BIRTH TO THREE

A Guide for Parents Creating Parenting Plans For Young Children

Presented by Multnomah County Family Court Services

December 2013

Foreword

Who Are We?

Family Court Services is a social service agency administered by the Department of Community Justice Juvenile Services Division. Family Court Services provides no or low cost services to Multnomah County Oregon parents going through divorce or separation. ***Our Mission*** is to protect children and parents from the harmful effects of conflict related to separation and divorce. Our services include assistance with the creation of parenting plans, mediation for parents in disagreement about care arrangements for children, court ordered custody evaluations, supervised visitation and exchange services for families with a history of domestic violence, parent education classes for parents with custody and parenting time issues before the court, and services for parents who are having difficulty seeing their children in the absence of a court order.

We Honor All Parents & Families

What parents and families look like is diverse. Children are being raised and doing well in homes headed by opposite-sex parents, same-sex parents, grandparents, parents who are living apart and co-parenting, and parents who are parenting alone. Wherever possible, we are committed to using inclusive language that respects all parents.

We Recognize Solo Parents

We know that many separated, divorced, and single parents are parenting without the help or involvement of the other parent. We refer to this as ***solo parenting*** rather than single parenting, because many single parents still have a co-parent who is helping to raise their child. While some sections of this handbook focus on things that co-parents should consider, we hope that much of the material will be helpful to solo parents as well.

We Focus on Strengths and Resiliency

One of the most important research findings on families dealing with divorce and separation is that the majority of children are able to bounce back after family transitions. There are many things parents can do to limit the impact that divorce or separation can have on children.

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Introduction

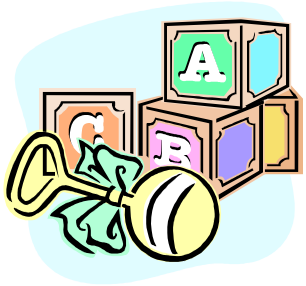
Why have a special handbook focused on children age birth to three?
The first three years of a child's life are critical for their future health, happiness and growth. During these years, a child is learning much more than how to walk, talk and follow directions. Her brain is actually growing in very important ways that will help her deal with stress, learn, be healthy, and have close relationships with others in the future.

Parents ending their relationship during this time in their child's life face difficult choices about what schedule will work best for their child. It is hard to balance the needs of a young child with each parent's wish to have as much time as possible.

Experts on children have spent a lot of time studying young children whose parents are not together. They have tried to identify what are the best plans and schedules for young children in these situations. Sometimes the experts do not agree and this can be confusing for parents.

The good news is that experts do agree on some important things. They agree that young children need:

- safe, predictable care from a warm, responsive adult(s)
- frequent and meaningful contact with two safe parents
- protection from tension, conflict, and violence
- comfort from an attachment figure when they are upset
- plans that change when their needs change



How can this handbook help me and my child?
This handbook will help parents of young children who are divorcing, separating or maybe never lived together make informed decisions about parenting time schedules.

- We will talk about **attachment** and the importance of each parent in a child's life.
- We will look at overnights for young children and things to think about when deciding on overnights.
- We will explore signs of distress in young children and the difference between normal and concerning responses to stress.
- We share sample plans and resources so that you have a place to start.

This handbook talks about research on these subjects. You will notice that sometimes the research finds different answers to the same questions. There are many reasons for this, but mostly it shows that there is **no one size fits all** plan that will meet the needs of every child.

Keep in Mind: *This handbook gives a broad overview of things to think about in developing your plan. It may not describe a plan that meets the specific needs of your child. You should always talk with your child's doctor or a child therapist if you have questions about the special needs of your child. In addition, you should ask an attorney if you have questions about how this information might effect your legal case.*

Attachment

The bond a child makes with a primary attachment figure is the building block for nearly all other important steps in growing up.

What is attachment?

A human infant cannot survive without someone providing food, protection, and affection. Because of this, human babies are born with a very strong instinct and need to bond with a caregiver. ***Attachment*** is the word used to describe the deep and lasting emotional bond between a child and at least one caregiver. In their first year, children develop a strong ***attachment bond*** with the person they first experience as consistent, safe, and comforting. This is usually a parent or a person who takes care of them most of the time. This person is often called the ***primary attachment figure.*** Even when more than one person takes care of a child, the child will usually have a ***primary attachment*** to one of their caregivers during infancy.

Why attachment is important…

Researchers have spent over 40 years studying the importance of attachment. We now know that critical early brain development depends on ***secure attachment*** (*more on this later*). The bond a child makes with a primary attachment figure is the building block for nearly all other important steps in growing up. Infant brains ***double*** in volume between birth and 12 months. The back-and-forth interactions between an infant and his primary attachment figure are key during this time of growth. Other attachment relationships play an important role as well.

A ***secure attachment*** gives a child a sense of trust and self-confidence. It gets them ready to take on the joyful and challenging experiences of life. Ultimately, secure attachment makes for ***resilient*** children – children that are able to "bounce back" after tough situations, recover from emotional hurts, and take on new challenges.

Research tells us that securely attached children are better able to:

- trust and feel close to others
- handle difficult feelings
- feel good about themselves
- care about other people's feelings
- learn and do well in school
- be curious and creative
- be flexible, problem-solve and adjust to new situations
- think before acting on impulse
- be more independent
- have better social skills

So what is "Secure Attachment"?

Secure attachment happens when a parent ***consistently and predictably*** provides attentive and sensitive responses to their child, *especially* when the child is excited or upset. Children with secure attachments know they can depend on the attachment figure to help when they are upset and share their excitement when they are happy. Secure attachment relies on a mutual give-and-take between the child and parent. The child sends a signal for attention (like crying or smiling). The parent reads the signal correctly and responds in a way that meets the child's needs. ***Responsive behaviors*** that help form attachment include feeding, holding, smiling, cuddling, comforting, soothing, bathing, and other care-giving behaviors.

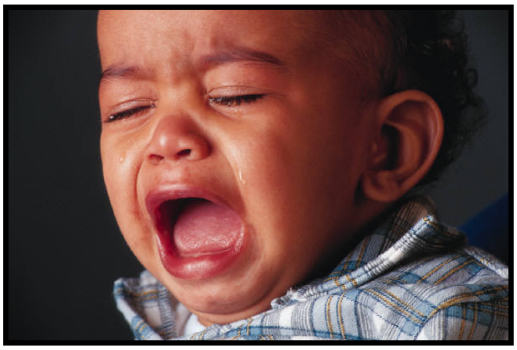
What does secure attachment look like in babies?

Caregiving behaviors help infants form secure attachments.

Around the age of eight months, a securely attached infant starts to get upset when their attachment figure is out of sight. This response is called ***separation anxiety***. Separation anxiety at this time in life is ***normal***. Also important is what the infant does when the attachment figure returns. A securely attached infant is happy and can accept comforting from the attachment figure. In other words, the securely attached infant has a strong enough bond that they feel upset when the attachment figure leaves, but also has enough ***trust*** in their attachment figure that they can relax and be comforted when the attachment figure returns. Securely attached children can be comforted to some extent by other people, but they generally prefer the comfort of their ***primary attachment figure***.

Trust = Emotional Regulation…

The process of getting upset and then being comforted by contact with the primary attachment figure is how infants learn to calm themselves and regulate (manage) their own emotions. ***Emotional regulation*** is a term for this ability. It allows us to understand and accept our own emotions, use healthy ways to handle them, and keep functioning even under stress. Most aspects of good mental and emotional health later in life depend on this ability of emotional regulation.



What does secure attachment look like in toddlers?

As your child enters the second year of life she becomes more physically and emotionally independent. Parts of the brain involved in speech come on-line during the second year and most children have begun to talk and deal with toilet training by the end of the third year. This is a busy and challenging time for children and their parents.

Exploring (getting into everything!) and testing your patience by saying "no" are some of the ways a toddler tries out his new skills and develops an independent sense of self. Toddlers have a strong desire to do things "by myself!" At the same time, they still need to feel close to their attachment figure. This creates internal stress and can lead to strong emotional outbursts. This may be why people sometimes call this stage the "terrible twos".

A securely attached toddler will generally be able to explore their environment with excitement and curiosity, but will also want frequent contact with their attachment figure. The attachment bond that created ***trust*** in the first year now becomes the ***secure base*** a toddler can rely on while exploring the outside world and their inside feelings and wishes. Think about how children this age play on their own, want to feed themselves, and so on, but still bring every toy to you to look at and want you to hold them when they are tired, hurt, or upset. They also want you to share their joy and excitement about the world around them!

Children can have more than one attachment figure

Attachment continues to develop over the lifespan, from before birth (*there is now evidence that attachment to the mother begins in utero, during the third trimester of pregnancy*) into adulthood. We know that infants bond with a primary attachment figure in the first months of life. Some experts now believe infants begin to build other strong attachments as early as two to three months of age.

These other attachments are usually with people who spend a lot of time with the infant and provide warm, responsive care. This is often the other parent. Sometimes it is a grandparent, sibling or other caregiver. These relationships provide a child with positive, loving interactions with others. Infants show extreme distress if they lose contact with a primary attachment figure. Infants also have a grief response if they lose contact with other important attachment figures.

The attachment bond that created trust in the first year now becomes the secure base a toddler can rely on while exploring the outside world and their inside feelings and wishes.

Attachment Problems

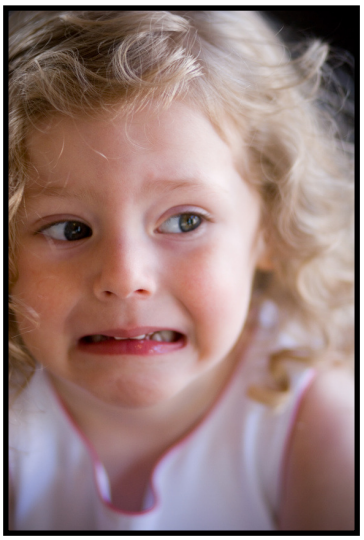
Insecure Attachment

Children can develop attachment styles that cause problems for them later in life. An ***insecure attachment*** can develop when a child bonds with a caregiver, but does ***not consistently*** feel understood or protected by them. This can happen when a caregiver ***sometimes*** understands what the child needs and responds, but at other times does not. It can happen with a caregiver that is overly anxious or rejecting of the child. In all of these situations, the child learns that she cannot consistently rely on the parent to meet her needs.

A child with an ***insecure attachment*** to a primary caregiver may avoid closeness and emotional connection (*avoidant insecure attachment*) or become unsure and anxious about whether they can depend on the caregiver (*ambivalent insecure attachment*). Children with insecure attachments are more likely to have frequent and prolonged temper tantrums, be accident prone and impulsive, and desperately seek attention. They tend to have low frustration tolerance by the preschool years, school and behavior problems in later years, and ultimately struggle to establish satisfying adult relationships.

Disorganized Attachment

A ***disorganized attachment*** is the most serious attachment problem. It happens when a parent acts in ways that frighten or overwhelm a child's coping system. The child is in the helpless position of having to rely on a person that is scary or hurtful. The person that should be a haven of comfort and safety becomes a source of terror that the young child wants to escape. This leaves the child nowhere to go for emotional safety and no way to build trust.



Children whose primary attachment figure abuses them or who is scary because of domestic violence, addiction or untreated mental illness, are more likely to have disorganized attachments. Children in these situations often do not develop the ability to self regulate.
Their emotional and behavioral problems are usually more severe and harder to change than those of children with insecure attachment. Researchers have found that children with disorganized attachment are more likely to deal with serious mental health and relationship problems as adults.

Keep in Mind: *A child with an insecure attachment to a parent that is not the primary attachment figure can still benefit from contact with that parent but may need more support. When developing a parenting time plan for a child with a parent who is not consistently responding to a child's needs, it is important to think about ways to support and reassure the child.*

Attachment & Parenting Time Schedules

How does attachment factor into decisions about parenting time schedules?

Science has shown that some of the brain development that happens in the first years of life can **only** happen when the child is very young and their brain is still forming. There seem to be "windows" of opportunity for learning during early childhood that are not open later. For example, children who do not hear language spoken during their early years, may lose the ability to learn to talk later.

The child's attachment system is central during this period of brain growth. Science shows that children learn from people they are attached to at two or three times the rate they learn from others. Experts believe that disturbing attachment during the first years may have more negative consequences than events that happen in later years. For a young child whose parents are separating, there are many possible sources of stress.

The child may be separated from their primary attachment figure for periods of time. If those periods are too frequent or too long, they may have a negative effect on the development of secure attachment. During a parent's separation, the child may be exposed to more parental conflict, tension, or in some cases, violence. The child's parents may be stressed and potentially less emotionally available.

There is also the possible loss of contact with the ***non-residential parent*** (the parent that has less time with the child). Even if the non-residential parent is not the primary attachment figure, the child will grieve the loss if the bond with that parent is strong**. Research shows that the involvement of both parents in a child's life, with the exception of a dangerous or abusive parent, is an important factor for children to thrive.** We also know that while primary attachment is a critical developmental process, attachment to the other parent becomes equally important as children grow older.

Keep in Mind: *In cases where there is domestic violence, serious untreated mental illness, or an absent co-parent, these steps are difficult, maybe even impossible to accomplish. Parenting plans may look different. We will talk about some of those scenarios later in this handbook.*

There is a lot you can do to protect your child during a separation or divorce…

If your child already has a secure attachment, he is in good shape to tolerate some of the changes that come with divorce and separation. Years of observing parents in separated households show that many things protect infants and young child during the separation process. ***For example, parents can…***

- commit to protecting the child's developing attachment system by making sure infants have lots of opportunities and time to connect with their primary attachment figure and regroup emotionally
- work to reduce conflict and tension during transitions
- decide to be flexible in shaping the schedule around the child's needs
- get support so that they are emotionally available to respond to the child
- support and encourage the child's bond with the other parent
- focus on the child's developmental needs rather than what's "fair" to the parents

The Importance of Parental Involvement

Gender and Parenting

Children almost always do better when they have access to two safe, involved parents. This section looks at some of the research that supports having two parents involved in a child's life. In the past, much of that research focused on "moms" and "dads." When we talk about research that looked at just moms or just dads, we use those terms. We otherwise try to use gender-neutral terms wherever possible.

Keep in mind that studies of mothers and fathers included large groups of parents. They result in broad generalizations about male and female parent behavior. Remember that gender is definitely ***not the only factor in parenting***. Mothers and fathers each have unique abilities as individuals. They may or may not fit the patterns described below.

How do mothers and fathers each contribute to a child's development?

Research shows that mothers and fathers interact with their child in somewhat different ways, each of which can aid healthy development. Female parents tend to more often use warm, calming, and soothing behaviors. They are often more able to read nonverbal communication and connect with another's emotional state. These ways of connecting increase right brain development in infants. Right brain development is critical for social and emotional relationships. Mother-child attachment seems to affect a child's ability to be close to others and handle anxiety early and later in childhood.

Fathers tend to be more physical and stimulating when interacting with young children. They often hold their infants facing out and allow more freedom for babies to explore. Male parents often favor practical, educational activities, and use toys in ways that expand a child's world. Fathers' play with children may be a model for self-control that helps children recognize emotional cues in others. Attachment to the father also seems to effect how a toddler manages aggressive behaviors.

On average one-third of children in separated households lose contact with a parent, usually a dad.

Mothers more typically stay in close proximity to their child while monitoring and helping children with tasks. Fathers tend to take a step back and be less anxious about safety, though many will reassure and encourage a child to manage anxiety, and continue with a task. Together this combination of responses helps a child develop a balance of independence and sense of safety.

What is the impact of the involvement of a safe, nurturing father?

Few parents going through a separation or divorce plan to cut off contact with the father. Yet on average one-third of children in separated households lose contact with a parent, usually a dad, which is why studies have focused on dads. When safety is not an issue, children with safe, involved fathers have shown:

- ***Higher educational achievement across the lifespan*** – they are ready for school sooner and stay in school longer; overall school performance is better; one study found that children with significant father involvement were 43% more likely than other kids to earn mostly A's and one-third less likely to repeat a grade.

Children with involved fathers are more likely to earn "A's"

- ***Better performance in cognitive skills*** such as language ability, thinking, and problem-solving.

- ***Higher levels of social/emotional functioning*** – they tend to make stronger, longer-lasting friendships across the lifespan and show a greater ability to care about other people's feelings; girls have higher self-esteem and more faith in their ability to maintain long-term relationships; boys have fewer aggressive behaviors.

- ***Fewer behavioral problems*** – they use drugs and alcohol less frequently and girls are less likely to experience teen pregnancy; boys are less likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system.

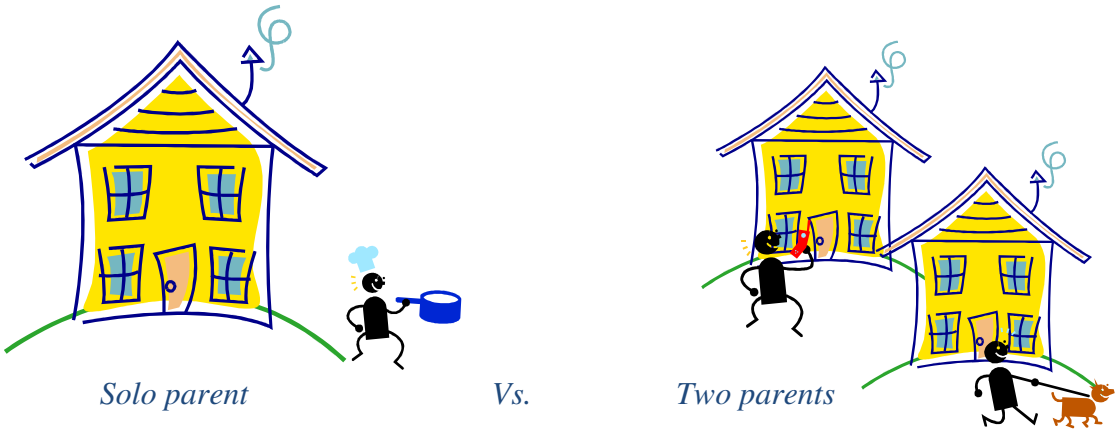
- ***Greater financial security*** - involved fathers are more likely to support their children financially and to meet child support obligations.

Keep in Mind: *Studies of the impact of involved fathers include fathers who are not perfect and may have some skill deficits. They usually do not include fathers that have a history of violence, drug addiction, or serious untreated mental health problems.*

What about other kinds of parenting scenarios?

Studies of the benefits of two-parent involvement have mostly focused on comparing male and female parents. However, many studies have compared children raised by same sex parents to children raised by opposite sex parents. ***Overall, the research shows that children raised by warm, caring same sex parents do as well as children raised by caring opposite sex parents.*** Unfortunately, there is very little specific research comparing separating/divorcing same sex parents to opposite sex parents experiencing separation/divorce. We hope that many of the benefits of having two opposite sex parents involved in a child's life after separation will also be true for children of same sex parents that separate or divorce.

There have been many studies of children raised in solo parent homes. These studies often have negative things to say about how children without two parents do as adults. As experts take a deeper look, they note that some of the "problems" for children raised by a solo-parent may have more to do with the financial difficulties of raising a child alone, than the simple fact that a parent is solo. In addition, many of the studies included solo parents with other kinds of problems (like addiction or untreated mental illness) that may have a negative effect on children.



More recently, researchers have taken a fresh approach and looked at resiliency (protective) factors for children in solo-parent homes. They note that ***many children with solo-parents are healthy and well adjusted***. These studies show that children who do well in solo parent homes have some of the following:

- positive relationships with other safe adults who support or mentor them
- strong commitment to school involvement and education
- parents with good parenting skills
- secure attachment to the parent that is raising them
- involvement in positive peer and extra-curricular activities
- communities that are safe and free from violence
- parents that have good social support networks

Staying Connected When Your Child Does Not Live with You

Why do some non-residential parent's drop out of a child's life?

We know that parents love their children, so why do some parents "drop out"? Parents report several themes for why they drop out…

- ***Feelings of guilt or inadequacy as a parent*** – Fathers coming out of traditional relationships may feel less competent in childcare roles. They struggle to find ways to enter into the academic and social lives of their children. Mothers that leave their children when they leave a relationship feel intense guilt. Their family or community may judge them harshly.
- ***Remarrying/re-partnering within the first year following the separation*** – The time children need to adjust to a divorce or separation is easily a couple of years. Their need for a parent's undivided attention during this time is strong. Seventy-five percent (75%) of divorced fathers remarry within 3 years. Those who remarry when children are very young are more likely to lose contact.
- ***Moving more than 75 miles away*** – When a parent lives more than an hour's drive away from their child, logistics and schedules are more challenging. Children may protest being uprooted from their neighborhoods and friends. Non-residential parents may feel less connected with the child's everyday lives.
- ***Ongoing conflict with the other parent*** – Over time the emotional and psychological stress of constant battle takes its toll and non-residential parents may decide children would be better off if they do not come around.
- ***Alienation*** – The residential parent or other important people in children's lives continually badmouth the other parent and/or move away to limit their contact.
- ***Problems of living*** – If the non-residential parent is struggling with addiction or mental illness, is homeless or incarcerated the challenges to ongoing contact are serious.

What non-residential parents can do to <u>strengthen attachment…</u>

Non-residential parents worry about their ability to bond with their child if they have no or few overnights. The frequency and quality of time spent with a child is important, regardless of whether an infant spends the night. Remember that children develop attachments with caregivers who consistently provide a safe, calm, nurturing and responsive environment. Parents who routinely engage in ***responsive behaviors*** with their child will build stronger attachment.

Responsive behaviors include:

- taking care of your child's basic needs – feeding, bathing, changing, dressing
- soothing your child when they are ill or upset – cuddling, holding, rocking
- helping your child get ready for bedtime or naps – reading, teeth-brushing, and other bedtime rituals
- holding and talking to your infant; or engaging in imaginative play with your toddler

It helps to be sensitive to the residential parent's concerns about separation from the child. This can be hard to do in the middle of a divorce/separation when trust is low and bad feelings may be high. Ultimately, it is worth the effort. Studies show that when a residential parent trusts the child to be well cared for by the other parent, they are more likely to support the relationship. Trust allows the residential parent to relax and let the child know that it is safe to transition to the other parent.

Here are some ways to build trust with your co-parent:

- **Take a parenting class** such as "The Incredible Years" to develop better knowledge and skills for the care of a young child.
- **Be open to receiving information from the residential parent** about your child's routines, needs and preferences.
- **Provide the residential parent with information** about how your child did when he was with you, such as feedings, nap times, medications given, or changes in health.
- **Make sure your space is safe for a small child** and allow the other parent to visit and see that it is ready for your child.

What non-residential parents can do to stay connected…

A first step to staying connected to your child is to develop a respectful working relationship with the other parent. This usually requires that you separate feelings for the other parent from those for your child. Treating the other parent with respect and managing conflict teaches children healthy behaviors. Research shows that when respect for a primary attachment figure is lacking, children are more likely to be anxious, withdrawn or antisocial. If conflict is low and the residential parent feels respected, there are more opportunities for communication, involvement and connection.

Important ways to stay connected to your young child's everyday life, even when they are not with you include:

- attending doctor's appointments
- participating in play-groups or pre-school activities
- dropping off and picking up from daycare/preschool
- offering to help the residential parent whenever possible by providing respite care, transportation to appointments, or other support
- avoiding over-involvement in work or a new relationship
- being dependable – missing scheduled visits sends a message to your child and the other parent that time with your child is not important

Parents who live far away or are otherwise unable to have a lot of in-person contact with their child might consider:

- Scheduling regular phone calls or Skype/Face Time sessions – even speaking a few words to an infant or toddler helps establish recognition. Children this age have an incredibly short attention span. Just because they cannot spend more than 30 seconds on the phone *does not* mean they do not want to connect with you. Providing photos for the other parent to share with the child.
- Providing a stuffed animal with a voice chip recording of you saying "I love you," or other short messages.
- Mailing your child cards, letters, videotapes of yourself and other mementos that *let them* know you are thinking about them. You may think about your child every minute of the day, but your child will not know this unless you show her.

Supporting the Non-Residential Parent's Bond

What residential parents can do to strengthen non-residential parent involvement…

Residential parents must separate negative feelings about the other parent from the need of a child to stay connected to that person. Below are some ways that residential parents can support the child's bond with the other parent and at the same time help themselves feel less worried when their child is away from them.

- **Share your knowledge with the parent with less hands-on experience**. Instead of criticizing, "They've never changed a diaper in their life!" try sharing your skills and information about your child's needs and preferences.
- **Encourage frequent contact with the non-residential parent** to increase your child's security and attachment to them.
- **Treat the other parent with respect**; they are more likely to take your advice if they feel respected.
- **Get support to deal with your fears** about being away from your child.
- **Get information about normal and abnormal child distress** so that you do not over-react to normal distress during transitions.
- **Avoid conflict in front of your child**; conflict makes your child more anxious about transitions.
- **Try not to jump to conclusions about the other parent** based on your child's behavior or statements. Checking out a concern with the other parent may reveal normal reasons for why a child was upset; maybe they couldn't have ice cream for breakfast!
- **Include the other parent as a contact** on medical, dental, childcare, and school forms. By law (Oregon Revised Statutes 107.154) both parents have the right to information about their child's school, medical and mental health, and juvenile records *regardless of custody status*, unless a court orders otherwise.
- **Consider using a notebook to communicate** important information back and forth about your infant or young child's day. *There is a Sample Co-Parent Communication Log included in the back of this handbook.*

Separate negative feelings about the other parent from the need of a child to stay connected to that person.

The Question of Overnights

Why all the fuss about overnights?

Most parents know how important secure attachment is to a child's development and often worry about separating a child from a primary attachment figure. A child's ***attachment system*** (the need to be close to the primary attachment figure for safety and comfort) is triggered by threats of danger. These "threats" can include separation from the attachment figure or being alone and in the dark, like at bedtime. Both of these may happen when a child spends the night away from the residential parent.

If care-giving routines are chaotic, or if the child is not able to re-connect with the primary attachment figure often enough to "reboot" their attachment system, the child may feel more stress and pine for that parent. Chronically stressed children's brains release chemicals that can harm their developing brain. This is why parents must be sensitive to how a child is handling time away from a primary attachment figure. It is also helpful to have stable, reassuring bedtime routines for children. Sensitive parenting and supportive routines help a child relax, feel safe, maintain healthy attachment, and get the sleep they need to be healthy and happy (instead of grumpy!).

Should infants or children under three have overnights in the other parent's home?

This is a question researchers have spent a lot of time studying. Some experts believe that studies show that infants do not experience any negative effects from overnights with the non-residential parent. In addition, they indicate that overnights can increase the bond to the non-residential parent, and the non-residential parent's commitment to the child. Other experts believe that separating an infant from a primary attachment figure for overnights too long or too often may be harmful. They point to findings which suggest that infants with frequent (once a week or more) overnights show more distress with their primary attachment figure, and are more irritable and worried about being separated from their primary caregiver compared to children mostly in the care of one parent.

So what should parents do?

There is no clear, simple, one-size-fits-all answer for parents. At this point, we do not know for certain that overnights have either a negative or positive effect on young children. Instead, parents should think about a number of factors when making decisions about overnights and parenting time for young children.

Here are the "top ten" questions to think about when considering overnights and parenting plans in general…

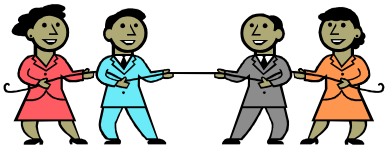
1. ***What is your child's attachment history with each parent?*** Who is your child most likely to go to when upset, hurt, sick, or awakened in the middle of the night? Does your child respond the same or differently to each of you? This is a tough question for parents. Be honest for the sake of your child. Remember that primary attachment is age-related. It is the building block for all other attachments.

2. ***What were your caretaking behaviors and roles before the separation/divorce?*** What were each of your roles in providing care to your child in a variety of daily activities and nighttime routines – things like bathing, diapering, feeding, playing with, and putting a child down to sleep? Did you live together as parents and share in the care of the child?

3. ***What are your skills as parents?*** What are your parenting strengths and weaknesses? What are you or the other parent still learning? How might you help the other parent develop these abilities to benefit your child? Consider building a plan that makes the best use of each of your skills.

4. ***What is your child's temperament?*** How does your child deal with change and transition? Some children need more routine and become easily distressed when schedules and surroundings change. Other children are more flexible and adjust to changes in routine with relative ease. The less flexible child may struggle to adapt to schedules that vary in sleeping, eating, bathing and other regular routines between their two homes.

5. ***What is the level of conflict between you and the other parent?*** Some conflict is normal during separation and divorce. However, children exposed to high levels of conflict feel more anxiety around exchanges. If high conflict is chronic, the stress can have lasting negative effects on a child's mood and behavior. Parents who have conflict need to develop plans that manage children's exposure. If arguments regularly occur around exchanges, think about ways to minimize face-to-face contact, like using a third party or childcare setting for exchanges when possible.



Many parents who have high conflict minimize children's exposure by practicing a *parallel parenting* style that limits the amount of contact and discussion they need to have with the other parent. Each parent does things their way on their time. This

arrangement is not ideal for keeping consistency between homes, but it is far better than exposing your child to on-going conflict.

6. ***How well will you and the other parent be able to communicate?*** Routine and consistency are important for young children. Your child will do better going between two homes if you and the other parent share information about things like bedtime and meal routines, food preferences, illnesses, toilet training, new milestones and so on. If your ability to directly communicate these types of things with the other parent is not where you would like it to be, consider having a notebook that travels back and forth with your child that documents these events (see the "Sample Co-Parent Communication Log" in the back of this handbook).

7. ***Does your child have special needs?*** A child with colic, sensory issues or other medical conditions can quickly sap your physical and emotional strength. If you are both skilled at meeting your child's special needs, it may help to create a plan that gives each of you a chance for some respite. Sometimes only one parent has the patience and time needed to care for the child. If that is true in your situation, it is important to build a network of resources and ask for help when you need it. Children with special needs may be more affected by transitions or attachment disruption.

8. ***Is there a history of domestic violence?*** Young children exposed to domestic violence are at risk of having their developing brain negatively impacted. The fear and chronic stress that exists in a home where there is violence endangers the child's attachment system. Some studies show that children exposed to domestic violence have more mental health problems than children who experienced other forms of abuse**.** ***In many states, including Oregon, abusing a partner when a child is present is a serious crime.***

If you and/or your children have experienced domestic violence, safety must be the first priority. ***Safety focused parenting plans*** can provide safe, meaningful contact between a parent and a child and minimize the risk of future violence. Safety focused plans can include a range of options from safe public exchange locations to professionally supervised parenting time. *More information and resources for parents that have experienced domestic violence is in the resources guide in the back of this handbook.*

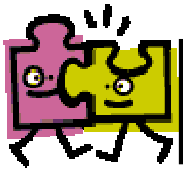
9. ***Do you or the other parent have serious problems with functioning?*** A parent with active or untreated addiction, mental illness, or other serious problems with day-to-day functioning is probably not consistently able to respond to the care needs of an infant or young child. In addition, a parent with these struggles may be in and out of a child's life, which damages the bond between that parent and child and potentially disrupts attachment. Just like with domestic violence, many of the safety focused parenting plan options can apply to these situations.

10. How do you think your plan will feel for your child? Ask yourself how you would feel if, as your child you had to pick up and move between homes several times each week? What would it be like as a baby to not understand where you are going or when you are coming back? What would make you feel more comfortable and secure?

If you can answer most of these questions in a positive way, your child may be in good shape to have overnights with the non-residential parent. We will talk more about how to transition young children to overnights away and what to watch for later in this handbook.

If you have negative responses or concerns in some of these areas, it is wise to think very carefully about overnight time. In situations where there are problems with attachment, skills, and child temperament, spending frequent day time with the other parent can help the parent build skills and the child build attachment.

In either case, it is important for you and the other parent to notice how your child is doing. Watch for signs of serious distress (see "Signs of Distress" in the next section). Be ready to pull back or slow down if needed while being careful not to overreact to normal distress.



Remember - There **is no clear, simple, one-size-fits-all parenting plan!**

Signs of Distress

While normal distress is predictable and not harmful to young children, ***chronic or abnormally high levels of distress can harm young children's attachment bond, emotional stability, and brain development.*** Some parenting time schedules and/or situations may expose young children to chronic, high levels of stress.

How do I know if my child's distress is normal?
Here are some signs that might help parents tell the difference between normal and problematic levels of distress.

Normal Separation Anxiety	Problematic Separation Anxiety
Child cries or expresses negative feelings when separated from you, but calms down after a few minutes once you are out of sight.	Child cries or expresses negative feelings when separated from you, but ***can not be calmed*** down after several minutes and may become increasingly upset and inconsolable.
Normal Responses to Reuniting	**Problematic Responses to Reuniting**
Child is happy when they return to you, greets you with affection, and can accept warmth and affection from you.	Child is angry, inconsolable, or flat (numb & withdrawn) when they return to you and cannot accept reassurance from you. In some cases, the child may turn her back, hit or express extreme negative feelings toward you.
Normal Reassurance Seeking Behavior	**Hyper-vigilant Behavior**
Child wants extra reassurance from you, follows you a bit more closely, wants to hold your hand, needs to be held more, have extra attention, etc. This lasts the first day or so after they return, but goes away pretty quickly once they settle back into your care.	Child is hyper-vigilant (constantly watching) about where you are, cannot let you out of their sight during times they used to be able to handle – must be held constantly (can't be put down), clings for days, follows you into the bathroom, can't be left at daycare or grandma's, can't sleep alone, etc.
Mild and Short-Term Regression	**Serious and Long-Term Regression**
Child uses "baby talk" or wants you to do things for them they have learned to do on their own, but only for a short time. They can be redirected to more age appropriate behavior.	Child looses abilities they had previously learned, like babbling, rolling over, crawling or walking, using the potty, or using language. These abilities disappear for days or weeks at a time.
Normal Expression of Feelings	**Problems with Expressing Feelings**
Child expresses a broad range of feelings, happy, sad, mad, etc. and the feelings seem to match the situation.	Child's feelings are flattened (numb & withdrawn) or way out of proportion to the event that triggered the feeling. Child loses interest in environment or activities or is chronically tearful, angry or sad.
Normal Acting Out Behaviors	**Concerning Acting Out Behaviors**
Child tantrums, says "no" more, acts irritable and cranky, does not follow directions, squabbles with peers, but regroups within a day or so.	Child has extreme acting out behavior, hurts self, others, or pets, plays with/smears feces, destroys favorite items or toys. Normal negative behaviors become chronic or start to escalate.

Preparing Children for Transitions

Children under two years have a limited ability to remember over time. This part of memory has not yet developed in their brain. They cannot imagine into the future, so they cannot predict the return of an attachment figure. Children under two are highly sensitive to routines, which give them a sense of safety and security. In addition, they do not have enough language skills to tell you how they are doing and ask for what they need. That means parents have to pay attention to their behavior and anticipate what they need.

With children under age two, consider the following:

- ***Schedule frequent but short parenting time opportunities*** as children under two need frequent contact to bond, but may be stressed by being away from a primary attachment figure for too long. It may help to spend a few hours several times a week (ideally at least two or three) with the non-resident parent. Young babies and children may not be able to tolerate an overnight stay away from their primary attachment figure and familiar environment.
- ***Try to match feeding, nap and activity times*** so that you minimize the amount of change your child has to handle.
- ***Share comfort items*** like a favorite blanket, a pacifier, stuffed animal, recorded song, or other item your child uses to self-soothe.
- ***If you are considering overnights…***
    - ***Take your time*** – too much, too soon might actually slow the process down if it causes the child to fear separation and resist overnights.
    - ***Start with naps*** – naps allow a child to "practice" falling asleep and waking up in a parent's care without having to deal with darkness or long hours away from the primary attachment figure.
    - ***Help each other help the child*** – it is in *everyone's* interest for overnights to go well. It can be helpful if the primary attachment figure can visit the other parent's space and help put the child down for naps or bedtime a few times. This may reassure the child that she or he is okay.
    - ***Be willing to take a step back*** – your child will let you know if things are moving too fast. As difficult as it may be to take a step back, it is important to be sensitive to your child's needs. A child can spend a lot of time with a parent without spending the night. Remember that taking a step back is likely to be temporary and may actually help things move forward once the child has had a chance to settle down.

Children ages two and three have more ability to remember and a better developed sense of time, though it is still limited compared to older children and adults. They can spend more time away from either of their caregivers but may still have separation anxiety when they are away from a primary attachment figure for long periods. Regular, frequent time with both parents is still important. Children this age are more aware of changes in their lives and may be more resistant to change than when they were younger.

For children over two, consider the following:

- ***Schedule longer but still frequent parenting opportunities.*** Children this age can often tolerate a day or two away from a parent, but miss them and feel stressed if the time is longer. Some can tolerate overnights, while other toddlers continue to be anxious about sleeping away from the primary attachment figure.
- ***Help them prepare for transitions.*** It helps to have a routine for transitions. Also, because of their verbal and time abilities, telling them a few hours before a transition that it's approaching is helpful. In addition, telling them you will see them again, that they are okay and predicting that they will have a good time is reassuring.
- ***Watch what you say!*** Even before they can talk, toddlers understand what you say. They also respond to your tone of voice. At this age, toddlers idealize and identify strongly with each parent. They imagine you are perfect. Criticizing the other parent can damage a toddler's self-esteem and trust in each **of you.**
- ***Try to match feeding, nap and activity times*** so that you minimize the amount of change your child has to handle. This is still important for toddlers as some toddlers are even more sensitive than infants to change. They can become anxious, rigid or irritable when routines are not predictable.
- ***Share comfort items*** like a favorite blanket, a pacifier, stuffed animal, recorded song, or other item your child uses to self-soothe. By this age pictures and face time or Skype can also be reassuring.
- ***Be ready to adapt and communicate.*** The growth and development happening in children's language and memory centers is significant. Toddlers' progress can be rapid. What they ate yesterday, today they hate. Their favorite "blankie" is a thing of the past, but they can't let the dog out of their sight. They used to fall asleep with a back-rub and now they want story after story. Parents have to be poised to make adjustments and talk to each other about the changing moods, wants and habits of their toddler.
- ***Holidays and special occasions matter.*** At this age children are becoming aware of special occasions and holidays, which are large and magical in their world. Think about these occasions when you create your plan. Older toddlers can use a calendar to circle the day they will see the other parent, or celebrate a holiday.

Research studies have found that by age four children with two safe and familiar homes generally show few signs of negative outcomes in arrangements that involve multiple overnights and lots of time with each parent. Experts believe that by this age, a healthy attached child can self soothe, anticipate a parent's return, ask for what they need, and understand enough about time to predict reunification with the other parent.

By age four children with two safe homes generally show no signs of negative outcomes when spending multiple overnights with each parent.

Keep in Mind: *Children are more likely to show their negative reactions to stress when they are with the primary attachment figure. This is because they may feel safest with the primary attachment figure* ***and*** *because young children believe the primary attachment figure is responsible for all good or bad feelings.*

A Warning about TV, Social Media & Young Children

Today's infants typically start to watch television by 4 months of age. Research shows that viewing TV or having lots of screen time can affect how much and how quickly children learn. Below are some important facts about your child and the use of media.

- The average child under five watches 4.5 hours of TV per day (40% of their waking hours).
- For ***every hour*** of non-educational TV a child under 3 years watches per day, their risk of having attention problems at age seven increases by 10%.
- Preschool boys who watch violent TV shows (including violent cartoons) are three times more at risk of having behavior problems by age seven. The risk increases with every hour viewed.
- Children ages 8 to 16 months learned 6 to 8 ***fewer new words*** for every hour spent viewing baby DVDs and videos. In fact, children do not benefit from educational programs (now marketed to infants and toddlers) until after age four.
- Program content has a lot to do with the impact to a child's having future attention problems. Programs that are non-educational, entertainment oriented (and commonly fast action paced) or violent significantly increase the risk of future attention problems.
- The American Pediatric Academy (AAP) recommends ***no TV and video viewing for children under two*** and no more than 2 hours a day of any screen activity for three and four year olds.
- Violent and evening-time screen activity has also been associated with sleep problems.

At the end of the day, children learn more from physical, interactive and exploratory play, and being read and sung to than from any two-dimensional screen device.

Summary

Attachment, the deep and lasting emotional bond between a child and at least one caregiver, develops in a child's first years. Secure attachment builds trust and self-confidence. It is the ideal for every child. Parenting time schedules for parents living separately can have a significant impact on emotional development during a child's critical early years. In addition, the involvement of both parents is extremely important for children. Even when parents are living separately, there are ways for both parents to build and maintain connections with a young child, and for each parent to support the other parent's role and relationship with a child.

The effects of overnights on young children depend on several factors, including the child's existing bonds with each parent, the child's temperament, each parent's ability to provide care, and the quality of communication between parents. Overnights spent away from the parent who is the primary care provider can be difficult for some young children, particularly when there is a high level of conflict between parents or when there is a history of domestic violence. Child safety and addressing needs of the child should always come before parents' interests of fairness.

You can enhance your child's experience with each parent by working cooperatively with your co-parent, by learning to notice your child's signs of distress and by preparing your child for transitions. Your child can thrive even when parents are living separately. Parental teamwork can foster healthy emotional development in your young child.

Sample Parenting Time Plans

Ages 0 to 24 months

1**. Plan A**: May be appropriate for families when one parent has not been the child's primary caregiver or has never lived with the child but wants regular contact.

- Three periods of 3 to 6 hours spaced throughout the week. Provides frequent contact to support bonding. Parents need to be able to support 6 child exchanges without conflict.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1-4pm		1-4pm			9am-1pm
	1-4pm		1-4pm			9am-1pm
	1-4pm		1-4pm			9am-1pm
	1-4pm		1-4pm			9am-1pm

- Two period of 4 to 6 hours spaced throughout the week. May be more feasible for parents with nonflexible work schedules or higher levels of conflict.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		12-5pm				9am-3pm
		12-5pm				9am-3pm
		12-5pm				9am-3pm
		12-5pm				9am-3pm

2. **Plan B**: May be appropriate when both parents have been at least partially involved in day-to-day care of the child, have adequate parenting skills and have established a strong bond. This plan could also be phased in after the child has successfully managed an A level plans for a period of time.

- Two periods of 3 to 4 hours and one 8 hour period spaced throughout the week.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
9am-5pm		5-8pm		5-8pm		
9am-5pm		5-8pm		5-8pm		
9am-5pm		5-8pm		5-8pm		
9am-5pm		5-8pm		5-8pm		

3. **Plan C**: May be appropriate when both parents have been equally involved in day-to-day care of the child, facilitated medical appointments and enjoy a strong attachment bond with the child. This plan could also be phased in after a child has successfully managed a B level plan for a period of time.

- Two periods of 3 to 6 hours each week and one overnight each week or alternating weeks.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	4-7pm		4-7pm		6pm overnight to	3pm
	4-7pm		4-7pm			
	4-7pm		4-7pm		6pm overnight to	3pm
	4-7pm		4-7pm			

Ages 24 to 36 months

Any of the above plans for children ages 0 to 24 months may be an appropriate starting point if you are just now establishing a schedule. For children who have already adapted well to the above plans, have lots of practice being separated from a primary caregiver, or have two parents who have been equally involved in caregiving, the following schedule might be a consideration.

- One period of 3 to 6 hours and two non-consecutive overnights each week.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	5 to 8pm		4pm overnight to	9am		Noon overnight to
Noon	5 to 8pm		4pm overnight to	9am		Noon overnight to
Noon	5 to 8pm		4pm overnight to	9am		Noon overnight to
Noon	5 to 8pm		4pm overnight to	9am		Noon overnight to

Keep in Mind: *These sample plans are provided as generally age appropriate schedules and may not fit the developmental needs of all children. Please see the section "The Question of Overnights" in this handbook for additional considerations in crafting your plan. Additional resources on age appropriate parenting plans can be found in the resources at the back of this handbook.*

Sample Co-Parent Communication Log

The sample log below is one option for exchanging information between parents about the child. Parents often find it helpful to use a notebook or form that travels back and forth in the child's diaper bag or backpack, especially when face-to-face communication is difficult. You are encouraged to develop your own log that includes information particular to your family's needs. Any agreed upon form should not be used to intrusively monitor a parent's time and parenting.

Date:_____

Toileting/Diapers: Document any toileting related issues including the child's success with potty training, concerning stools, rashes and treatments used, etc.

Foods: Document eating concerns include adverse reaction to foods, the last time the child ate, etc.

Bottles: Document any concerns with feedings.

Sleeping: Note any concerns with sleeping issues, how long and when the child napped, if there were any difficulties getting the child down to sleep, etc.

Medications: Keep a list of both prescription and non-prescription medications administered, amounts and time given.

Media exposure: How much time did the child spend with electronic media and what was the content – ie. Susie watched Sesame Street for 30 minutes on Wednesday.

Special Moments: Share any memorable things your child said or did during their time with you including mastering a new skill.

Concerns: Share any concerns that presented during your time with the child including such things as illness, fussiness, teething, problems at daycare. etc.

Appointments: Our child has a medical/dental/other appointment on (date)_____@ (time)_____ with _____.

Requests: Include requested changes to the schedule, toys or clothing to be returned, etc.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Family Court Services does not endorse any of these services, they are provided for information purposes only.

Court Forms and Parenting Plan Resources

Basic Parenting Plan Guide and Forms
http://courts.oregon.gov/OJD/OSCA/cpsd/courtimprovement/familylaw/Parentingplanbasic.page?

Planning for Shared Parenting: A Guide For Parents Living Apart
http://www.mass.gov/courts/courtsandjudges/courts/probateandfamilycourt/afccsharedparenting.pdf

Planning for Parenting Time: Arizona's Guide for Parents Living Apart
http://www.azcourts.gov/Portals/31/ParentingTime/PPWguidelines.pdf

Questions to help you decide if a safety focused plan is appropriate
http://courts.oregon.gov/OJD/OSCA/cpsd/courtimprovement/familylaw/parentingplanquest.page?

Safety focused parenting plan guide and forms
http://courts.oregon.gov/OJD/OSCA/cpsd/courtimprovement/familylaw/parentingplanquest.page? Also available in Spanish.

State forms for filing for Custody & Parenting Time, Divorce, Enforcement, etc.
http://courts.oregon.gov/OJD/OSCA/cpsd/courtimprovement/familylaw/pages/familylawforms.aspx

Multnomah County Family Court Services (FCS)
503-988-3189
http://www.multco.us/dcj/fcs

Other Online Resources

211Info.
Free information about community, health and social services can be accessed by calling 211 or the following website:
http://211info.org/

Baby Center
http://www.babycenter.com/

Center for Disease Control – Child Development and Positive Parenting
http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/child/default.htm

Co-Parenting Communication Guide (Published by the Arizona Chapter of the Association for Family and Conciliation Courts)
http://www.afccnet.org/Portals/0/PDF/AzAFCC%20Coparenting%20Communication%20Guide.pdf

Common Sense Media
A non-profit organization providing reviews, ratings, education and advocacy for families and children around the use of media.
www.commonsense.org

The Long Distance Parent
Information and resources for staying connected
http://distanceparent.org/

Mayo Clinic – Infant and Toddler Health
http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/infant-and-toddler-health/MY00362

Our Family Wizard
An on-line subscription service with tools for helping families manage schedules and information between two homes. Offers free accounts for children.
www.ourfamilywizard.com

Proud To Parent
A free, confidential website for never married parents providing interactive programs, articles and videos.
www.proudtoparent.org

Parenting.org – Precious Beginnings
http://www.parenting.org/precious-beginnings

Second Changes – A Guidebook for Parents Wishing to Reunite with Their Children
http://multco.us/sites/default/files/dcj/documents/second_chances_master012510.pdf

Sesame Street Workshop
Videos, tools and resources for parents and young children.
www.sesamestreet.org/divorce

Up To Parents
A free, confidential website for divorced parents providing interactive programs, articles and videos.
www.uptoparents.org

Zero to Three National Center for Infants Toddlers and Families
www.zerotothree.org

Community Programs and Services

The following is a brief list of resources in the community. For a more extensive list please visit our website at www.multo.us/dcj/fcs.

Albina Early Head Start
503-236-9389
Website: http://albinaparents.org/
Serves low income pregnant women and children age 6 weeks to 3 years.

Albina Head Start
503-282-1975
Website: http://albinaparents.org/
Free full day preschool for low income parents who are working or in school or a job training program. For children age 3-5.

Center for Family Success – Parenting Inside Out
503-286-0600
Website: http://www.childrensjusticealliance.org/programs
Parenting Inside Out is an evidence-based parenting skills training program consisting of 48 hours of instruction facilitated over 12 weeks. The no-cost program serves parents who are involved/have been involved in the criminal justice system. Other parenting classes and support services also available.

Lifeworks Northwest/Children's Relief Nursery (CRN)
503-283-4776
Website: http://www.lifeworksnw.org/who-we-serve/children-teens-families/childrens-relief-nursery/
CRN provides a range of no-cost services to children and their families (who reside in a designated catchment area) including: Child-Parent psychotherapy, infant and toddler mental health, therapeutic classrooms, parenting skills groups, parent/infant classes, in home case management, trauma therapy and support, respite childcare, and music therapy.

Impact Northwest
503-988-5961
Website: http://impactnw.org/main-navigation/programs/early-childhood/
Impact Northwest provides no-cost services to children at risk of abuse, neglect, malnutrition and delayed development. Programs include:

- **The Parent-Child Involvement Project (PChIP) of Listen to Kids** works to reduce the negative effects of domestic violence on children (ages 0 to 12) by strengthening the parent-child relationship.
- **Parent Child Development Services:** Parents and children (under age 3) participate in classroom activities and receive support in areas such as nutrition, child development, and discipline. Parents of children 3-5 years old participate in groups that concentrate on developing social skills, school readiness skills, and provide support for transition to school. Services also include home visits, immunization checks and health and development screenings.
- **Healthy Start program:** The program teaches parents to identify strengths and utilize problem-solving skills, and improve the family's support system through linkages and referrals to available community services. Must be referred by the county health department.
- **Early Childhood Fathering Project:** Weekly, drop-in, father-child interaction groups, monthly dads' workshops, and dads' outings, designed to increase fathers' confidence, their competence, and to connect them with other dads and their community. For father's with children ages 0 to 5.

Insights Teen Parent Program
Telephone: 503-239-6996
Website: www.insightstpp.org
Serves teens that are pregnant and/or parenting in Multnomah County through home visits and groups, school based programs, housing, and counseling for domestic violence or family issues.

Letty Owings Center (a program of Central City Concern)
Telephone: 503-235-3546
Website: http://www.centralcityconcern.org/changing-lives/letty-owings-center.html
Residential drug and alcohol treatment program serves poverty level pregnant women and women with young children. A weekly parenting education group is required for all clients.

Metropolitan Family Services – Parenting Program
503-232-0007 ext. 250
Website: http://www.metfamily.org/parent_education.htm
Metropolitan Family Services provides free researched based parent and family services that strengthen families, help children succeed, and create strong connections to the community. Parenting classes meet the requirements for court mandated parents. Parents may self-refer for services including:

- Make Parenting a Pleasure classes that provides support for parents and tools for positive parenting.
- Nurturing Parenting classes for parents of children ages 0 to 8.
- Guiding Good Choices classes and workshops that teach parents healthy communication

Multnomah County Early Childhood Services
503-988-3520
Website: http://web.multco.us/health/early-childhood-services
Culturally responsive home-visiting services and programs that promote family bonding and parent-child attachment, improved pregnancy and birth outcomes, and the adoption of healthy behaviors during pregnancy and early life.

MECP – Multnomah Early Childhood Program (David Douglas School District Administrative Office)
503-261-5535
Website: www.ddouglas.k12.or.us
The Early Intervention program for Multnomah County. No-cost developmental screenings, evaluations and services for children age birth to five (pre-kindergarten) with delays and disabilities.

Morrison Child and Family Services
503-258-4381
Website: http://www.morrisonkids.org/programs.aspx
Morrison provides a comprehensive continuum of mental health, substance abuse and prevention services for eligible children from birth through age 18. Programs for parents of young children include:

- **Parents Anonymous® of Oregon** delivers family-strengthening and child-abuse-prevention services to parents, including those contending with substance abuse and both the child welfare and criminal justice systems.
- **Listos Para Aprender** is a home-visitation, school-preparedness program for families living in Portland who have children younger than three or are pregnant whose primary language is Spanish or an indigenous language from Central or South America.
- **The Incredible Years Parenting Program**. The 10-14 week groups include dinner and child care.
- **Parents as Teacher**. Offered four times per year in Oregon. Spanish trainers are available. Program objectives are to increase parent knowledge of early childhood development, improve parenting practices, provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues, prevent child abuse and neglect and increase children's school readiness and success.
- **Child-Specific Consultation**. Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants screen children and consult with parents and others about supporting the child and the families' functioning. Services take place in the family home, preschool, childcare site, or other community locations. Short-term parent coaching can support parent skill development, implement behavior management strategies, or strengthen the parent-child relationship.

Child Care Resource and Referral-Multnomah County (CCR&R-MC)
503-491-6200
Website: http://www.ccrr-mc.org/
CCR&R-MC is the non-profit, state designated resources and referral agency providing child care referrals, parent resources, and information and referrals on child care subsidy.

Mt Hood Community College Child Development and Support Programs
503-491-6111

- **Early Head Start** enrolls children birth to three and pregnant mom in a variety of programs. Home-based program involves weekly home visits to families, socialization days and a variety of parent groups offered in the Rockwood area. A limited number of child care slots are available.
- **Head Start** has both part day and full day programs for children 3-5 throughout east Multnomah County. Both programs include home visits.
- **Migrant Education Preschool/Head Start** provides preschool and home visit services for migrant eligible families. All services provided in Spanish.

Neighborhood House – Parenting Program
503-246-1663
Website: http://www.nhpdx.org/WhatWeDo/parentingprogram.html
Services for families with children ages zero to six include: parent-child interactive play groups, parenting support groups, workshops on nutrition, child development and early brain development to strengthen parenting, home visits, health and developmental screenings for all participating children, parent resource lending library, toy and book lending library for children, support and advocacy for families of children entering school, linkages to community services and opportunities, Family Literacy program including ESL classes and school transition services.

Volunteers of America (VOA)– Family Relief Nursery
503-236-8492
Website: http://www.voaor.org/Learn-About-our-Services/Children-and-Family-Services/Family-Relief-Nursery.aspx
VOA provides services to strengthen families and give children the best possible start in life including a therapeutic nursery, respite care, home-based services, transportation services and parenting classes.

WIC- Multnomah County
503-988-3505
Webiste: http://web.multco.us/health/wic
Services include nutrition education classes, breastfeeding promotion and support, breast pumps, food vouchers and information and referral to other health and social service programs.

Domestic Violence Resources

Hotlines:
Portland Women's Crisis Line ..... **503-235-5333** or **toll-free1-888-235-5333**
Linéa UNICA (Español) .....**503-232-4448** or **toll-free1-888-232-4448**
National Domestic Violence Hotline .....**1-800-799-SAFE /7233 TTY 1-800-787-3224**

Shelters and Services:
The Gateway Center for Domestic Violence **503-988-6400**
Healing Roots Center *Services for African American Women*..... ...**503-595-9591**
Volunteers of America Home Free..... **503-771-5503**
Bradley Angle House Emergency Shelter..... **503-281-2442**
Raphael House. (*For women & children escaping DV*)**.....503-222-6507/503-222-6222**

Legal Services:
Restraining Orders / Stalking Orders .....**503-988-3022 Voicemail option #2**
Legal Aid's Domestic Violence Project **503-224-4086**
(Pro bono legal representation for low-income petitioners with contested restraining order hearings in Multnomah County. Call Tues thru Friday.)

BOOKS

Books about General Parenting
Ames, Louise Bates (1976) ***Your One-Year-Old*** **(one for every year through** ***Your Ten-to Fourteen-Year-Old*****)**
Brazelton, T. Berry (1992) ***Touchpoints: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development***.
Cline, Foster & Fay, Jim (2002**)** ***Love & Logic Magic for Early Childhood: Practical Parenting***
Christophersen, Edward R. (1998) ***Beyond Discipline: Parenting That Lasts A Lifetime***
Christophersen, Edward R. (1998) ***Little People: Guidelines For Common Sense Child Rearing***
Chirstophersen, Edward R. and Mortweet, Susan L. (2003) ***Parenting That Works: Building Skills That Last a Lifetime***
Coloroso, Barbara (1994) ***Kids Are Worth It***
Crary, Elizabeth & Casebolt, Pati. (1990) ***Pick Up Your Socks & Other Skills Growing Children Need***
Dinkmeyer, Don & McKay, Gary (1996) ***Raising a Responsible Child: How to Prepare Your Child for Today's Complex World***
Dinkmeyer & McKay (1988*)* ***The Parents Handbook - STEP - Systematic Training for Effective Parenting***
Dinkmeyer & McKay (1998) ***The Parents Handbook STEP Teen - Systematic Training for Effective Parenting of Teens***
Eliot, Lise (1999) ***What's Going On In There? How the Brain and Mind Develop in the First Five Years of Life***
Faber, Elaine (1980) ***How To Talk So Kids Will Listen And Listen So Kids Will Talk***
Glenn, Stephen & Nelson, Jane (1989) ***Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World***
Leman, Kevin (2000) ***Making Children Mind Without Losing Yours***
Nelson, Jane (1999) ***Positive Discipline for Single Parents: Nurturing, Cooperation, Respect & Joy in Your Single Parent Family***
Nordling, Joanne (1999) ***Taking Charge: Caring Discipline That Works at Home and at School***
Phelan, Thomas (2003) ***1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2-12***
Siegel, Daniel J. & Hartzell, Mary (2003). ***Parenting from the Inside Out: How a Deeper Self-Understanding Can Help You Raise Children Who Thrive***
Steyer, James P. (2012) ***Talking Back to Facebook: The Common Sense Guide to Raising Kids in the Digital Age***

Books For Children Pre-School and Early Elementary (Ages 3-7)

Dams, Eric (2003) ***On the Day His Daddy Left***
Boelts, Maibeth and Bladholm, Cheri (2004) ***With My Mom, With My Dad: A Book about Divorce***
Brown, Marc and Brown, Laurie Krasny (1988) ***Dinosaurs Divorce***
Lansky, Vicki and Prince, Jane (1999) ***It's Not Your Fault, Koko Bear*** [also available in Spanish]
Levins, Sandra and Langdo, Bryan (2005) ***Was It the Chocolate Pudding?: A Story For Little Kids About Divorce***
Masurel, Claire (author) & McDonald Denton, Kady (illust.) (2003) ***Two Homes***
Moore-Mallinos, Jennifer and Fabrega, Marta (2005) ***When My Parents Forgot How to Be Friends***
Nightengale, Lois (1996*)* ***My Parents Still Love Me Even Though They're Getting Divorced: An Interactive Tale for Children***
Schmitz, Tamara (2008) ***Standing on My Own Two Feet: A Child's Affirmation of Love in the Midst of Divorce***

Books For Parents on Divorce

Ackerman, Marc (1997) *Does* ***Wednesday Mean Mom's House or Dad's?***
Ahrons, Constance (1998) ***The Good Divorce: Keeping Your Family Together When Your Marriage Comes Apart***
Fisher, Bruce (1992) ***Rebuilding When Your Relationship Ends***
Gold, Lois (1992) ***Between Love and Hate***
Johnston, Janet (1997) ***Through the Eyes of Children: Healing Stories for Children of Divorce***
Londrell, Kenneth (1998) ***Be a Great Divorced Dad***
Lyster, Mimi (2005) ***Building a Parenting Plan that Works***
Marquardt, Elizabeth (2005) ***Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce***
Mandelstein, Paul (2006) ***Always Dad: Being a Great Father During & After Divorce***
Neuman, Gary (1999***) Helping Children Cope With Divorce the Sandcastles Way***
Price, Margaret "Pegi" (2010) ***Divorce and the Special Needs Child: A Guide for Parents***
Ricci, Isolina. (1980) ***Mom's House, Dad's House: Making Shared Custody Work***
Ross, Julie and Corcoran, Judy (1997) ***Joint Custody with a Jerk***
Schneider, Meg & Zuckerberg, Joan (1996) ***Difficult Questions Kids Ask & Are Afraid to Ask About Divorce***
Stewart, James (2000) ***The Child Custody Book: How to Protect your Children and Win Your Case***
Wallerstein, Judith & Blakeslee, Sandra (2003) ***What About the Kids? Raising Your Children Before, During & After Divorce***
Wallerstein, Judith & Kelley, Joan (1980) ***Surviving the Breakup: How Children and Parents Cope with Divorce***
Worthen, Tom (2001) ***Broken Hearts…Healing: Young Poets Speak Out on Divorce***

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