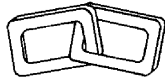


INTERACTION CONSULTANTS



After separation, what about the kids?

Determining the ongoing care of children between separated parents can be a source of conflict. Parents worry about who is responsible for what decisions and they fret about developing a residential schedule between them. Further, in the run up to developing a plan, they can get caught in a battle of wills, believing one or other parent must be responsible for all major decisions. They start talking about child custody with both parents starting to scare the other.

Truth is, most parents are in agreement on the larger issues. Most parents would agree that if their child needed medical attention, they would follow through. Further, most parents agree on the need for education and thus seek to have their child continue at school. So for most parents, it tends to be the nitty-gritty issues rather than the big ones that really require sorting out.

The Parenting Plan Worksheet has been developed for just that purpose. A 12 page document, it has been developed by social worker, Gary Direnfeld, with the input of hundreds of other social workers, and family lawyers worldwide.

The benefit of the Parenting Plan Worksheet is that it helps parents discuss, negotiate or mediate the ongoing care of their children. Parents simply fill in the blanks and spaces provided to develop their unique version.

Even if parents are concerned about a parent's alleged substandard care or have concerns about abuse, drugs or alcohol, all

these issues can be addressed and spoken to within the parenting plan.

By concentrating on the nitty-gritty and finding solutions to issues arising, parents can actually avoid requiring blanket statements on matters of child custody. Hence, neither parent feels left out of the life of their child although there still may be conditions, restrictions or expectations to enable certain responsibilities and/or time with the child.

For more information about the Parenting Plan Worksheet, go to:

<http://www.yoursocialworker.com/s-articles/PPW.htm>

Get you copy, fill it in on your own or with the other parent. Use it as a tool for discussion, negotiation or mediation. If necessary, take it to your lawyer to serve as the basis of your position when sorting matters out with the other side. It just may lead to an easier agreement.

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Gary Direnfeld is a social worker. Courts in Ontario, Canada, consider him an expert on child development, parent-child relations, marital and family therapy, custody and access recommendations, social work and an expert for the purpose of giving a critique on a Section 112 (social work) report. Call him for your next conference and for expert opinion on family matters. Services include counselling, mediation, assessment, assessment critiques and workshops.