



DIVORCE WITH A PLAN

Family Law Attorneys

THE CHILD CUSTODY CHECKLIST *With A Plan*



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Welcome to Divorce with a **PLAN**

When facing the important decisions surrounding child custody, it's essential to approach the process with clarity and preparation. Custody decisions have a profound impact on your children's well-being, your family's dynamics, and your future relationship as co-parents. Taking the time to thoughtfully plan for this process ensures you are prioritizing what matters most — your children's best interests.

Understanding the legal, emotional, and logistical aspects of child custody can be overwhelming. Our Child Custody Checklist is designed to guide you through this journey, offering clear steps and valuable insights to help you navigate these challenges with confidence and care.

With proper planning and informed decision-making, you can create a custody arrangement that protects your family's future and fosters a supportive environment for your children.

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Clarity Stage

At this stage we want you to gain clarity in what the actual issues of the case are. We find out narrow into what we are arguing about, explain the law to you, explain what the courts are looking for in your case and what settlements usually is in cases like yours. Our main objective during this stage is to educate you about the strengths and weaknesses of their case and to ask the opposing side what their issues are. If we are able to fashion a settlement at this time we shall give our clients that option.

The court requires families to file parenting plans, child support financial statement, and file a complaint detailing what has happened and what you want the court to grant you. You can find the law on this at <https://www.peoples-law.org/child-custody-maryland>. We like to start the process of the parenting plan being filled out at this stage.

We also send out at least two letters during this phase to the opposing party in an attempt at resolving the issues in the case from the beginning.

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Clarity Stage

Q: What is a Parenting Plan?

A **parenting plan** is essentially a roadmap directing how children will be raised after separation or divorce. At **Divorce With A Plan**, our main aim to ensure that the children are the main focus and strive for both parties to have an active role in the childrens' lives.

Q: Why are parenting plans important?

While parenting plans are child-focused, they also **foster collaborative ideas, encourage co-parenting**, ensure the child's continued relationships with each party are the centralized focus, and gives each party a chance to come up with solutions to problems.

The goal is to provide predictability and structure for how the family will function when you no longer live together with the other parent.

For the court, parenting plans provide insight to the family dynamic and help make child custody orders and modifications uniform and equitable.

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Clarity Stage

Parenting Plan Sample:

What parenting schedule split is right for you and your family?

- ☐ 50/50
- ☐ 60/40
- ☐ 70/30
- ☐ 80/20
- ☐ Other

What are your parenting Goals?

What are the communication ground rules?

Fair time sharing times to discuss:

- Monthly Schedule
- Vacation times
- Holidays
- Special days (birthdays, parents' birthdays)
- Special occasions (weddings, funerals, graduations)
- School sports, religious and community-events (parent-teacher conferences, school programs, sports events, religious programs)
- Grandparent time-sharing arrangements
- Other extended family time sharing, if any

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Clarity Stage

Parenting Plan Sample:

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

TIME	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
6:00					
7:00					
8:00					
9:00					
10:00					
11:00					
12:00					
13:00					
14:00					
15:00					
16:00					
17:00					
18:00					
19:00					
20:00					
21:00					

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Parenting Plan Sample:

WEEKLY SCHEDULE PLANNER

Mon	
Tue	
Wed	
Thu	
Fri	
Sat	
Sun	
Note	

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Child Support Financial Statement Form:

Financial Statement

(Child Support Guidelines)

Md. Rule 9-203(b)
(CC-DR-030)

I state that I am the _____ of the minor child(ren), including children who have not attained the age of 19 years old, are not marraird of self-supporting, and are enrolled in secondary school:

Please write your response

Name Minor #1

Please write your response

Minor #1 Date of Birth

Please write your response

Name Minor #2

Please write your response

Minor #2 Date of Birth

Please write your response

Name Minor #3

Please write your response

Minor #3 Date of Birth

Please write your response

Name Minor #4

Please write your response

Minor #4 Date of Birth

Please write your response

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Child Support Financial Statement Form:

The following is a list of my income and expenses (see below):
See definitions below before filling out.

Total monthly income (before taxes)

Please write your response

Child Support I am paying for my other child(ren) each month

Please write your response

Alimony I am paying each Month to:

Please write your response

How much alimony are you paying this person each month?

Please write your response

Alimony I am Receiving Each month from:

Please write your response

Amount of alimony I am receiving each month:

Please write your response

For the child or children listed above:

The monthly health insurance premium

Please write your response

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Child Support Financial Statement Form:

Work-related monthly child are expenses

Extraordinary monthly medical expenses

Please write your response

School and transportation expenses

Please write your response

How much alimony are you paying this person each month?

Please write your response

To figure the monthly of expenses, weekly expenses should be multiplied by 4.3 and yearly expenses should be divided by 12. If you do not pay the same amount each month for any of the categories listed, figure what your average monthly expense is.

I solemnly affirm under the penalties of perjury that the foregoing paper are true to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

Please write your response

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Child Support Financial Statement Form:

To figure the monthly amount of expenses, weekly should be multiplied by 4.3 and yearly expenses should be divided by 12. If you do not pay the same amount each month for any of the the categories listed, figure what your average monthly expenses is.

Total Monthly Income: Include income from all the sources including self-employment rent, royalties, business income, salaries, wages, commissions, bonuses, dividends, pensions, interest, trust, annuities, social security benefits, workers compensation, unemployment benefits, disability benefits, alimony or maintenance received, tips, income from side jobs, severance pay, capital gains, gifts, prizes, lottery winnings, etc. Do not report benefits from means-tested public assistance programs such as food stamps or AFDC.

Extraordinary Medical Expenses: Uninsured expenses over \$100 for single illness or condition including orthodontia, dental treatment, asthma treatment, physical therapy, treatment for any chronic health problems, and professional counseling or psychiatric therapy for diagnosed mental disorders.

Child Care Expenses: Actual child care expenses incurred on behalf of a child due to employment or job search of either parent with amount to be determined by actual experience of the level required to provide quality care from a licensed source.

School and transportation Expenses: Any expenses for attending a special or private elementary or secondary school to meet the particular needs of the child and expenses for transportation of the child between the homes of the parents.



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"Best Interests of the Child" Standard:

[HTTPS://WWW.PEOPLES-LAW.ORG/CHILD-CUSTODY-MARYLAND](https://www.peoples-law.org/child-custody-maryland)

Regardless of any agreement you may have reached, the courts will look to determine the "best interests" of the child. They look at several factors. No single factor is most important. This is a list of some, but not all, of the factors, that courts will consider.

Material Opportunity - Which parent has the financial resources to give the child more things?

Agreements - Is there a custody agreement already in place?

Any Prior Abandonment or Surrender of Custody - Is there a history of one parent walking out and leaving the other parent to cope with the child and the home? Which parent left when you last broke up?

Religious Views - These will be important in the court's decision only if you can show that religious views affect the physical or emotional well-being of the child.

Ability to Maintain Family Relationships - Who will be best able to help the child keep family relationships? Who is going to let the child speak with their ex-mother-in-law, for example? Who will not penalize the child for any bad action on the part of the other parent?

Age, Health and Gender of Child

Length of Separation - How long has the parent been separated from the child?

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Primary Care Giver - Who is the person who takes care of the child? Who feeds the child, shops for their clothes, gets them up for school, bathes them, and arranges day care? Who does the child turn to when they get hurt?

Child Preference - The decision of the court may be reversed on appeal if the judge will not hear the child's preference. However, the judge may choose to interview the child outside the presence of the parents. Though it is rare, the court will hear from a child under 7 years, and a child as young as 5 or 6 years of age may be heard. The child's maturity, and whether the child can tell the truth from fiction will guide the decision whether a child may be heard. A child of at least 10 or 12 years of age is certainly entitled to have their opinions heard and given weight in legal proceedings about custody. Additionally, the court has the power to appoint an attorney for the child in contested cases.

Residences of Parents and Opportunity for Visitation - How close do the parents live to each other? How close do they live to members of the child's extended family? Which parent lives closest to the child's school and social circle?

Character and Reputation

Disability - A party's disability is only relevant to a custody decision if the disability affects the best interest of the child.

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Planning and Discovery Phase

DISCOVERY



A new client welcome packet will be sent to the client's email.

SETTLEMENT OFFERS



We send out at least one settlement offer to the other side based on the conversations and the needs of our client. If no response is given we are on a biweekly basis providing our clients with options to adjust strategy as we both see fit. This is a moving target that depends highly on what's happening in your case, and is never a cookie cutter answer. The court also mediation and we prepare clients for that mediation

RISKS/BENEFITS OF SETTling VERSUS GOING TO TRIAL



Before the settlement conference we have a conversation with our clients regarding the risks and benefits of trial based on the current status of the case and we go over our legal opinion, what we think the clients wants, and want we thinks the court will do. 85% of family law cases settle at this stage, if it doesn't we transition into the third phase.

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Relentless

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

At this stage we are analyzing and preparing for trial. Again 85/% of cases settle. If you don't settle and we are this stage then there is a financial decision to pay for a trial for the outcome that you want. On average per day for trial is \$6500 per day for trial prep and trial. At this stage if you make it to the 15% of people who have to try their case we need to have a conversation about the difference between the outcome that you want and the price for trial. This is a fact that we armor you with so that are you prepared and ready to concentrate on your trial.

FINAL EVIDENCE AND TESTIMONY ANALYSIS

At this phase we are finalizing all settlement offers with the other side, we are reviewing our evidence to make sure we have what we need to prove points in the case, we are contacting witnesses to go over what we believe can assist us with conveying what has occurred in your life. This conversation includes the final review of evidence and choices that only the attorney can make as to how the case will be presented to the court.

DRAFTING OF ORDER ANALYSIS

Trial is the time to listen openly to all settlement agreements, consider the risks and benefits of trial, and consider alternative option that we provide, the court provide, and YES even those that opposing counsel may provide that helps a reasonable settlement based on what the people who actually knows what happens on a day to day basis in their lives thinks is best.

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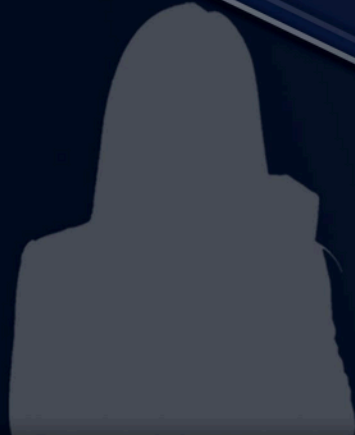


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CLIENT'S TESTIMONIAL



“ CARMEN OSEHON ”



I am returning client and as usual the Rouse law firm did not disappoint.

Ms Dasha was very professional. She paid attention to detail and came well prepared.

She answered all questions honestly and thoroughly. I'm well pleased with result.

I highly recommend her services.



“ LINDA LAS VEGAS ”



Divorce With A Plan has made a positive impact on my relationships as I have had two divorces.

They have been there for me and I can affirm that My Special Plan came from the Best of The Higher Knowledge!



“ UCHE OMESUH ”



I have never come across an Attorney who is so real, so authentic, so compassionate, so empathic and so patient and I know several of them.

Attorney Josephia Rouse is the BEST! She isn't bias at all. She keeps it real and gives you the absolute best legal advice you need.

We need may Attorneys like her in our world.

Our society will be so much better if all Attorneys are as competent as Ms Rouse.

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Thank you!

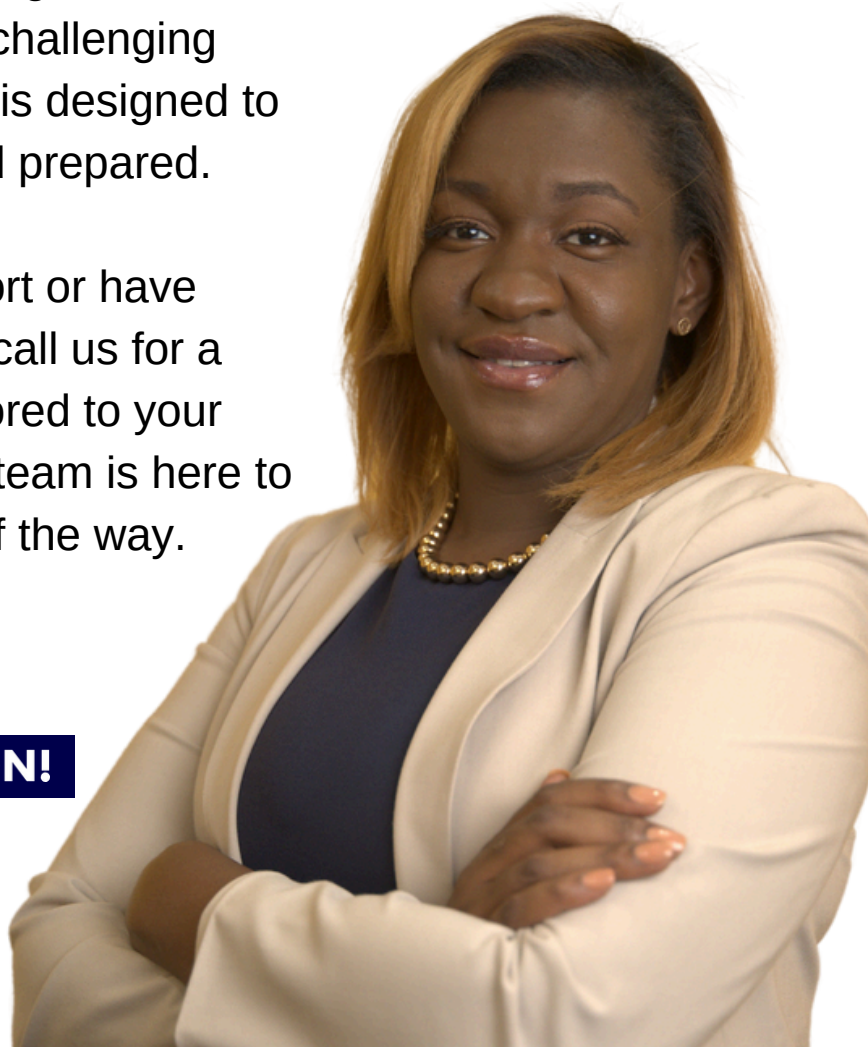
SPEAK WITH AN EXPERIENCED FAMILY LAW ATTORNEY NOW

We truly appreciate you taking the first step toward navigating this challenging time. Our Divorce Checklist is designed to help you stay organized and prepared.

If you need additional support or have questions, don't hesitate to call us for a consultation with a plan tailored to your needs. Our compassionate team is here to help guide you every step of the way.

We're just one call away!

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