

Michigan Parenting Time Guideline

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Parenting Time

Parenting time is time set aside by court order for a parent and child(ren) to spend together in the absence of a contrary agreement by the parties. Michigan law recognizes that it is in the best interests of the child(ren) that parenting time occur in a frequency, duration, and type reasonably calculated to promote a strong relationship between the child(ren) and the parent. To this end, parenting time should be on a regular schedule with specific consistent starting and ending times for the ease of the parties and child(ren) in planning their schedules. Ideally, orders should provide for changing needs of the child(ren) and changes in the parties' schedules. Parties should adopt parenting time schedules that are flexible and expansive while keeping in mind their child(ren)'s need for certainty and stability. When the parties adopt a schedule, the courts normally will not interfere with the schedule unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The sample schedule presented in this guideline is based upon the most commonly used schedules across the state. Specific days and periods of time have been chosen for ease of use. Specific parenting time is designated to occur with fathers in some years and mothers in other years in order to promote uniformity and ease of use across the state. Parties should develop a schedule that best accommodates their own families' situation. Whenever possible, the parents should attempt to begin parenting time immediately after school is dismissed for the day when parenting time occurs on a weekday during the school year. If this cannot be arranged, or, if the parties cannot agree, the specific times in the sample schedule (or another specific time to which the parties can agree) should be used. Although the parties may agree to use the sample schedule, or it may be necessary to use the sample schedule because the parties cannot agree, the preferred schedule is one that the parties develop themselves.

A. Alternating Weekend Parenting Time

Parenting time shall occur on alternating weekends from 6:00 p.m. Friday evening until 6:00 p.m. Sunday evening.

B. Weekday Parenting Time

Parenting time shall occur one evening per week from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on a day of the week to be determined by the parties. If the parties cannot agree on a day, the parenting time shall occur on Wednesday evening.

C. Holiday Parenting Time

The father shall have parenting time in years ending in an odd number and the mother shall have parenting time in years ending in an even number for the following holidays:

1. Memorial Day weekend beginning 6:00 p.m. the Friday of the weekend and ending 6:00 p.m. Memorial Day.
2. Labor Day weekend beginning 6:00 p.m. the Friday of the weekend and ending 6:00 p.m. Labor Day.

The father shall have parenting time in years ending in an even number and the mother shall have parenting time in years ending in an odd number for the following holidays:

3. Fourth of July beginning 6:00 p.m. on July 3rd and ending 9:00 a.m. on July 5th.
4. Thanksgiving weekend beginning 6:00 p.m. the Wednesday evening before Thanksgiving and ending 6:00 p.m. the Sunday evening following Thanksgiving.

In addition to these holidays, the parents may choose to alternate up to 4 other religious or secular holidays to the extent they are not already alternated by application of other parts of this schedule.

D. Spring, Summer and Winter (Christmas Break) Parenting Time Schedule.

1. Spring Break

The father shall have parenting time in years ending in an even number and the mother shall have parenting time in years ending in an odd number for the Spring break. Spring break parenting time shall occur during the spring break of the school district in which the child(ren) resides from 6:00 p.m. the day school is scheduled to recess until 6:00 p.m. the day before school is scheduled to resume.

2. Winter (Christmas Break)

In years ending in an odd number, the father shall have parenting time from 6:00 p.m. on the date that the school district in which the child(ren) resides recesses for winter break (Christmas break) until 9:00 p.m. December 24 and the mother shall have parenting time from 9:00 p.m. December 24 until 6:00 p.m. the day before school resumes again in the school district in which the child(ren) resides. Thereafter the normal parenting time schedule shall resume.

In years ending in an even number, the mother shall have parenting time from 6:00 p.m. on the date that the school district in which the child(ren) resides recesses for winter break (Christmas break) until 9:00 p.m. December 24 and the father shall have parenting time from 9:00 p.m. December 24 until 6:00 p.m. the day before school resumes again in the school district in which the child(ren) resides. Thereafter, the normal parenting time schedule shall resume.

3. Summer Break

The non-custodial parent shall have parenting time commencing the first Friday after the Fourth of July at 6:00 p.m. and continuing for four weeks until the fourth Friday at 6:00 p.m. During this period, the custodial parent shall exercise weekend parenting time beginning on the second Friday at 6:00 p.m. and ending on Sunday at 6:00 p.m.

E. Mother's Day and Father's Day

The child(ren) shall be with the mother the entire weekend of Mother's Day and with the father the entire weekend of Father's Day from 6:00 p.m. Friday until 6:00 p.m. Sunday.

F. Phone Contact

When the child(ren) is in the care of the non-custodial or custodial parent for an extended period of time (e.g., one week), the child(ren) shall have the right to contact with the other parent by telephone or Internet. The frequency of the contact should be established on a case by case basis. When establishing the contact schedule it is important to consider the age and the maturity of the child(ren). With a school age child(ren), the contact should be at a minimum of once per week for a time that is appropriate for the child(ren)'s age.

If a child(ren) will be vacationing or residing at a location different from the usual location, the other parent should be informed of a telephone number, address and the means to contact the other parent in case of an emergency.

G. Other Parenting Time Options

Other parenting time options include the child(ren)'s birthday and an option for the non-custodial and custodial parents to be the first choice as a child care provider in the event one is needed.

H. Holiday Parenting Time To Take Precedence Over Other Scheduled Time

Whenever a more specific holiday parenting time is scheduled, it shall take precedence over any regularly scheduled parenting time. When the holiday schedule concludes, the alternating weekend schedule shall be resumed according to the pre-existing plan as if it had not been interrupted.