

SUGGESTED VISITATION/TIME-SHARING GUIDELINES

The following information was taken from Court Clinic Services "DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN OF DIVORCE" brochure. This information is given to you as a guideline in setting-up your visitation/time-sharing plan. For a complete copy of this brochure, contact the Court Clinic Services Division at the Second Judicial District Court.

INFANTS (0 to 6 months)

One primary home with consistent care giver. No overnights away from primary care giver. Frequent short visits (2 to 4 hours) at least three times a week with the non-primary parent.

INFANTS 6 to 18 months One primary home and regular time with the other parent. If the child knows the other parent and has spent regular periods of time with him/her, then the child can begin to spend longer times (4 to 6 hours) away from the primary home. This can gradually increase to 8 hour periods up to three times a week. The child's behavior should be monitored to determine adjustment and need for change.

TODDLERS (18 months to 3 years) After age 2 may tolerate up to one overnight every other week with other parent if that parent has been an active and regular participant in the child's life. The schedule should continue to be predictable with frequent contact with the non-primary parent in order to maintain a strong relationship.

PRESCHOOLERS (3 to 6 years) Schedule should continue to be predictable and consistent. If a parent has been an active participant, then start with one overnight every other week plus full day visits on the alternate week and evening/dinner visits between these contacts. The child's behavior should be monitored for signs of stress when changes are made. Adjustments should be made to ensure the child's comfort level.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN (6 to 10 years) Most appropriate schedule will depend on the child's relationship with both parents, child's temperament, and developmental progress. This age can tolerate 50/50 time-sharing plans IF both parents are in agreement that it is a good idea; the parents live in close proximity so the child can go to school from both homes easily and maintain peer relationships; the parents have similar parenting styles; and the parents are able to communicate well to avoid being manipulated by the child.

PRE-ADOLESCENCE (11 to 12 years old) The parents must be aware of the child's schedule and routine. While some can continue on the schedule for the elementary school child, others may need to move toward one primary home or long periods of time between transitions.

ADOLESCENCE (13 to 18 years old) Flexible schedule that shows respect for the adolescent's needs first and the parent's second. Usually adolescents prefer one home and spending flexible time with the other parent.