



What is Shared Parenting?

A definition by *Families Need Fathers*

Shared parenting is when children are brought up with the love and guidance of both parents.

There is much discussion about how to describe the continued involvement of both parents in the lives of their children following separation or divorce. 'Shared parenting', 'equal parenting', 'involved parenting', 'co-operative parenting', 'parallel parenting' and others are used.

The term preferred by FNF is **shared parenting**.

Unlike some of the others, it makes explicit that both parents must share this role. Co-operation should be earnestly sought, and equality is a desirable long-term objective, but 'shared parenting' captures these features and more.

What do we mean by 'shared parenting'?

Firstly, shared parenting goes wider than the time each parent spends with their child(ren). It must involve the child spending a significant proportion of their time with each parent. But it does not imply a stated or fixed proportion of parenting time being allocated to each parent, much less that the child's time must be divided equally between the two parents in every case.

There must be a proportion of parenting time that is so low that parenting can scarcely be said to be 'shared'. One could argue this level. What seems to be the 'standard ration' that children are offered - a fortnightly visit to their non-resident parent, plus some time around holidays - cannot be said to be shared parenting. Nor can parents with so little parenting time be effectively involved in any decisions that need to be taken.

It is important to note that shared parenting does not imply a single time in a child's life. It refers to a childhood-long parenting plan. The plan is

reviewed periodically and adapted to fit a child's emotional, scholastic and physical needs as they grow.

Our definition revolves around the *objectives to be achieved*.

These are as follows:

- 1) That the children feel that they have two properly involved parents.
- 2) That one parent is not able to dominate the lives of the children at the expense of the other or to control the other parent via the children.
- 3) That the parents have broadly equal 'moral authority' in the eyes of the children and that the children have free access to both their parents if there are issues affecting them.
- 4) That the children are able to share the lives of both their parents 'in the round' - for example not spending all 'routine time' with one parent and only 'leisure time' with the other.
- 5) That the parents are in a position of legal and moral equality, and are considered in this light by the children as well as friends, neighbours, teachers etc as well as public authorities, this would apply to routine as well as major matters.
- 6) That there is no part of the children's lives, for example their school life or having friends, that one parent is excluded from by virtue of the allocation of parenting time or the law on separation/divorce and children.
- 7) That the children are not by virtue of the allocation of parenting time excluded from any part of either parent's life.
- 8) That the children spend enough time with both parents to be able to negate any attempts at 'parental alienation'.
- 9) That the children do not develop stereotyped ideas from their parents about the roles of the sexes, for example that a father's role is chiefly financial and a 'giver of treats', and that mothers have responsibility for everything else.

How to apply these criteria to particular families will be a matter of discussion and negotiation, taking into account the individual needs and wishes of the children and parents, and the circumstances in question. As always, the needs of the child must be paramount.

Examples on how to proceed in the necessary direction

1) That week-end contact begins with picking up the child(ren) from school/nursery on Friday and continues to delivering them on Monday. This will increase equality of parenting time, allow sufficient time for real shared activities and bonding, allow contact between the parent currently known as the "Non Resident Parent" and the school plus other parents and their children (which are likely to be their own children's friends). In the event of concerns about the parents meeting each other, the need for this will be reduced.

2) That there be mid-week contact, normally picking up the child from school/nursery, and, if practical, the child staying overnight. This will increase the range of activities that the children share with both parents. It is important, for example, that both parents are involved in homework.

3) That 'half the holidays' be interpreted as half the time school children are not at school rather than half the time the adults have as holidays. It should include having school training days and having other holidays and festival days, if the parents cannot both be involved.

The lives of babies and children too young to go to school are less constrained. Shared parenting will often mean a more equal allocation of parenting time than is possible for older children, which can benefit both parents e.g. by allowing them to do paid work more easily, as well as the child.

4) That special days - for example Christmas or other festival holidays, the children's and their siblings' birthdays - be equally shared if the parents cannot be together for them. That the children also be allowed to be with the relevant parent for days that are special for that parent - for example their birthdays and those of their grandparents, or for other festivals and important events. Examples are 'take your child to work days', sports fixtures (for both the children and the parents), Mothers' Day with their mothers and Fathers' Day with their fathers.

5) That the children are not put into day-care, after-school clubs, babysat or other alternatives to parental care, if one of their parents is available to look after them.

6) If one parent has demands that restrict their availability for parenting they should not be allowed to claim priority in the time they have available.

7) That time for the children to see their grandparents and wider family - on both sides of the family - must be adequate.

EDM 482

Children and Shared Parenting, 26th January 2004

52 Signatures

Leigh, Edward

Bailey, Adrian	Barnes, Harry	Beggs, Roy
Bennett, Andrew	Blunt, Crispin	Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Virginia	Brake, Tom	Breed, Colin
Burns, Simon	Cable, Vincent	Calton, Patsy
Cameron, David	Caton, Martin	Chapman, Sydney
Colman, Tony	Cranston, Ross	Dobbin, Jim
Doughty, Sue	Drew, David	Etherington, Bill
Francis, Hywel	Garnier, Edward	George, Andrew
Hunter, Andrew	Hurst, Alan	Jenkins, Brian
Jones, Nigel	Kaufman, Gerald	King, Andy
Lamb, Norman	Lloyd, Tony	Marris, Rob
Marsden, Paul	Martlew, Eric	McWalter, Tony
McWilliam, John	Reed, Andy	Robinson, Iris
Selous, Andrew	Sheerman, Barry	Simpson, Alan
Singh, Marsha	Spink, Bob	Stinchcombe, Paul
Taylor, David	Tyler, Paul	Wright, David
Winterton, Ann	Winterton, Nicholas	

That this House believes that children are best brought up with the full involvement of both their natural parents and, if possible, grandparents and members of their wider family; further believes that all children of separated parents are entitled to the love, personal care and support of both their natural parents in their everyday lives unless reason is shown otherwise; further believes that both parents have a duty to support the relationship of a child with the other parent; further believes that public and private institutions should recognise both parents of children with whom they deal; further believes that all involved parties should seek to minimise any loss of damage done by divorce or separation or alienation to children's relationships with either of their parents or with their wider family; further believes that the rewards of, and sacrifices of resources devoted to, parenting should be fairly shared between the parents; and calls for public policy to be adapted to remove obstacles to this objective.

EDM 128

Parenting Time Presumption, 18.05.2005

362 signatures

May, Theresa

Abbott, Diane	Ainsworth, Peter	Alexander, Danny
Amess, David	Ancram, Michael	Anderson, David
Arbuthnot, James	Atkins, Charlotte	Atkinson, Peter
Austin, Ian	Austin, John	Bacon, Richard
Baker, Norman	Baldry, Tony	Banks, Gordon
Barker, Gregory	Barlow, Celia	Baron, John
Barrett, John	Bayley, Hugh	Begg, Anne
Bellingham, Henry	Benyon, Richard	Bercow, John
Berry, Roger	Betts, Clive	Binley, Brian
Blackman-Woods, Roberta	Blunt, Crispin	Bone, Peter
Borrow, David S	<i>Bottomley, Peter</i>	Brady, Graham
Brake, Tom	Brazier, Julian	Breed, Colin
Brokenshire, James	Brown, Nicholas	Browne, Jeremy
Bruce, Malcolm	Burgon, Colin	Burns, Simon
Burrowes, David	Burstow, Paul	Burt, Alistair
Burt, Lorely	Butler, Dawn	Butterfill, John
Cable, Vincent	Cameron, David	Campbell, Gregory
Campbell, Ronnie	Carmichael, Alistair	Carswell, Douglas
Caton, Martin	Challen, Colin	Clapham, Michael
Clappison, James	Clark, Greg	Clark, Katy
Clegg, Nick	Clelland, David	Cohen, Harry
Connarty, Michael	Conway, Derek	Cook, Frank
Cooper, Rosie	Corbyn, Jeremy	Crabb, Stephen
Crausby, David	Cruddas, Jon	Cryer, Ann
Cunningham, Jim	Curry, David	Curtis-Thomas, Claire
Davies, David TC	Davies, Philip	Davies, Quentin
Davis, David	Dean, Janet	Devine, Jim
Dismore, Andrew	Djanogly, Jonathan	Dobbin, Jim
Dodds, Nigel	Donaldson, Jeffrey	Donohoe, Brian H
Doran, Frank	Dorrell, Stephen	Dorries, Nadine
Dowd, Jim	Duddridge, James	Duncan, Alan
Dunne, Philip	Durkan, Mark	Efford, Clive
Ellwood, Tobias	Engel, Natascha	Ennis, Jeff

Etherington, Bill	Evans, Nigel	Evennett, David
<i>Fabricant, Michael</i>	Fallon, Michael	Farron, Timothy
Featherstone, Lynne	Field, Frank	Field, Mark
Flello, Robert	Flynn, Paul	Foster, Don
Foster, Michael Jabez	Fox, Liam	Francis, Hywel
Francois, Mark	Fraser, Christopher	Galloway, George
Gapes, Mike	<i>Garnier, Edward</i>	Gauke, David
George, Andrew	George, Bruce	Gerrard, Neil
Gibson, Ian	Gillan, Cheryl	Godsiff, Roger
Goldsworthy, Julia	Goodman, Helen	Goodman, Paul
Goodwill, Robert	Gove, Michael	Gray, James
Grayling, Chris	Greening, Justine	Greenway, John
Grieve, Dominic	Grogan, John	Gummer, John
Hamilton, David	Hamilton, Fabian	Hammond, Phillip
Hammond, Stephen	Hancock, Mike	Hands, Greg
Harper, Mark	Harris, Evan	Harvey, Nick
Hayes, John	Heald, Oliver	Heath, David
Hemming, John	Henderson, Doug	Hendry, Charles
Herbert, Nick	Hermon, Lady	Hillier, Meg
Hodgson, Sharon	Hoey, Kate	Holloway, Adam
Holmes, Paul	Hood, Jim	Hopkins, Kelvin
Horam, John	Horwood, Martin	Hosie, Stewart
Howard, Michael	Howarth, David	Howarth, George
Hoyle, Lindsay	Hughes, Simon	Huhne, Chris
Humble, Joan	Hunt, Jeremy	Hunter, Mark
Hurd, Nick	Iddon, Brian	Jack, Michael
Jackson, Stewart	Jenkin, Bernard	Jenkins, Brian
Jones, David	Jones, Kevan	Jones, Martyn
Kawczynski, Daniel	Keen, Alan	Keetch, Paul
Kemp, Fraser	Key, Robert	Khan, Sadiq
Kilfoyle, Peter	Kirkbride, Julie	Knight, Greg
Laing, Eleanor	Lait, Jacqui	Lamb, Norman
Lancaster, Mark	Lansley, Andrew	Laxton, Bob
Lazarowicz, Mark	Leech, John	Leigh, Edward
Lepper, David	Letwin, Oliver	Lewis, Julian
Lidington, David	Lilley, Peter	Lloyd, Tony
Llwyd, Elfyn	<i>Loughton, Tim</i>	Love, Andrew
Luff, Peter	MacKay, Andrew	Maclean, David
MacNeil, Angus	Main, Anne	Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John	Marris, Rob	Marsden, Gordon
Marshall, David	Marshall-Andrews, Robert	Mates, Michael
Maude, Francis	McCafferty, Chris	McCarthy-Fry, Sarah
McCrea, Dr William	McDonnell, Alasdair	McDonnell, John
McGovern, Jim	McGrady, Eddie	McIntosh, Anne

McLoughlin, Patrick	Meacher, Michael	Mercer, Patrick
Miller, Maria	Milton, Anne	Mitchell, Andrew
Mitchell, Austin	Moore, Michael	Morden, Jessica
Morgan, Julie	Moss, Malcolm	Mulholland, Greg
Mullin, Chris	Mundell, David	Murphy, Denis
Murphy, Paul	Murrison, Andrew	Naysmith, Doug
Newmark, Brooks	Oaten, Mark	O'Brien, Stephen
O'Hara, Edward	Olner, Bill	Opik, Lembit
Osborne, Sandra	Ottaway, Richard	Owen, Albert
Paice, James	Pelling, Andrew	Penning, Mike
Penrose, John	Pickles, Eric	Pope, Greg
Price, Adam	Prisk, Mark	Pritchard, Mark
Prosser, Gwyn	Pugh, John	Randall, John
Reed, Jamie	Reid, Alan	Rifkind, Malcolm
Riordan, Linda	Robertson, Angus	Robertson, Hugh
Robertson, Laurence	Robinson, Iris	Robinson, Peter
Rogerson, Daniel	Rosindell, Andrew	Rowen, Paul
Ruane, Chris	Ruddock, Joan	Ruffley, David
Russell, Bob	Salmond, Alex	Salter, Martin
Sanders, Adrian	Scott, Lee	Selous, Andrew
Shapps, Grant	Shepherd, Richard	Short, Clare
Simpson, David	Simpson, Keith	Singh, Marsha
Skinner, Dennis	Smith, Geraldine	Smith, Robert
Soames, Nicholas	Southworth, Helen	Spellar, John
Spelman, Caroline	Spicer, Michael	Spink, Bob
Strang, Gavin	Streeter, Gary	Stuart, Graham
Stunell, Andrew	Swayne, Desmond	Swire, Hugo
Syms, Robert	Tami, Mark	<i>Taylor, David</i>
Taylor, Ian	Taylor, Matthew	Taylor, Richard
Teather, Sarah	Thurso, John	Todd, Mark
Tredinnick, David	Trickett, Jon	Truswell, Paul
Turner, Desmond	Ussher, Kitty	Vaizey, Edward
Vara, Shailesh	Vaz, Keith	Viggers, Peter
Villiers, Theresa	Vis, Rudi	Walker, Charles
Wallace, Ben	Walley, Joan	Walter, Robert
Wareing, Robert N	Waterson, Nigel	Watkinson, Angela
Webb, Steve	Weir, Mike	Whittingdale, John
Widdecombe, Ann	Wiggin, Bill	Willetts, David
Williams, Betty	Williams, Hywel	Williams, Roger
Williams, Stephen	Willis, Phil	Willott, Jenny
Wilshire, David	Wilson, Robert	Wilson, Sammy
Winterton, Ann	Winterton, Nicholas	Wishart, Pete
Wright, Jeremy	Wyatt, Derek	Yeo, Tim
Younger-Ross, Richard		

That this House believes that separated parents should each have a legal presumption of contact with their children, so that both parents can continue to parent their children and children are able to benefit from being parented by both their parents, as well as from contact with any grandparents and extended family members able and willing to play a role in their upbringing; and urges the Government to replace the legal term 'contact' with 'parenting time' and to ensure that parenting time orders can be and are made and enforced by the courts, save where a child's safety would be at risk