

BARRY COUNTY FRIEND OF THE COURT



STANDARD PARENTING TIME SCHEDULE AND GUIDELINES

Adopted by the Barry County Trial Court – Family Division

Effective April 1, 2023

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the Michigan Supreme Court, State Court Administrative Office Friend of the Court Bureau, and the Michigan Parenting Time Guideline Advisory Committee adopted an updated parenting time guideline ([Michigan Parenting Time Guideline](#)). The Barry County Friend of the Court believes that the new guideline is an excellent source of information for parents. The Barry County Trial Court encourages parents read the manual and discuss the important information it provides. This manual encourages parents to work together to develop a parenting time schedule that meets their children's needs.

The guidelines also address what parents should and should not do to ensure that all of the child's needs are met on a physical and emotional level for their age group. A child's development is an essential aspect of any parenting time schedule. The new guideline encourages the parents to use effective communication to help facilitate a positive co-parenting relationship.

However, the Court and the Friend of the Court acknowledge that there are times when parents are not able to work together in a positive manner. Therefore, the Court has adopted a default schedule as a guideline. The following is the revised standard parenting time schedule when parties are unable to agree. This guideline is divided into sections based on child development recommendations laid out in the Michigan Parenting Time Guideline. If a family has multiple children in different stages of development, a specific schedule may be required to address the different age groups.

****** This default guideline is provided as a tool and it is not the law. Please visit michiganlegalhelp.org or consult with a licensed attorney to address any legal questions you may have. ******

STANDARD PARENTING TIME SCHEDULE BY AGE GROUP

For families without any special consideration or safety concerns

Birth to 6 Months:

- 3 to 4 visits per week for 2 to 3 hours (not to interfere with the infant's feeding schedule)
 - Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 9:00 am to 11:00 am or 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm (depending on work schedules)
- Each Holiday for 2 to 3 hours, such as 9:00 am to 11:00 am.

6 Months to 12 Months:

- 3 to 4 visits per week up to 4 hours (not to interfere with the infant's feeding schedule)
 - Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm or 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm (depending on work schedules).
- Each Holiday up to 4 hours, such as 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

12 Months to 18 Months

- Alternate Weekends (no overnights) – Saturday and Sunday 9:00 am to 6:00 pm.
- Weekday – Each Tuesday and Thursday 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm
- Alternating Holidays (no overnights), such as 9:00 am to 6:00 pm

18 Months to 3 Years:

- Alternate Weekends – Saturday at 9:00 am to Sunday at 6:00 pm
- Weekday – Each Tuesday and Thursday 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm.
- Alternating Holidays (no overnights) – 9:00 am to 6:00 pm

3 Years to 5 Years:

- Alternate Weekends – Friday at 6:00 pm to Sunday at 6:00 pm
- Weekday – Each Tuesday and Thursday 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm
- Alternating Holidays – standard holiday schedule
- Extended Parenting Time – standard extended parenting time schedule

5 Years to 18 Years:

- Alternate Weekends – Friday at 6:00 pm to Sunday at 6:00 pm
- Weekday – Wednesday 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm
- Alternating Holidays - standard holiday schedule
- Extended Parenting Time – standard extended parenting time schedule

STANDARD HOLIDAY PARENTING TIME SCHEDULE

Holiday parenting time shall take precedence over regularly scheduled parenting time. Additionally, if a parent's holiday parenting time either precedes or follows his/her regularly scheduled parenting time, then parenting time shall be one continuous period of parenting time.

HOLIDAY	ODD YEARS	EVEN YEARS
Easter (Sunday at 9:00 am to 6:00 pm)	Mother	Father
Memorial Day (Friday at 6:00 pm to Monday at 6:00 pm)	Father	Mother
July Fourth (07/04 at 9:00 am to 07/05 at 9:00 am)	Mother	Father
Labor Day (Friday at 6:00 pm to Monday at 6:00 pm)	Father	Mother

Thanksgiving (Wednesday at 6:00 pm to Friday at 9:00 am)	Mother	Father
Christmas Eve (12/23 at 6:00 pm to 12/24 at 9:00 pm)	Father	Mother
Christmas Day (12/24 at 9:00 pm to 12/25 at 9:00 pm)	Mother	Father
Mother's Day (Sunday at 9:00 am to 6:00 pm)	Mother	Mother
Father's Day (Sunday at 9:00 am to 6:00 pm)	Father	Father

STANDARD EXTENDED PARENTING TIME SCHEDULE

Extended parenting time shall take precedence over regularly scheduled parenting time. Additionally, if a parent's extended parenting time either precedes or follows the regularly scheduled parenting time, then parenting time shall be one continuous period of parenting time. During their extended parenting time, each parent is responsible to provide appropriate childcare and ensure the child's attendance in any extracurricular activity or education activity that the child is required to attend.

Standard Spring Break Extended Parenting Time

- Spring Break is defined as beginning the day that school is dismissed at 6:00 pm and ending the Sunday prior to school commencing at 6:00 pm.
- The mother shall have spring break parenting time in the odd numbered years.
- The father shall have spring break parenting time in the even numbered years.

Standard Summer Break Extended Parenting Time

- Summer Break is defined as beginning on the Friday after the last day of school at 6:00 pm and ending on the Friday prior to the first day of school at 6:00 pm.
- The Non-Custodial Parent shall have three separate seven (7) consecutive overnights from Friday at 6:00 pm until the following Friday at 6:00 pm.
- The three weeks cannot be consecutive.
- The Non-Custodial Parent shall provide the other parent with the specific dates for extended summer parenting time in writing by 5:00 pm on May 1st each year, with a copy to the Friend of the Court.

Standard Christmas Break Extended Parenting Time

- Christmas Break is defined as beginning on the day that school is dismissed at 6:00 pm and ending on the day prior to school commencing at 6:00 pm, and shall be split equally between the parents.

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- The first half of Christmas Break begins at 6:00 pm the day school is dismissed and ends at 6:00 pm on the day that falls half-way through the break.
 - The father shall have the first half in odd numbered years.
 - The mother shall have the first half in even numbered years.
- The second half of Christmas Break begins at 6:00 pm on the day that falls half-way through the break and ends at 6:00 pm the day before schools resumes.
 - The mother shall have the second half in odd numbered years.
 - The father shall have the second half in even numbered years.

STANDARD PARENTING TIME EXCHANGES AND TRANSPORTATION

If the parties are unable to agree as to parenting time exchanges and transportation, the following shall be the standard applied. The parents shall share the responsibility equally. The parenting who is receiving the child for parenting time is responsible for picking the child up at the other parent's home in a prompt and consistent manner.

Nothing is more disappointing to a child than a parent not arriving for their scheduled parenting time. In cases of an emergency, a 15-minute delay is allowed for picking up the child. However, the parent shall immediately advise the other parent if they are going to be late. This shall not be interpreted as permitting a parent to be habitually late. This 15-minute exception is an exception to be used only when a legitimate, unavoidable, necessary reason exists for being late. If a party fails to pick up the child for scheduled parenting time, that parenting time will be deemed forfeited.

STANDARD PARENTING TIME GUIDELINES

The Barry County Trial Court – Family Division and the Office of the Friend of the Court provide the following guidelines to ensure a positive parenting time experience.

- Parenting Time and Child Support are two separate issue. One parent cannot withhold parenting time due to non-payment of child support. Likewise, the payer of support cannot withhold support when parenting time is denied.
- Neither the Court nor the Friend of the Court can force a parent to exercise parenting time.
- The Friend of the Court does not handle neglect and abuse cases. If a parent suspect neglect or abuse, that parent should contact the Children's Protective Services.
- The Friend of the Court does not investigate a home based on the accusation of head or body lice. It is the Court's expectation that the parties will cooperate full in resolving the issue with the help of the health authority.

- Neither parent can determine what happens during the other parent's parenting time, and neither parent has to provide where, what and how parenting time will be exercised, unless the court order requires this information be provided.
- A parent should not schedule appointments for the child during the other parent's time; however, both parents need to understand there may be times when the only appointment available will conflict with the other parent's time, and the parties should make every effort to ensure that this is not a common occurrence and the parties should discuss the issue prior to scheduling the appointment.
- Parenting time is for the benefit of the child-parent relationship; therefore, any parenting time where the parent is not with the child for an extended time period should be avoided.
- Either parent has the right to obtain information from the child's school and health care provider, unless the court order prohibits a parent from having access to such records and information.
- A parent has a right to take the child on a trip both inside or outside Michigan during their parenting time, as long as it does not interfere with the other parent's parenting time.
 - The parent traveling with the child should provide information regarding the vacation, including a general itinerary and emergency contact information, to the other prior to departing.
- Extracurricular activities for the child are generally positive and encouraged; however, the activities should not unreasonably interfere with parenting time.
 - The parents should cooperate and discuss all extracurricular prior to the signing up the child.
 - The parents may need to be flexible with parenting time to ensure the child can participate in the extracurricular activity as well as parenting time.
- If the child is on medication, written instructions of the dosage and proof of the physician's prescription are to be supplied to the other parenting at the time of the exchange.
- The parent exercising parenting time should have an adequate supply of clothing for the weather, as well as any necessary supplies that the child needs, such as diapers, wet wipes etc., and any clothes and extra supplies provided by the other parent should be returned to the other parent at the end of parenting time.

- Both parents are encouraged to work together to insure that the child has all of the necessary clothing for any events taking place during the scheduled parenting time, such as uniforms.
- The child shall always be transported to parenting time by a licensed driver who is known to the child, and the child shall be transported in a certified car/booster seat or seat belt as required by the law.
 - Both parents are encouraged to have their own certified car/booster seat in their vehicle for the safe transportation of the child.
- Each parent is responsible to make sure all of the child's personal belongings accompany the child at the beginning and end of parenting time. If something is forgotten at a parent's home, that parent is responsible for insuring that the item is delivered to the other parent.
- Parenting time exchanges is not a time to discuss adult issues or exchange anything other than details relating to the child. Each parent should insure that other parent is aware of all the important information, which includes medical issues, school issues, extracurricular schedules, and changes to emergency contact information
 - The Barry County Trial Court – Family Division and the Office of the Friend of the Court recommend that the parents pass a notebook back and forth at parenting time exchanges or to use a web-based tool for co-parent communication, such as Family Wizard.
- A child should be allowed reasonable access to a parent via telephone, email, or other forms of communications when the child is with the other parent; however, this communication should not become invasive to the point of interfering with the child's activities or the other parent's parenting time.
- Parents should never use the child as a source of information on the activities of the other parent.
- Most law enforcement agencies do not become involved in settling custody and/or parenting time disputes, and they will refer the parties to the Friend of the Court. **A parent should only contact the police if the child or the parent is in immediate danger.**
- The presence or exclusion of third parties during parenting time must be address through a court order. Third parties may include supervisors, significant others, grandparents.
- Personal Protection Orders should not be used to deny custody or parenting time, and it is the parent seeking the PPO to inform the court of any existing

custody and/or parenting time order that may be effected by a PPO. The party seeking a PPO must provide a copy of the PPO to the Friend of the Court.

OTHER PARENTING TIME ISSUES

The following parenting time issues are discussed within the Michigan Parenting Time Guideline, and these issues should be addressed separately in the court order on a case by case basis.

- Children with special needs (physical, mental , emotional, and educational)
- Parenting Time with Military Parents
- Parenting Time with Non-Traditional Work Schedules
- Long Distance Parenting Time
- Grandparenting Time
- Incarcerated Parents
- Parents in Residential Treatment (Mental Health and Substance Abuse)
- Disabled Parents
- Guardianships
- Children in Foster Care
- Parenting Time and Domestic Violence.

PARENTING TIME DISAGREEMENTS

There are times when parents disagree with the schedule which cause one parent to miss parenting time. In some circumstances, a party who has been denied parenting time can request the Friend of the Court enforce the parenting time order, which can result in make-up parenting time or sanctions. The following are not valid reasons for denying a parent time with the children:

- The child is sick, a note from the doctor is required and make up time should be provided.
- The child has to go somewhere else.
- The child is not at home.
- The child wants to stay home (regardless of age).
- The custodial parent does not want the child to go.
- The weather is bad
- The child does not have clothes to wear etc.

It is the expectation of the Court, a parent **MUST** attempt to pick up the child at the beginning of their court ordered parenting time. The attempt must be made even if the other parent has provided notice that the child will not be made available for pick up,

If a parent believes that a change of circumstances has occurred which effects the current parenting time schedule, that parent has a right to request the court to modify the current order. The parent may contact the Friend of the Court for instructions.

If a parent believes that they have been denied parenting time, that parent must contact the Friend of the Court to discuss options available including enforcement. The Friend of the Court has a Make-Up Parenting Time Policy which outlines how make-up parenting time should be occur.

SUPERVISED PARENTING TIME AND REUNIFICATION SCHEDULES

There are times when a parent believe that for the safety of the child, the other parent should only be allowed parenting time that is supervised. The primary focus of supervised parenting time is to provide supervision for a period of time with the goal of moving toward unsupervised parenting time. A court order is required for supervised parenting time. The Michigan Parenting Time Guideline has an entire section devoted to supervised parenting time as well as reunification parenting time. The guideline is an outstanding source for parents who need guidance in this arear. It is important for parties to understand that this time of parenting time is determined on a case-by-case basis and requires a court order.

This standard parenting time policy and guidelines are adopted by the Barry County Barry County Trial Court – Family Division and the Barry County Friend of the Court.