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## **The Challenges of Joint Child Custody with 50/50 Time-Sharing**

Child custody after legal separation or divorce can be one of the most highly contentious and stressful issues parents face. Time-sharing with the child or children to maintain a relationship with both parents is of paramount concern. In situations where parents have been given shared physical custody, otherwise known as joint child custody, it may not be as simple as splitting the time in half.

New Mexico courts often discourage 50/50 custody schedules, as children may have difficulty with the transitions involved every few days. Young children are especially vulnerable to the stress involved in frequent change. But, even older kids may have difficulty handling the disruptions to their academic, extracurricular and social lives.

If a 50/50 custody schedule is granted, New Mexico courts will still take into account the best interests of the child when considering how this time will be allocated. In fact, several factors may be considered before the final schedule is agreed upon. These factors may include the child's age, the child's relationship with each parent, the distance between each parent's home, the parents' work schedules and even the child's schedule of school, sports and other extracurricular activities.

Communication between parents is one of the keys to a successful 50/50 custody schedule. Good communication will help avoid interruptions in routine, thereby creating stability for the children, and the parents. It will also help with staying on top of appointments, schoolwork and activities. Consequently, this type of arrangement may not be appropriate in situations where there is a lot of conflict between parents. Nor would this schedule work well for parents who live a great distance from each other.

Remaining mindful of the impact of transitions, considering the best interests of the child, and keeping the lines of communication open are all important things to consider when developing a 50/50 custody schedule. After all, it isn't just time spent; it's time spent well. And time well spend it good for the children and the parents alike.

### **DISCLAIMER**

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