



## Parenting Plan Template

Dear Friend:

I know you will find my Parenting Plan Template to be an invaluable tool in helping you make decisions about how you will parent your children now that you have made the decision to divorce.

And if you find yourself caught in the middle of a nasty custody battle, my parenting plan template may be just what you need to gain better control of the situation and resolve it more quickly and equitably....

I developed this parenting plan template based on over 200 custody evaluations I have conducted during the past five years. One of the things I consistently observed was that parents lacked the ability to make REALISTIC long term plans for their children.

This parenting plan template will get you started. If you run into any problems or have questions, please email me at [rsommer@shaw.ca](mailto:rsommer@shaw.ca) .

My best to you!

*Dr. Reena Sommer*

**(REPLACE ALL OF THE  
ABOVE WITH YOUR  
OWN IDENTIFYING  
INFORMATION)**

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# **Parenting Plan Template**

## **“Jones Family”**

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For the purpose of this template, I am using the “Jones Family” in a generic sense.

Substitute it with your own family name – You may also want to include a photo (s) of your family/family members here!

## The “Jones Family”

### **How to Modify This Report – What You Need to Know Before Starting!**

This template will guide you in developing and creating your own individualized parenting plan. Because no two families are alike, there is no “one” parenting plan that will identify and address all of the needs for all families. This template will serve as a directive to assist you in creating your own individualized parenting plan that will reflect the individuality of your family.

One of the most important features of an effective parenting plan is that it must be understood by any adult reading it. This parenting plan should educate and familiarize any reader about your family situation. Although the main purpose of this document is to motivate a settlement between you and your ex-spouse (who of course does not need to be educated about your family), it should also be kept in mind that a judge may also be reading it. So when developing your parenting plan, keep in mind the different people and audiences that may be involved. In other words, this document may likely serve a number of purposes.

- 1) You will find a number of headings in this document. These headings will form the backbone or framework of the document. They will direct how you will formulate your individualized parenting plan.
  - 2) Remember that when writing your parenting plan, do your best to keep things factual when describing your past and current family situation as well as your children’s needs. In other words, do not embellish the text with editorial comments. Most importantly, be particularly careful about injecting your own opinions and ideas about your spouse.
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On the other hand, you are welcome to express your personal views regarding your expectations and plans for your children. But in doing so, DO NOT badmouth your ex-spouse. This will not encourage a settlement and will not win you any points with a judge.

Judges recognize that the main reason couples decide to divorce is because they do not see ‘eye to eye” and/or they no longer respect each other’s viewpoint. This is a “given” in divorce proceedings. It is therefore not necessary to focus on the differences between you unless they have a direct bearing on your children’s wellbeing.

This document is not about your marital problems, the reasons why your marriage broke down or your ex-spouse’s inadequacies. If you feel a need to identify some specific problems within your ex-spouse, address them as concerns and not as complaints.

- 3) Keep in mind that unless there is a reason why your children should not have a relationship with your ex-spouse (i.e., abuse, mental health, criminal and /or drug history that impairs their ability to parent safely), then your parenting plan should reflect your children’s right to maintain a relationship with both parents. Keep in mind as well that “joint custody” (i.e., both parents maintaining legal custody of the children) is theoretically the norm.
- 4) The presentation of your parenting plan will have a tremendous impact upon how it is received by others, particularly a judge. Make sure that it is formatted using this template, is free of spelling and grammatical errors, and is easy to read and understand.

Before submitting it, have a friend review it for content and meaning. If you so desire,

## **Family History**

Here is your opportunity to provide a brief history of your family (1-2 pages). Introduce yourself, your ex-spouse and your children. Focus on the following issues:

- 1) When & where you met – where you were in your careers/occupational status at the time
- 2) When your relationship deepened – marriage/cohabitation
- 3) Describe your extended family and social support network
- 4) Where you resided when you started your family – did you move often
- 5) Describe your family routine pre-separation – division of labour, activities for the children, income splitting, religious and social activities, educational preferences if any etc
- 6) Discuss any special challenges that may have existed in your family (i.e., age disparities, health, occupational, financial, learning disabilities etc)

## **Parenting Philosophy**

Here is your opportunity to talk about the things that are important to you regarding the future care/parenting of your children. Make sure that it is focused on the children's needs and your ability to meet those needs.

As indicated previously, keep in mind the court's preference for joint custody and ensuring that children maintain relationships with both parents. You may also want to talk about discipline and how your children's needs will likely change across time.

This is your opportunity to describe your hopes and dreams for your children as well as your values and attitudes about things that will affect

them. In this section you will be able to establish the basis for what follows in the action “plan” that follows.

A page or two at the most should do it.

## **Parenting Schedules**

Here is where you can talk about the “nuts & bolts” of your parenting plan. This is where you lay out the logistics of how you will meet your children’s needs. Keep in mind that if you want to be successful in motivating a settlement, you will need to provide more than one option for parenting your children.

I would suggest that you provide 3 basic option plans which in the end can be considered alone or together. If you do it this way, you will demonstrate your ability to be flexible, your concern for your children and your willingness to go beyond “black and white” thinking (“it’s my way or the high way” thinking).

Using a graphical or tabular format works best in laying out the parenting schedules. These will condense what would otherwise take several pages to explain.

You should limit yourself to one page per schedule option.

## Conclusion

Here is where you can add some emotional commentary about your children, their needs and the importance of developing a plan that will pave the way for their future. This can be done in a paragraph or two.

Your entire document should not exceed 10 pages. The saying “less is more” definitely applies here. Since yours is not the only case the judge will oversee, he or she does not want to be saddled with tons of paperwork.

Keep it brief, concise, accurate and presentable.

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Feel free to include photos of yourself, your ex-spouse, your children, grandparents, your home, your pets and anything else you feel are important. You can either insert scanned photos within the text or attach them in an appendix at the end of your document.

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To assist you with your custody related concerns & specifically, with learning ways to cope more effectively with parental alienation...

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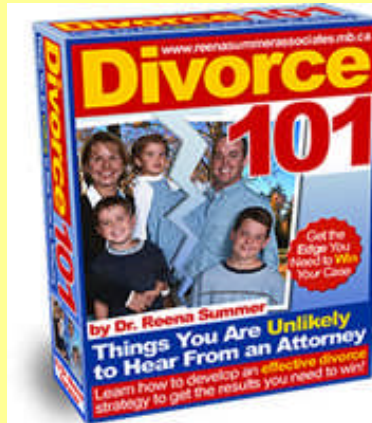


Or, to ensure that you get the most out of your Parenting Plan, you may wish to consider purchasing the “How to Develop an Effective Parenting Plan” ecourse which comes with two one-hour teleseminars, an expanded version of the parenting plan template and many bonus offerings.

[ORDER NOW](#)

If found my Parenting Plan Template helpful  
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