

**TUSCOLA COUNTY
FRIEND OF THE COURT
PARENTING TIME
GUIDELINES**

(Formerly known as the "Revised Co-Parenting Schedules" and "Parenting Time Guidelines")

EFFECTIVE: March 1, 2015

Unless your court order specifies otherwise, the Friend of the Court (FOC) will enforce the most recent version of the Tuscola County Friend of the Court Parenting Time Guidelines.

Tuscola County Friend of the Court
440 N. State Street
Caro, MI 48723
989-673-4848

Your children need your presence more than your presents.

-Jesse Jackson

TUSCOLA COUNTY FRIEND OF THE COURT PARENTING TIME GUIDELINES

Generally, it is in the best interest of children to maintain an active and involved relationship with both parents. Fathers and mothers each bring unique skills to parenting that, together, serves to enrich the development of their children. The following Parenting Time Guidelines (Guidelines) are aimed at affording parents an opportunity to work together to create parenting time schedules that serve the unique needs of their families. If parents are unable to reach an agreement, the following schedules shall apply:

CHILDREN UNDER 3 YEARS

REGULAR PARENTING TIME (CHILDREN UNDER AGE 3): Because of the unique needs of young children, particularly those under age 3, parents are encouraged to work together to create a schedule that best meets the needs of their children. If parents are unable to reach an agreement, the following regular parenting time schedule shall apply.

AGE 0-8 MONTHS

Monday and Wednesday from 4pm-8pm, and Saturday from 10am-2pm.

- If there is a conflict between this schedule and an older sibling's schedule, parenting time for each child will be according to their age-based schedule.

AGE 9-18 MONTHS

Monday and Wednesday from 4pm-8pm and Friday from 6pm to Saturday at 12pm.

- Initiating Overnight Parenting Time: Young children may be uncomfortable at an overnight location they have never seen before. It is generally recommended that children will have experienced at least 2 parenting times at the overnight location before overnight parenting time begins so they are familiar with their surroundings at the commencement of overnight parenting time.
- If there is a conflict between this schedule and an older sibling's schedule, parenting time for each child will be according to their age-based schedule.

AGE 19-36 MONTHS

Monday and Wednesday from 4pm to 8pm and Friday from 6pm to Saturday at 6pm.

- Initiating Overnight Parenting Time: Young children may be uncomfortable at an overnight location they have never seen before. It is generally recommended that children will have experienced at least 2 parenting times at the overnight location before overnight parenting time begins so they are familiar with their surroundings at the commencement of overnight parenting time.
- If there is a conflict between this schedule and an older sibling's schedule, children 19-36 months shall follow the older sibling's parenting time schedule.

HOLIDAY PARENTING TIME (CHILDREN UNDER AGE 3):** Holiday parenting time schedules pose unique challenges for young children. Parents are encouraged to work together to create a holiday schedule that meets the needs of both the parents and the children in the case. When parties are unable to reach an agreement regarding holiday parenting time, the following schedule will apply:

HOLIDAY**	ODD YEARS	EVEN YEARS	TIME
New Year's Day	Father	Mother	10am-6pm
Easter Day	Mother	Father	10am-6pm
Mother's Day	Mother	Mother	10am-6pm
Memorial Day	Father	Mother	10am-6pm
Father's Day	Father	Father	10am-6pm
4th of July	Father	Mother	10am-6pm
Labor Day	Mother	Father	10am-6pm
Halloween	Mother	Father	4pm-8pm
Thanksgiving	Father	Mother	10am-6pm
Christmas Eve	Mother	Father	10am-8pm
Christmas Day	Father	Mother	10am-8pm

***If parties practice faiths that are not provided for above, please inform the FOC so that an alternative holiday schedule can be implemented.*

- If there is a conflict between the holiday parenting time schedules for children 0-18 months and older siblings, each child shall follow his or her own age appropriate schedule.
- If there is a conflict between the holiday parenting time schedules for children 19-36 month and older siblings, younger children shall follow their older sibling('s) schedule.

BIRTHDAY PARENTING TIME (CHILDREN UNDER AGE 3): Birthdays are very special for children and parents are encouraged to work together so that a minor child has contact with each parent on his/her birthday. Unless the parents can agree otherwise, the following birthday schedule will apply:

ODD YEARS	EVEN YEARS	TIME
Mother	Father	10am-6pm

- Birthday parenting time takes precedence over all other parenting time, except it does not take precedence over holiday parenting time.
- Siblings shall follow each other's birthday schedules so that children are together for their sibling's birthday. However, children under 9 months shall only exercise birthday parenting time from 10am-6pm on the day of the sibling's birthday.

CHILDREN 3 YEARS AND OLDER

STANDARD PARENTING TIME (100 miles or less): The standard parenting time schedule applies to children, 3 years of age and older, where parents live within 100 miles of each other. Parents are encouraged to work together to create a plan that meets the unique needs of their families. If parents are unable to reach an agreement for parenting time, the following schedule shall apply:

Regular Parenting Time: The non-custodial parent shall be entitled to regular parenting time as follows: Every Wednesday from 4pm to 8pm. Wednesday parenting time shall be exercised within 30 miles of the child's primary residence. Additionally, parents shall alternate weekends beginning Friday at 6pm to Sunday at 6pm, with the non-custodial parent receiving the first full weekend following the entry of the court order setting forth parenting time.

Summer Parenting Time: Beginning with the non-custodial parent, parents shall alternate full weeks starting at 6pm on the first Sunday following the completion of the child's school year. The summer parenting time schedule shall continue until 6pm on the Sunday prior to the resumption of the school year.

- If a child is at least 3 years of age but not yet school age, summer parenting time will begin at 6pm on the first Sunday following the completion of the school year in the district in which the child primarily resides in.
- Upon the completion of the summer parenting time schedule, the first weekend following the resumption of school shall be exercised as follows:

ODD YEARS	EVEN YEARS
Father	Mother

Telephone Parenting Time: Parents should encourage and help foster healthy communications between their children and the other parent. However, the quality and quantity of telephone parenting time will vary depending on the children's ages and activities. For instance, a very young child may only need or desire brief phone interactions, while older children may enjoy more phone contact but have busier schedules (e.g. sporting events, church activities, school activities, vacations and the like). Therefore, it is necessary for both parents to be reasonable and flexible in seeking and permitting telephone parenting time based on the children's ages and activities.

- For purposes of these guidelines, "reasonable" is defined as telephone contact at least 2 times per week. Telephone communication may be initiated by the custodial parent, non-custodial parent or child. Note that Skype or some other form of verbal/visual contact may be used as a substitute for phone calls.
- Both the custodial and non-custodial parent is entitled to telephone parenting time during summer parenting time.
- If a parent regularly denies telephone parenting time without cause or telephone parenting time becomes problematic, the aggrieved parent may file a complaint with the FOC to determine if a specific telephone parenting time schedule should be implemented.

LONG DISTANCE PARENTING TIME (Over 100 miles): The long distance parenting time schedule applies to children, 3 years of age and older, where parents live over 100 miles apart. Parents are especially encouraged to work together to create a plan that meets the unique needs of their families. If parents are unable to reach an agreement for parenting time, the following schedule shall apply:

Regular Parenting Time: The non-custodial parent shall be entitled to regular parenting time as follows: Upon providing at least 72 hours' notice, the non-custodial parent shall receive parenting time on the 3rd weekend of each month from Friday at 6pm to Sunday at 6pm.

Summer Parenting Time: Unless otherwise agreed, the non-custodial parent shall be entitled to two summer parenting time periods as follows:

1. Beginning Father's Day at 6pm and continuing through July 3rd at 6pm, **AND**
2. Beginning the first Sunday in August at 6pm and continuing for a period of 2 weeks, ending at 6pm on Sunday.

Telephone Parenting Time: Parents should encourage and help foster healthy communications between their children and the other parent. However, the quality and quantity of telephone parenting time will vary depending on the children's ages and activities. For instance, a very young child may only need or desire brief phone interactions, while older children may enjoy more phone contact but have busier schedules (e.g. sporting events, church activities, school activities, vacations and the like). Therefore, it is necessary for both parents to be reasonable and flexible in seeking and permitting telephone parenting time based on the children's ages and activities.

- For purposes of these guidelines, "reasonable" is defined as telephone contact at least 2 times per week. Telephone communication may be initiated by the custodial parent, non-custodial parent or child. Note that Skype or some other form of verbal/visual contact may be used as a substitute for phone calls.
- Both the custodial and non-custodial parent is entitled to telephone parenting time during summer parenting time.
- If a parent regularly denies telephone parenting time without cause or telephone parenting time becomes problematic, the aggrieved parent may file a complaint with the FOC to determine if a specific telephone parenting time schedule should be implemented.

HOLIDAY PARENTING TIME (CHILDREN AGE 3 AND OLDER):** Parents are encouraged to work together to create a holiday schedule that meet the needs of both the parents and the children in the case. However, when parties are unable to reach an agreement regarding holiday parenting time, the following schedule will apply:

HOLIDAY**	ODD YEARS	EVEN YEARS	TIME
Easter Weekend	Mother	Father	6pm on Friday to 6pm on Sunday
Spring Break	Mother	Father	6pm on the last day of school to 6pm on Sunday one week later
Mother's Day	Mother	Mother	6pm on Saturday to 6pm on Sunday
Memorial Day Weekend	Father	Mother	6pm on Friday to 6pm on Memorial Day
Father's Day	Father	Father	6pm on Saturday to 6pm on Sunday
4th of July	Father	Mother	6pm on July 3 rd to 6pm on July 5 th
Labor Day Weekend	Mother	Father	6pm on Friday to 6pm on Labor Day
Halloween Day	Mother	Father	4pm to 8pm on Halloween evening
Thanksgiving	Father	Mother	6pm on Wednesday to 6pm on Sunday
Christmas Eve	Mother	Father	6pm on the last day of school until 8pm on Christmas Eve
Christmas Day	Father	Mother	8pm on Christmas Eve until 3pm on New Year's Eve
New Year's Eve	Mother	Father	3pm on New Year's Eve until 6pm on the evening prior to the resumption of school

***If parties practice faiths that are not provided for above, please inform the FOC so that an alternative holiday schedule can be implemented.*

- The above holiday parenting time schedule applies to both standard and long distance parenting time, and takes precedence over regular, summer, and birthday parenting time.
- Upon completion of the holiday parenting time, regular/summer parenting time shall resume as though no interruption to the schedule had occurred, unless otherwise stated in these guidelines.

BIRTHDAY PARENTING TIME (AGE 3 AND OVER): Birthdays are very special for children and parents are encouraged to work together so that a minor child has some form of contact with each parent on their birthday. Unless the parents agree otherwise, the following birthday schedule shall apply:

ODD YEARS	EVEN YEARS	TIME
Mother	Father	6pm on the night before the child's birthday and continuing until 6pm on the child's birthday

- Birthday parenting time takes precedence over standard and long distance parenting time, but it does not take precedence over holiday parenting time.
- All siblings, 9 months and over, shall follow each other's birthday schedules so that the children are together for their sibling's birthday. Siblings under 9 months shall participate in their sibling's birthday parenting time from 10am-6pm.
- In no case shall birthday parenting time interfere with a child's school schedule or that of a sibling's. If the minor child is school age, and their birthday falls on a school day, neither parent shall exercise parenting time more than 60 miles from the child's or sibling(s)' school.

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

COURT ORDERS: If the court order specifically states how and when parenting time shall be exercised, both parties must follow the specific terms in their court order. However, if the order states that parenting time is pursuant to the "Tuscola County Friend of the Court Guidelines," these Guidelines will govern how and when parenting time shall occur. These Guidelines provide that parties may reach their own agreement as to parenting time. If the parties cannot reach an agreement, the specific provisions contained in these Guidelines will determine how parenting time must be exercised.

TRANSPORTATION: Unless specified by court order and in the event that parents cannot agree, the parent seeking to exercise his or her parenting time must arrange to pick the children up at the other parent's residence.* A party may make arrangements for another responsible person to pick up the children so long as the individual has a valid driver's license and the children are familiar with him or her.

- **Emergencies and Extreme Difficulty:** Most people recognize and accept that once in a great while some unforeseen event or emergency occurs that will result in transportation difficulties. If an emergency occurs which will make it extremely difficult or impossible to provide transportation, parents should take every step necessary to inform the other parent as soon as possible so the parties can work out an alternative arrangement.

**If either party has a Personal Protection Order (PPO) against the other party or someone residing in their home, parties shall comply with the terms of their PPO.*

CHRONIC TARDINESS AND ABSENCES: Chronic tardiness and not showing up for parenting time are unacceptable behaviors and may result in court action. Parties are expected to be punctual and not cause the other party to wait. Only in exceptional circumstances is it permissible to be late for a parenting time exchange. If this situation arises, all reasonable attempts to communicate with the other party should be made as soon as possible.

- With this in mind, and in the event that a parent/child is not at the designated exchange location at the scheduled pick-up /drop-off time, the parent/child must wait at least **15 minutes** beyond the scheduled exchange time.

- If tardiness and absences become a regular occurrence, the aggrieved party may consider filing a motion to modify or eliminate the parenting time all together.

Remember: Nothing can disappoint a child more than waiting to be picked up, yet no one comes.

MAKE-UP PARENTING TIME: Parents are encouraged to create a schedule that meets their families' unique needs. As children get older and are involved in more activities, parents are encouraged to be flexible and work together to, first and foremost, serve their children's best interests. Similarly, parents can expect that, from time to time, special family and school events will arise that may cause interruptions to parenting time schedules. If this occurs, a parent may consider doing the following:

- **Cooperation:** Work with each other to adjust and alter the parenting time schedule to suit the needs of the children and/or the other parent.
- **Joint Meeting:** If parents are struggling with their parenting time arrangement, they may wish to contact the FOC to schedule a "joint meeting". This meeting is free of charge and is aimed at helping families work through their parenting time issues in an informal setting with a FOC parenting time coordinator. This meeting will be held only if **both** parents agree to participate. If you wish to schedule a joint meeting, contact the FOC at 989-673-4848.
- **Parenting Time Complaint:** If a parent denies parenting time, the aggrieved parent may request that the FOC determine whether a violation has occurred; if a violation has occurred, the offending party may be required to provide make-up parenting time pursuant to MCL 552.642 and FOC policy. All parenting time complaints requesting make-up parenting time must be submitted within **56 days** from the date of the alleged violation.

You may contact the FOC for additional instructions and forms for submitting parenting time complaints or utilize the following process:

1. Complete and submit a "Parenting Time Affidavit" to the FOC. This form may be obtained by contacting the FOC at 989-673-4848, or on-line at:
<http://www.tuscolacountycourts.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Parenting-Time-Complaint.pdf>
 2. The FOC will then provide the other party with an opportunity to respond to your parenting time complaint.
 3. Based on the parties' responses, the FOC will make a determination and prepare a recommended order as to whether make-up parenting time should be granted, denied, or alternatively, set for hearing in front of the referee.
 4. The FOC will send its determination along with the recommended order for make-up parenting time to both parties. Parties will then have a right to object to the recommended order within 21 days.
 5. If the parties do not object, the recommended order will be forwarded to the court for entry. If one or both of the parties object to the recommended order, the matter will be set for a hearing in front of the referee.
- **NOTE:** The FOC can only enforce specific court ordered parenting time schedules and schedules contained within these Guidelines. Private agreements made amongst the parties as to how parenting time should be exercised cannot be enforced through the above described parenting time complaint process.

CLOTHING AND BELONGINGS: Each parent is responsible for providing adequate clothing depending on the weather and events in which the children will engage in. Additionally, each parent is responsible for food, diapers, and toiletries when the minor children are in their care. When personal belongings are only needed on an occasional basis, or financially, it does not make sense to own more than one set of any particular item (e.g. sporting apparel such as cleats, shin guards and uniforms, seasonal clothing

such as snowsuits, boots or swim wear, and the like), these types of belongings shall be transported back and forth with the children as necessary. Any clothing or personal belongings that are with the children at the beginning of parenting time must be returned at the completion of parenting time in the condition they were received.

EDUCATION: Helping children with their school work and ensuring that work is completed in a timely manner is an important part of parenting. Each parent is responsible for making sure that they provide sufficient structure and time for their children to complete their school work. Parents must communicate with each other regarding homework, special projects, and events to ensure the future success of their children.

- **Communication with School:** Each parent is individually responsible for maintaining communication with their child's school so they are sure to receive all school related information.
- **Summer School:** If it is necessary for a child to attend summer school in order to pass to the next grade level, the child must be made available to attend, unless **both** parents agree that it is not in the child's best interests.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Parties shall cooperate with each other when enrolling children in extracurricular activities to ensure that the activities do not materially interfere with the ability to exercise parenting time. Neither the custodial parent nor the non-custodial parent should enroll a child in excessive activities that interfere with the other parent's ability to spend time with that child.

Keeping this in mind, both parents must ensure that while children are in their care, the children attend all scheduled activities, including practices, games, performances, lessons, tutoring, and other like activities.

Parents shall keep one another informed of all activities so that the other parent has an opportunity to attend or participate in the activity, even if the activity occurs when the non-custodial parent does not otherwise have scheduled parenting time.

FAMILY REUNIONS, FUNERALS AND WEDDINGS: Children shall be allowed to attend family reunions, funerals and weddings of parents, step parents, paternal and maternal grandparents, biological aunts and uncles, first cousins, half siblings, and current step siblings, as well as, funerals and weddings of close family friends and peers. Children shall be made available to the parent attending the event with sufficient time based on the circumstances. The parent requesting parenting time with their children pursuant to this section shall provide **all** transportation.

PARENTING TIME EXCHANGES: Neither parent shall use parenting time exchanges as an opportunity to discuss child support issues, parenting time complaints, or behave disrespectfully toward the other parent. If parenting time exchanges are consistently volatile, the court and/or the FOC may recommend that all future exchanges occur at a neutral location, including the Tuscola County Sheriff's Department.

CHILDREN'S MEDICAL NEEDS: Parents shall discuss the general health care needs of their children and advise each other of any illnesses and treatment requirements.

It is imperative that information regarding medical treatment be shared between the parents regardless of which parent initially sought treatment. A parent must provide all necessary medication and the doctor's written instructions, as well as necessary medical equipment to the parent exercising parenting time. The parent exercising parenting time shall administer all medications according to the doctor's written instructions, unless that parent obtains subsequent doctor's instructions to alter or discontinue usage. If a child requires medical attention during parenting time, that parent shall obtain treatment for the child and notify the other parent immediately that treatment is being provided.

VALID REASONS FOR DENYING PARENTING TIME: A parent may consider denying parenting time under extremely limited circumstances, where it is likely that the children may suffer imminent physical or emotional harm. Those circumstances may include the following:

- A parent appears visibly intoxicated, or high on illegal drugs.
- A parent makes credible threats to remove the child, conceal them from the other parent and not return them and/or harm them.
- A pending Child Protective Services (CPS) investigation.

NOTE: Despite a parent's belief that a valid reason exists for withholding parenting time, if a parenting time complaint is filed by the other parent for failing to make the children available for parenting time, the final determination of whether there were valid grounds for withholding parenting time will be made by the court and/or the FOC.

If a parent believes that a child is being abused or neglected, they should contact CPS at 1-855-444-3911. Also, a parent may consider filing a motion to modify the current custody or parenting time order and/or contact an attorney for assistance.

INVALID REASONS FOR DENYING PARENTING TIME: Parents are expected to comply with their parenting time orders and/or these Guidelines if ordered to do so. At some point, a parent may wish to deny the other party parenting time for a variety of reasons. The following are generally **invalid** grounds for denying parenting time:

- The other parent has failed to pay child support.
- The child has a minor illness.
- The child was not home.
- The child didn't want to go.*

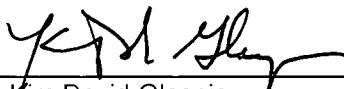
***If you suspect that a minor child is resisting parenting time with the other parent due to neglect or abuse, contact CPS at 1-855-444-3911.**

OMISSIONS AND OVERSIGHTS: In the event that a situation arises that is not provided for in this policy, the Office of the Tuscola County FOC shall have authority to render an opinion and issue a determination and recommended order subject to parties' right to object. In reaching its determination, the FOC shall rely on the Michigan Parenting Time Guidelines, as published by the Friend of the Court Bureau of the State Court Administrative Office, Michigan Supreme Court which is available at: http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/Publications/Manuals/focb/pt_gdlns.pdf

Unless your court order specifies otherwise, the FOC will enforce the most recent version of these Guidelines.

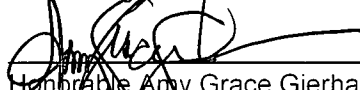
APPROVED AND ADOPTED

DATED: 12-19-14



Honorable Kim David Glaspie
Chief Judge of the 54th Circuit Court

DATED: 12-19-14



Honorable Amy Grace Gierhart
Circuit Judge of the 54th Circuit Court

DATED: 12-22-14



Honorable Nancy L. Thane
Presiding Judge, 54th Circuit Court
Family Division