stick to. Younger children might find it difficult being on video calls for a long time, or older teenagers often leave their phones on silent and miss calls.

Think creatively: your child might enjoy receiving a 'goodnight' message to their phone each evening, but may need your acceptance that they don't always have to reply. A younger child might like to watch a pre-recorded short video message from you, but might be too nervous to be recorded for a reply.

☐ We don't need to address this question

When to communicate

When is the best time to call or message our child when we are not spending time with them?



☐ We don't need to address this question

6. Communication with each other

Information sharing

How are we going to share important information with each other, (for example, school reports, health issues)?

Note

It is important to identify an agreed way to communicate that feels comfortable for one another, and will benefit your child. Agreeing ways to communicate and share updates can help build trust.

List the key things you think should be communicated (updates about health and education or things to celebrate or possible worries) but remember, there may be other things too which you cannot plan for.

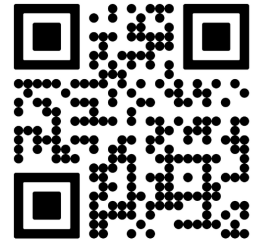
☐ By email

☐ In person

☐ By phone

☐ We don't need to address this question

☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here



When to communicate

When is the best time to call/message each other about our child?

☐ We don't need to address this question

7. Living arrangements

Where our child mostly lives

Who does our child live with most of the time?

☐ With _____

☐ Both

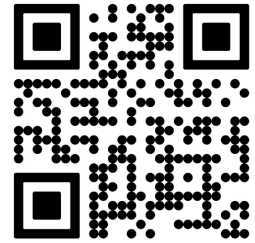
☐ We don't need to address this question

☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here



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School holidays

What are the arrangements for our child during school holidays, bank holidays and teacher training days (not including religious festivals or special occasions)?

Note

You may want to think about helping your child to spend longer periods of time with both of their parents, to allow for trips or holidays for example. Both parents should be flexible with holiday arrangements.

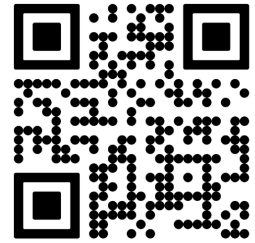
☐ We don't need to address this question

Handover belongings

What special items like a teddy or blanket does our child have? How will these, or items like schools bags and books, be shared across our homes?

☐ We don't need to address this question

Getting around



What will the arrangements be for our child moving between their homes?

Note

What will feel most natural for your child? Remember that these arrangements should allow your child to feel that you and their other parents are working together. Avoid arrangements that might make your child feel uncomfortable, such as meeting in unfamiliar places. Collecting your child or dropping them off at their home might help your child to see that their family is working together.

- ☐ _____ is responsible for taking and collecting our child to and from where they need to be
- ☐ The parent who is spending time with our child is responsible for taking and collecting them to and from where they need to be
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Holidays

Will we both have holiday time with our child and how will we agree the arrangements around holidays, trips or special events?

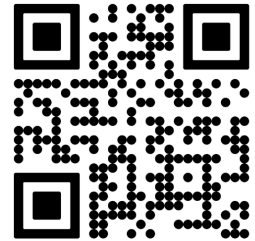
Note

Your child will likely want to attend their friends' parties or other special events which might impact the usual arrangements. You need to be flexible and respectful when accommodating things that are important to your child.



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☐ We don't need to address this question

Pets

Do we need to make any arrangements for the family pets?

☐ We don't need to address this question

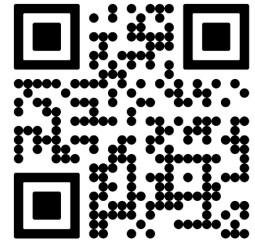
8. Childcare

Alternate carers

If neither of us are available to look after our child, who else can help out?

☐ We don't need to address this question

External care



Will anyone else look after our child (for example, childminders, babysitters, relatives, new partners, friends and neighbours)? If so, when?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, no one else will look after the child
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

9. Community, culture, family ties

Support network

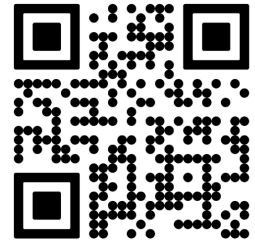
How will we help our child to keep in touch, spend time with and feel close to the people who are important to them?

Note

Show your child that you respect their relationships with other people by making decisions that you can stick to. You might be specific about arrangements for some people, and less for others.

- ☐ We don't need to address this question

Sibling time



How will we make sure our child spends time with their brothers and sisters?

☐ We don't need to address this question

Special days

How will we help our child to celebrate special days with the people who are important to them, such as celebrating birthdays or special religious events and festivals?

Note

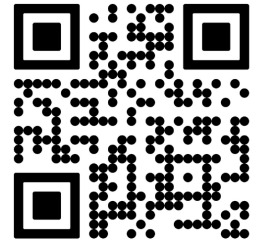
Remember that your child might have a different view about who and what is special to them. When you make decisions about special occasions, think about your child and the impact that this will have on them

☐ We don't need to address this question

New partners

How will we introduce new partners into our child's life?

Note



You and your co-parent are encouraged to have a discussion about how this information will be shared, when and by whom.

☐ We don't need to address this question

Religious practice

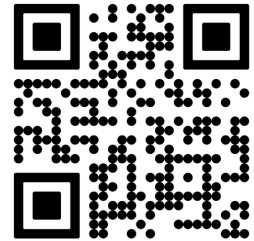
What do we agree about religious practice and upbringing?

☐ We don't need to address this question

Cultural issues

What else do we need to consider about our child's culture and identity?

☐ We don't need to address this question



Extracurricular commitments

What else is important to our child that we need to agree on?

Note

Think about what is important to your child, such as swimming lessons, music lessons, or even the days that they usually see certain friends or relatives. Time children spend in their communities is really important to their identity.

☐ We don't need to address this question

10. Education

School notices

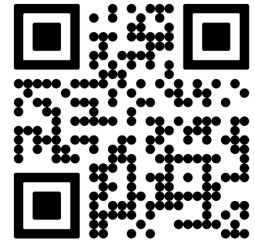
How we will arrange with schools that notices, reports, invitations and other materials are sent to both of us?

☐ Each provide school with our own up-to-date contact information (phone, email, addresses)

☐ Set up a joint email account

☐ We don't need to address this question

☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here



School involvement

How can we each get involved in school life?

☐ We don't need to address this question

School communication

Do we need to contact school about our situation, and its impact on our child, so that they can be supported in school as needed?

☐ Yes, we will

☐ No, we don't need to

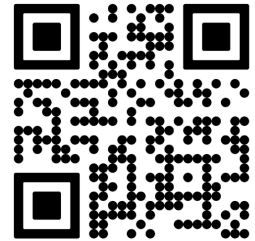
☐ We don't need to address this question

☐ Add any other comment or proposal here

11. Health

Routine health issues

Who organises routine health appointments and treatment?



☐ _____

☐ We don't need to address this question

☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Long term health issues

How will we meet any additional health needs, including long term or emergency care?

☐ We don't need to address this question

12. Money

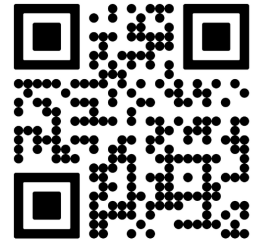
Day-to-day costs

How will we share day-to-day costs for clothes, school trips and larger items like computers and musical instruments?

☐ _____ is responsible for day-to-day costs for clothes, school trips and larger items

☐ Even split between us for day-to-day costs for clothes, school trips and larger items

☐ We don't need to address this question



☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Pocket money

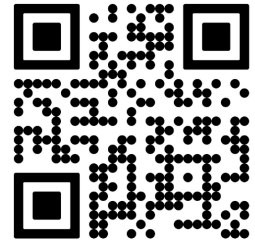
What are our arrangements for pocket money?

- ☐ _____ will be responsible for pocket money
- ☐ Even split between us
- ☐ We don't need to address this question
- ☐ If a different arrangement is proposed describe it here

Change to our finances

What will we do if our financial positions change, so that we can think about any impact on our child?

☐ We don't need to address this question



13. Other

Add additional arrangements below: