



**Topic:** Parenting Time Spreadsheets  
(with Draft Clauses for each)

**Opinion by:** Justice Doug Campbell

**Date:** May 8, 2015

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*This memorandum was prepared by Justice Doug Campbell in reply to the request of ACJ O'Neil as outlined in his Notice to the Bar dated November 6, 2014. It represents Justice Campbell's personal viewpoint and may or may not require some adjustment to conform to the preferences or practices of individual Judges. That will be left up to the Judge and the lawyer, if any, involved. Readers who make use of the within material do so therefore at their own discretion and subject to their own judgment.*

**Formulation:**

- (1) (a) In custody litigation, the Visual Effect of a Parenting Plan being shown on an easy-to-read Chart is desirable. The added advantage of manipulation that comes from spreadsheet technology makes this method a winner. And it is much easier to use than you might think.
- (b) Spreadsheets, when providing this function, can be of great assistance to the practice of Child Custody Law. They promote settlement, act as useful visual aids at Trial and they have the effect of improving post-separation relationships between separated people;
- (2) Standard wording of Parenting Clauses, if widely adopted, will save agony and cost to the litigants and reduce "Wording Debates" after cases are resolved in principle.

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**Discussion:**

It occurs to me that we "re-invent the wheel" every time we debate a Parenting plan either at a Settlement Conference, at a Trial, or elsewhere.

Lawyers and Judges go through this exercise repeatedly but most parents are facing the task for only the first or second time. That nuance makes the process very cumbersome and expensive, not to mention frustrating for most people.

There is a long list of parenting times that are addressed at each sitting: **regular parenting times** (weekends, weekdays, equality of time or lack thereof) and then there are the **additional parenting times** (Christmas, Long weekends, Spring Break, Easter, Summer School Break, Parent and Children Birthdays, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day and sometimes Halloween and there are a variety of options for each).

These are in addition to the peripheries such as the Language of Custody, electronic access, decision-making, access to information, and policy statements. (**Note: This piece does not deal with the long-distance issues found in Mobility Cases**).

Linked below is a system designed to start the process of creating a Parenting Division Plan in writing. It is a series of 16 Spreadsheets, created in Microsoft Excel that can be electronically manipulated to graphically display the settlement or litigation discussion. One of them may be exactly or very close to what is needed. Customize the chosen one to fit.

Following that, there is a rough **draft wording** to give effect to each of those 16 Parenting plans (and a few others) to be used in a Separation Agreements or Court Order – it is a Court Order that is contemplated here. (**Note: Use of this wording is adopted at one's own risk and is meant only to be a starting point for case-specific development with legal advice.**)

#### **Abbreviated Description of the System:**

The Spreadsheets, Instruction Sheet and the Draft Clauses are accessed by a link below. Click on that link to bring up the Screen and then click on the desired “Tab” at the bottom of the Screen.

The **First Tab** is a Table of Contents. I suggest that you go there first and have a look. (Use the tiny arrows at the bottom left to bring hidden Tabs into sight – “Contents” is at the far left; “17 – Draft Clauses” is at the far right.)

The **Second Tab** is an Instruction page. It brings up a more detailed instruction regarding both the content of the Spreadsheets and the basic use of Excel in this context (*with apologies to sophisticated Excel Users*).

The **Tab for Sheet #17** brings up draft clauses for use in Separation Agreements and Court Orders designed to give legal effect to the parenting times depicted in each of the Spreadsheets found in Tabs 1 through 16 (and a few more).

The reader should make a personal copy of the whole system, using “Save As” to preserve the precedent herein provided. As individual Tabs are used for particular cases, that sheet should be similarly preserved by using “Save As”.

**So here we go!** [CLICK HERE >>](#) to have a look at all of the Tabs and use them as indicated or as you choose!

**NOTE: The Excel spreadsheets may take a bit of time to open on your computer if you choose the “Open” option. It is faster to save and then open them by choosing the “Save as” option.**