KIDS NEED DADS

PARENTING PLAN WORKBOOK

A practical guide for New Zealand whānau

WELCOME



PARENTING PLAN WORKBOOK

A practical, step-by-step guide for parents, guardians and whānau planning care after separation.

WORK TOGETHER • PLAN CLEARLY • KEEP CHILDREN FIRST



START HERE

Your roadmap

Follow these five steps. Use the worked examples before completing the blank exercises.

1

Think about your child

Identify routines, needs, relationships and what helps your child feel secure.

2

Map the care schedule

Mark the days and nights for each caregiver, including changeover times.

3

Agree on the details

Write down holidays, communication, schooling, health and costs.

4

Check and sign

Read the plan together, resolve unclear wording and sign copies.

5

Review and adjust

Choose a review date and agree how changes will be discussed.



CHILD-CENTRED PLANNING

Begin with your child

There is no single schedule that fits every family. Use these prompts to guide your decisions.

EXAMPLE: A preschooler

A four-year-old attends preschool Monday to Thursday. Both homes keep similar bedtimes and share updates about medication and routines.

ASK YOURSELVES

What routines matter most? Who provides transport? How will your child maintain meaningful relationships with important people?

Our child's name(s) and age(s)

Important routines, needs and supports

What our child has told us or shown us



WEEKLY CARE SCHEDULE

See how a weekly plan works

This demonstration uses Person A and Person B. Colours show who provides overnight care.

Person A Person B

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
WEEK 1						
A	A	B	B	A	A	B
WEEK 2						
B	B	A	A	B	B	A

WORKED EXAMPLE

Week 1: Person A has Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday nights. Person B has Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday nights. Week 2 reverses the pattern. This is only an illustration, not a recommended arrangement. Write exact start, finish and changeover times in your own plan.

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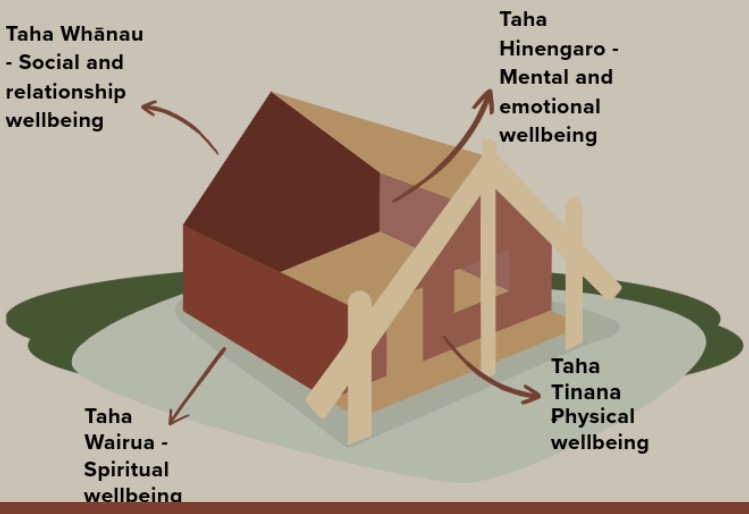


YOUR WEEKLY PLAN

Now make your own schedule

Shade each cell or write A/B/C. Use a second copy if your fortnight alternates.

Colour shading works in Adobe Acrobat Reader. Chrome may display letters without shading.

TIME	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

Caregiver A: _____ Caregiver B: _____

Caregiver C (if applicable): _____

Changeover days, times and locations:



FORTNIGHTLY PLANNING

Two-week overnight planner

A fortnightly view makes alternating weekends and 2-2-5-5 arrangements easier to see.

Enter A (olive green) or B (blue) in each day cell. Use the left column for Week 1 and Week 2.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

DEMONSTRATION: 2-2-5-5

One parent has Monday and Tuesday nights, the other has Wednesday and Thursday nights; weekends alternate. Confirm the exact handover time and whether the pattern suits your child.

Our handover arrangements



CHANGEOVERS

Make changeovers predictable

A good handover plan answers who, where, when and what happens if something changes.

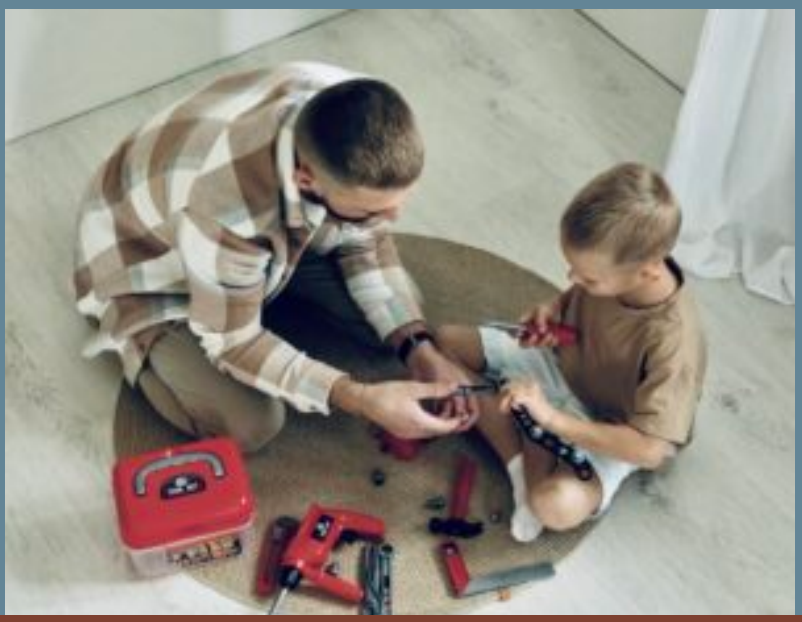
EXAMPLE

Friday at 3:00 pm: Person A collects the child from school. Monday at 8:30 am: Person A drops the child at school, and Person B collects them after school. If school is closed, handover is at the agreed public location at 9:00 am.

Usual handover place, time and responsible adult

What travels between homes (uniform, medication, comfort items)

Backup plan for delays, illness or school closure



HOLIDAYS

Holidays and special days

Plan the exceptions to the usual schedule so there is less uncertainty later.

EXAMPLE: CHRISTMAS

In even-numbered years, Person A has Christmas Eve from 5 pm until Christmas Day at noon. Person B has Christmas Day from noon until Boxing Day at 5 pm. In odd-numbered years the arrangement swaps.

Christmas, New Year and Matariki

Birthdays, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day and family events

School holidays, travel and notice periods



SCHOOL AND ACTIVITIES

Education and daily routines

Write practical arrangements that can be followed consistently across homes.

EXAMPLE

Both guardians receive school notices. Each may attend parent-teacher meetings. The parent caring for the child on an activity day arranges transport unless agreed otherwise.

School / early childhood education and enrolment decisions

Drop-offs, pick-ups, homework and after-school activities

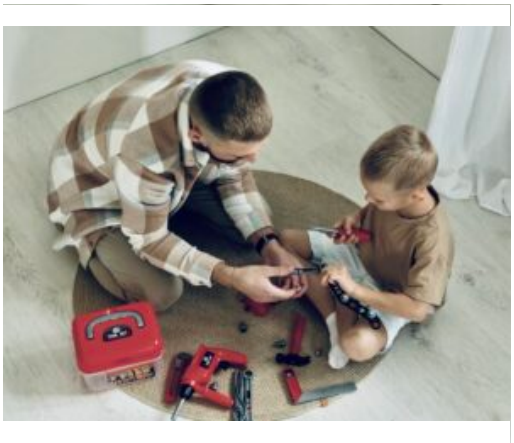
Sharing school notices, reports and emergency contacts



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Healthcare and wellbeing

Consider physical health, mental wellbeing, appointments, medicine and support needs.



EXAMPLE

Both guardians are informed promptly about significant health concerns. Medication travels with written dosage instructions. Routine dental and medical appointments are shared in advance where practical.

GP, dentist, specialists and emergency contacts

How medical updates, appointments and prescriptions are shared

How additional health costs are discussed

WELLBEING TOOL

Te Whare Tapa Whā

A holistic way to consider your child’s wellbeing



DISCUSS TOGETHER

Taha whānau: How will our child maintain meaningful relationships?

Taha hinengaro: How will we support their feelings and confidence?

Taha tinana: How will we support physical health and daily routines?

Taha wairua: How will we support identity, values and belonging?

Use these prompts alongside your healthcare and guardianship discussions.



COMMUNICATION

Keep communication clear

Agree on a practical method that protects children from adult disagreements.

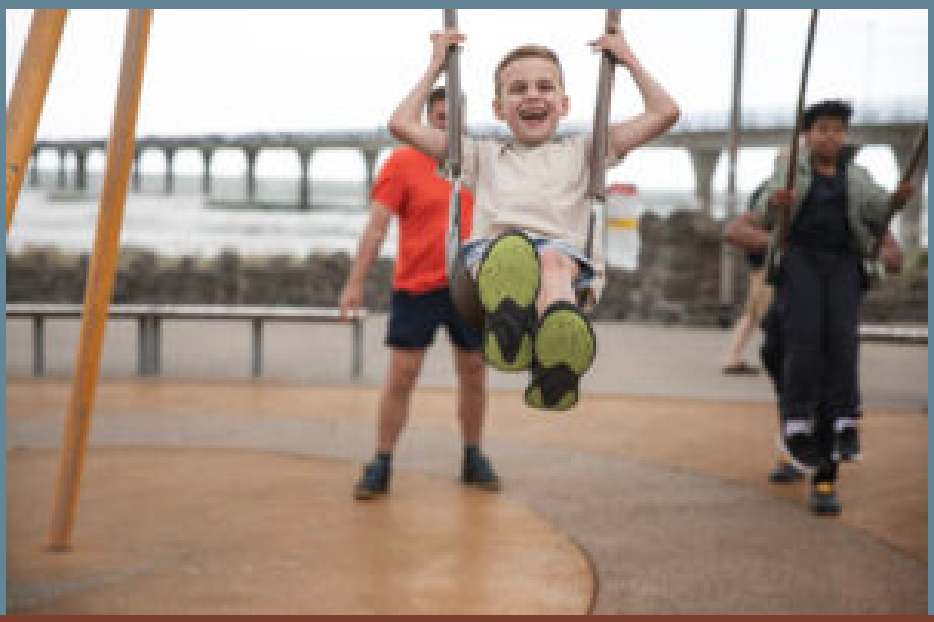
EXAMPLE

Use email for routine decisions and text or phone for urgent matters. Confirm changes in writing. Do not ask the child to pass messages. Where a court order restricts contact, follow that order.

Preferred channels and response expectations

How the child contacts the other parent or whānau

How disagreements and urgent issues will be handled



GUARDIANSHIP DECISIONS

Important joint decisions

Some major decisions require guardian consultation under New Zealand law.

EXAMPLE

Before proposing a school change or significant relocation, guardians share relevant information, discuss the child's needs and record their decision. If they cannot agree, they consider mediation or legal advice.

Schooling, residence and travel

Culture, identity, faith and whānau relationships

Other significant decisions and how agreement is recorded



COSTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Who pays for what?

Document agreed practical arrangements. Child support obligations are separate from this worksheet.

EXAMPLE

Each household provides ordinary clothing and meals during its care time. School camp and agreed extracurricular fees are discussed before either parent commits to a cost.

Clothing, school supplies and transport

Activities, childcare, health and extraordinary costs

How reimbursements and receipts will be handled



RESOLVING PROBLEMS

When the plan needs changing

Review the child's needs and use a calm, documented process.

1 Raise the issue

Describe the specific problem and what needs to change.

2 Suggest an option

Offer a practical proposal with dates and times.

3 Seek support

Consider Parenting Through Separation, Family Dispute Resolution or legal advice.

4 Record the outcome

Write down any agreed change and give each person a copy.



FINAL AGREEMENT

Review, agree and sign

A signed private parenting plan is not itself a court order. Seek advice about formalising arrangements.

Plan start date and agreed review date

Name, signature and date: Parent / guardian 1

Name, signature and date: Parent / guardian 2

Additional guardian / supporter (if applicable)



HELPFUL CONTACTS

Support and next steps

This workbook is a planning aid, not legal advice. It should be checked before official publication.



KIDS NEED DADS

Peer support and practical information for parents and whānau. Website: knd.org.nz

NEW ZEALAND FAMILY JUSTICE

Ministry of Justice: justice.govt.nz | Family Dispute Resolution and Parenting Through Separation. For immediate danger call 111.

Draft for Kids Need Dads review. Photos supplied by requester.