

## Visitation Issues: Possession Order Chaos

Sometimes, it just helps to know that you are not the only one. Texas is very protective of the relationship between the kid(s) and the parent with whom they do not reside. It would take a good long time to discuss all the visitation problems which can arise. This is, after all, an artificial arrangement concocted by well-meaning persons who do not know either you or your kid(s). Although you and your spouse can negotiate post-divorce, the Court generally prefer a visitation schedule as close as possible to a Standard Possession Order -- typically first, third and fifth weekends; Thursdays during the school year; thirty days during the summer, etc.

Your attorney can describe this for you in its entirety, along with all the nuances including the Expanded Standard Possession Order. 50/50 possession is possible and ideal in some circumstances. The purpose of this article is to touch on certain common areas of concern and possible solutions.

- My ex is always late to pick up Johnny

Nothing is sadder than a child standing at the door wearing a back-pack waiting to be picked up. Sadly, sometimes the other parent gets coincidentally held up when you are about to leave town for the weekend with your new love interest! The general rule for acceptable lateness is 15 to 30 minutes. After that, parents are generally off the hook. Always have a backup plan.

- Every time it's time for visitation, Johnny has come down with some strange malady

Funny, while married, this child was never sick at all! Suddenly, he's routinely barely able to leave the house. Let the other parent know that you are a co-parent; you can read the instructions on a prescription; you've got the number for the pediatrician; and you will be there at 6:00.

- My ex-spouse won't come for their weekends.

Visitation is a right not a duty. Document, document, document. If this happens frequently, you will eventually file a Motion to Modify for the purpose of reducing the other parent's visitation time.

- The child refuses to go to the other parent's house.

Divorce requires an adjustment by everybody. Kids look to each parent for cues on how to approach this issue. If a parent is comfortable, supportive and encouraging, then Johnny will be more secure with the idea.

- Mom has a work reunion this weekend and dad has tickets for the baseball game.

Usually, you are both pretty good about trading days, but this weekend is important to each of you and you both want the kids to be with you.

This is when you drag the divorce decree out of the drawer and it acts as the tie-breaker for who is actually entitled to have the kids. The trick is that, afterwards, you throw the decree back into the drawer and go back to working it out and trading days without holding a grudge!

- Daddy won't return the clothes and toys mom sent to his house with the child or the reverse -- mommy refuses to send any clothes or toys to daddy's house with the child.

Mom and dad – please know that someday the kid(s) are going to grow up and they will have long memories. Thank you both in advance for making sure you are not one of the parents whose game playing only hurt the kids involved. Call 281-550-6650 for a free consultation with an experienced lawyer who can guide you through this difficult time.