

Four Parenting Patterns

Isolina Ricci, Ph.D. 2009,

| Exclusive One Home* | Parallel Parenting Two Homes | Shared Parenting Two Homes | Cooperative Parenting Two Homes |
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| Sole custody with visitation | Joint legal and physical custody. One parent may have residential custody. | Joint legal and physical custody. One parent may have residential custody. | Joint legal and physical custody. One parent may have residential custody. |
| 0/100 to 15/85 time share | 20/80 to 50/50 time share | 20/80 to 50/50 time share | 20/80 to 50/50 time share |
| Child focused or adult focused | Adult Focused | Child or Adult focused | Child Focused |
| Conflict between parents varies | Conflict high. Total separation reduces contact | Conflict is managed most of the time | Conflict Low. Flexibility and mutual support |
| Schedule for visitation may or may not be flexible. | Schedule is not flexible. Children's requests and needs are secondary. Parenting plan, court order must be followed exactly. | Schedule may or may not be flexible depending on the level of conflict and mutual trust. | Schedule is flexible. Children's requests and needs predominate. Plan is a formality. |
| Communication may or may not be frequent | Parents only communicate over emergencies or key events. | Communications often open. May use electronics when avoiding conflict. | Communications open, free flowing. In person, phone and electronically. |
| Information sharing may or may not be frequent | May not share information at all. Each parent must obtain information independently. May use a third party, or a parenting notebook to communicate and avoid voice and in person contact. | Information sharing may vary but agreed to in principle. Electronic communications may be frequent, face to face less so. If issues, then electronics predominate. | Information sharing is the norm and exchanges take any convenient form so that news is transferred smoothly and within an appropriate time frame.. |
| Major decisions are made by one parent although they may be discussed with the other parent. | Major decisions may or may not be "shared", communicated or made without notice. | Major decisions are divided or shared and discussed before action is taken. Decisions may be conflicted. | Major decisions are shared and mutually agreed upon before action taken. |
| Resident parent resolves issues related to child. May or may not discuss with the other parent. | Households are separate with little or no carryover from one home to the other. Child has to manage differences in households. | Parents may or may not work together to resolve issues. May or may not allow full carryover of discipline, homework, activities. | Parents work together to resolve issues. Discipline, homework, activities carry over between homes despite parenting styles. |
| Parents may or may not allow the child to discuss activities with each parent. | Parents frequently discourage or prohibit any mention of activities in the other home. Child may be expected to act as if the other home does not exist. | Parents allow the child freedom to discuss activities in their other home. | Parents encourage the child to discuss activities in each home. |
| Transitions are less frequent than other patterns. | Transitions may be difficult due to frequency and differences between homes | Transitions may be difficult or smooth depending on frequency. | Transitions are smooth and flexible |
| Parents may or may not support each other. | Parents do not support each other. Each operates separately from the other | Parents support each other at least half of the time with discipline, house rules, homework. | Parents support each other most or all of the time with discipline, house rules, medical appointments, homework, activities |

Adapted and revised from Mom's House, Dad's House: Making Shared Custody Work, by Isolina Ricci © 1997 and "Mediation and Joint Custody: A Time To Review and Revise", 1986. Appears in "Co-Parenting Solutions: Practical Ways to Boost Cooperation and Manage Conflict", by Isolina Ricci, (in press) CCPS Publications, 2010.