

Steps to Successful Negotiation.

1. Make an appointment to meet (perhaps through FOC co-parents session or mediation)
2. Meet at a neutral location, for example: restaurant, park, etc.
3. Use "I" statements when speaking to the other parent (such as: I feel....What I'd like...).
4. Provide an opinion, and listen to the other parent's opinion. Take turns sharing your viewpoint, followed by the person making sure he or she understands what was said.
5. Brainstorm solutions. Brainstorm without evaluating or judging.
6. Choose a solution. The best solution is the one best for your children.
7. Review. Who does what and by when? What does it mean?
8. Put the solution into action. Try the best idea for a specific period of time.
9. Evaluate. Is the solution that was selected the best one, or was there another alternative that might be better?

Other brochures you may be interested in:

- Parenting Time
- Co-Parenting Tips
- Parenting Time Enforcement Questions
- Conciliation
- Mediation
- Custody and Parenting Time Evaluations

Additional resources to assist you can be found at www.accesskent.com/foc

Co-Parents Sessions



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Co-Parents Sessions

What is a co-parents session?

The Friend of the Court Parenting Time Unit offers co-parents sessions to parents who already have specified parenting time orders that require or need further clarification. This includes school breaks, summer parenting time, phone parenting time, etc. An example is where an order may grant a parent alternating holidays, but does not identify holidays, or specify when those holidays begin and end. In a co-parents session, both parents would meet with a Parenting Time Facilitator with the goal of reaching an agreement.

This process would not apply to non-specific orders with parenting time provisions such as “reasonable”, or “as agreed.”

What if I do not agree with the other parent's plan for clarification?

If the facilitator believes there are sufficient grounds to make a proposal to clarify or amend the parenting time order, the facilitator will draft and submit a proposed order to the court. Parents have an opportunity to object to this proposal within 21 days. If a parent does not object to the proposed parenting time changes, those changes will become an order of the court. However, if there is an objection filed, the court will

hear the case and make a decision. If the facilitator does not prepare a proposed order, you can file a motion with the court to modify the parenting time provision. You have the right to represent yourself under Michigan law and appropriate forms (In Pro Per) to do this are available in the FOC lobby, at the Legal Assistance Center, or online at the FOC website. You can also consult with an attorney at any time.

Are there other Parenting Time issues a co-parents session can be used for?

Yes. If a parent reports to the Friend of the Court that a parent has not exercised their court-ordered parenting time on a regular basis, they will be offered a co-parents session. In addition, if a parent who has specific court-ordered parenting time, but has not exercised parenting time for significant time period and wants to resume parenting time, they may also be offered a co-parents session.

What if the other parent does not appear at the co-parents session?

If the facilitator believes there are sufficient grounds and information to make a proposal to clarify or amend the parenting time order, the facilitator will draft and submit a proposed order to the court. The proposed order can still be objected to, a hearing held and a decision made by the court. Facilitators will **not** make proposals suspending a parent's parenting time.

How do I obtain a co-parents session?

Submit a written complaint or concern to the Friend of the Court regarding the following:

1. Clarification of ordered parenting time.
2. Documented repeated failure to exercise parenting time.
3. Desire to resume court ordered parenting time.
4. Other concerns may be considered.

The Parenting Time Unit will review the provided documentation and send a request form for a co-parents session to the initiating parent. Once the completed form is returned to the FOC, a co-parents session may be scheduled, if appropriate. Not every request for a co-parents session will be honored.

What is the cost of a co-parents session?

At this time, there is no cost for a co-parents session. It requires the investment of time and a willingness to work with the other parent in a safe environment to see if parents can reach a resolution.

Things to think about prior to a co-parents session:

- What is the goal of the session?
- What is best for our children?
- How will I discuss important concerns with the other parent without offending or getting into an argument?