

Coronavirus and How to Navigate/Modify Custody Arrangements and Parenting Plans – Creating a Temporary Parenting Plan

In this time of uncertainty, many questions have arisen regarding joint custody and whether parenting plans that are in place should be followed or modified. Many parents are considering putting a Temporary Parenting Plan in place. Some of the issues being addressed in a modified/temporary plan include, among others:

- (a) whether the children should stay with one parent for a certain period of time or if they should continue with the custody schedule in place;
- (b) what happens if one of the parents gets sick;
- (c) whether both parents will continue to have joint decision-making authority over health matters for the children;

If you decide to modify your parenting plan and determine that the children will remain with one parent, think of alternative arrangements so that the children will not miss quality time with the other parent. Try setting up times for the children to spend time reading or playing virtual games with the other parent by facetime or some other app that allows them face to face contact. Consider modifying your summer schedule and vacation schedule to allot for the other parent to have substantial time with the children once things get back to a more normal routine.

If you do modify the parenting plan, it should be done in writing. It should also be clear that there is an end date to

this plan and that the original parenting plan would resume at that time. The end date can be a specific calendar date or something like when the children go back to school or the end of the school year. A date can also be set to determine if the modified plan needs to be extended. The children should be informed of the new temporary plan so that there is no confusion or added disruption to their lives.

A Temporary Parenting Plan can be put into place by the parties or with the help of a third party. For those seeking assistance in modifying their parenting plan, contact Sheree Donath at 516-522-2743 or at sheree@donathlaw to schedule a time to speak.

The current health crisis should not be used as a means to alienate the other parent and ignore the custody arrangements and parenting plan you have in place. It is a time to try to keep your children safe and healthy.