

## VISITATION GUIDELINES

### A. ACCESS

1. Both parents shall be liberally permitted at reasonable hours to have telephone contact with the minor child at the expense of the calling parent. The custodial parent may call the child at reasonable hours during those periods the child is on visitation. The child may call either parent at reasonable hours and with reasonable frequency at the cost of the parent being called if it is long distance. Neither parent shall refuse to answer the phone or turn off the phone in order to deny the other parent telephone contact. If a parent uses an answering machine, messages left on the machine for the child should be returned as soon as possible.

Should a conflict arise between the parties as to what constitutes reasonableness, the non-custodial parent shall have phone contact with the minor child at least once a week but not more than twice a week. The custodial parent shall have contact with the minor child during periods of visitation at least once on the weekend when the non-custodial parent is exercising visitation. Should the non-custodial parent be exercising five or more continuous days of visitation, the custodial parent shall have the right to contact the minor child by phone at least once a week but not more than twice a week. Should the parties be unable to establish a time and frequency of the phone calls, this court will, upon motion of either party, establish specifics as to such phone calls.

2. Both parents should be allowed all reasonable postal access to the child; further, both parents are expected to transmit letters and packages to the child in their physical custody.

### B. VISITATION

1. 0 to 18 months: Children of this age should have one primary residence to insure maximum stability and consistency. Experts do not recommend overnights with the non-custodial parent. Frequent, but short visits by the non-custodial parent are very important. Visits should occur, ideally, two or three times per week. Although this may present some inconvenience for the parents, it is very important that strong bonds be established at this age with both parents through frequent contact.
2. 18 months to 3 years: As the child becomes older, he or she can have overnight visitation with the non-custodial parent, but the visitation should be no longer than one overnight per month per year of child's age. If the non-custodial parent can demonstrate sufficient parenting skills, more liberal visitation is encouraged.
3. From three (3) years of age until the child enters

first grade, the non-custodial parent shall have visitation with the minor child on alternating weekends from Friday at 6:00 p.m. until the following Sunday at 6:00 p.m. In addition to alternating weekend visitation rights, the non-custodial parent shall have visitation rights on major holidays as follows:

- (a) **THANKSGIVING:** In every even numbered year the non-custodial parent shall have visitation with the minor child from 6:00 p.m. the day before Thanksgiving until the following Sunday at 6:00 p.m.
  - (b) **CHRISTMAS/NEW YEARS :** In every odd number year thereafter, non-custodial parent shall have rights of visitation with the minor from December 20 at 6:00 p.m. until Christmas Day at 6:00 p.m. In 2000 and every even numbered year thereafter, non-custodial parent shall have rights of visitation from 6:00 p.m. on Christmas Day until January 2 at 6:00 p.m. Should the child be attending school, the beginning of the visitation shall begin at 6:00 p.m. on the day that the child's school recesses for the Christmas holiday and such visitation for New Years shall end at 6:00p.m. on the day before the child's school reconvenes following such Christmas/New Years break.
  - (c) **EASTER:** In every even numbered year the non custodial parent shall have visitation with the minor child from 6:00 p.m. Friday before Easter until Easter Sunday at 6:00 p.m.
  - (d) **SUMMER VISITATION:** The non-custodial parent shall have four weeks visitation with the minor during the summer months beginning on July 1st. The custodial parent shall have two weekend visitation periods during the four weeks.
4. After the child begins school in the first grade, in addition to the alternating weekend, Thanksgiving, Christmas/New Years, Easter, and Summer visitation as set forth below, the non-custodial parent shall have Spring Break visitation with the minor child beginning in the first even numbered year after his first year of school and each even numbered year thereafter from 6:00 p.m. the day the child's school recesses for Spring Break until 6:00 p.m. the day prior to that upon which the child's school reconvenes.
- (a) **SUMMER VISITATION:** In addition to the above described visitation, after the child begins school in the first grade, non-custodial parent shall have summer visitation with the minor child beginning seven (7) days after the child's school recesses for the Summer Break beginning 6:00 p.m. and ending

6:00 p.m. seven (7) days prior to the child's school reconvening following such summer break. While non-custodial parent is actually exercising summer visitation: Non-custodial parent's child support payments shall be reduced by one-half per month during the months of June and July each year, but in no event will it be reduced below \$100 per month; the custodial parent shall have seven (7) days with the minor child to coincide with that parent's vacation from employment; and, further, the custodial parent shall have alternating weekend visitation rights with the minor child while non-custodial parent is exercising his summer visitation. Custodial parent is to give the non-custodial parent reasonable notice as to when they will exercise their one week visitation which will coincide with their vacation from work, but no less than thirty (30) days actual written notice.

5. **ADDITIONAL VISITATION:** In addition to all of the visitation herein and above set forth;

- (a) The child shall be with the mother every Mother's Day weekend and with the father every Father's Day weekend beginning and ending on the time set forth for the child's age.
- (b) The non-custodial parent shall have visitation with the minor child on the child's birthday for two (2) hours, not to interfere with a scheduled party.
- (c) Non-custodial parent shall have rights of visitation with the minor child at all such other times as may be agreed upon by the parties. The court is of the opinion that the preservation of the parent-child relationship is paramount to the child's best interest and welfare. The joint custodians of the minor should amicably confer regarding any necessary modifications of, or adjustments in, the visitation schedule herein set forth.

6. **RULES AS TO VISITATION**

- (a) When there is a conflict between a holiday visitation and a regular weekend visitation, the holiday visitation takes precedence and the regular weekend visitation shall not be made up.
- (b) Should the parent exercising visitation live less than 100 miles from the residence of the minor child, the parent exercising visitation shall pick up the child at the beginning

of the visitation and return the child at the conclusion of the visitation. Should the minor child live more than 100 miles from the noncustodial parent, the visitation herein and above set forth and other provisions in reference to the minor child should be modified by this court upon proper motion of either party.

- (c) Neither parent should expose the child to any immoral or illegal activity.
- (d) Both parents should be sensitive to the danger of exposing the child to any harmful condition, such as cigarette smoke, riding in an automobile without a safety belt, and the like. These goals should not, however, be used to deprive the non-custodial parent of visitation.
- (e) Neither parent should speak or act in a derogatory or disrespectful manner concerning the other parent. Further, both parents, should strongly urge their families to treat the other parent and families with respect. Neither parent should use the children to transmit important information (visitation changes, child support arrears, payment problems, etc. ) between the parents. Both parents should refrain from discussing adult matters and conflicts with the children. Children have a right to love both parents and neither parent should interfere with that relationship.
- (f) Both parents should realize that child support and visitation problems can be, and will be, enforced by the court; however, the custodial parent cannot deny visitation when the non-custodial parent is not paying child support; moreover, the non-custodial parent may not refuse to pay child support when being denied visitation.
- (g) The child(ren) and/or the custodial parent have no duty to await the non-custodial parent for more than 30 minutes of the visitation time. A parent late for more than 30 minutes who has not notified the other parent that he/she would be late shall forfeit that visitation period.