

### **Basic information:**

To decide what school is best for your children, you must consider their academic and social needs and preferences, and the educational resources available where your children live. If their education will cost money, you must put aside adequate funds. Specify the arrangement in both your parenting agreement and child support agreement, and make sure the decision is the same in both places. You can plan now for how decisions will be made if either parent or the children want a change of schools. You can establish criteria (such as the child attaining certain skills or staying within a budget), or specify who will be authorized to make the change.

### **Things to think about:**

- What kind of schooling?
  - Most children attend their local public school. If you are not content with the local public school, there may be other options in your school district worth investigating. Some districts have specialized schools (such as schools that emphasize art, science, or math). Other school districts allow parents and students to choose from more than one school in the district, including charter schools.
  - If you decide on private school, you will have to decide what kind of school you want. Private schools come in all sizes and configurations. You can choose from parochial, secular, single-sex, or coed schools. Some private schools allow students to live at home; others require them to live in residence on the campus.
  - If a parent is willing and able to commit to full-time teaching, then home schooling is also an option. Home schooling requires an enormous commitment by one or both parents, and the curriculum must adhere to state educational standards.
  - Some children need help with certain skills or subjects. Others have special talents that can be cultivated by extra classes or activities. Parents need to be sensitive to these possibilities, as well as to the children's changing needs. If your children have special needs or talents, consider:
    - requesting support from their current school
    - supplementing the school resources with private tutors, counselors, or after-school activities, or
    - switching schools.
- You and the other parent must agree on who will participate in any parent-teacher associations; help in the children's classroom; attend parent-chaperoned functions, and attend parent-teacher conferences. Some parents attend these kinds of activities and events together, some designate one to attend and inform the other parent of the matters discussed, and some opt for separate participation all together.
- You and the other parent must determine who will be listed on the school's emergency

contact forms and in what order these persons will be listed. The school will also need to know who has authority to make medical decisions in the event of an emergency.

- Parents often disagree about how to encourage good performance in school or what the consequences should be for poor performance. Some parents give their children money or other rewards for earning good grades. Some parents withhold allowances or other privileges if their children get poor grades. If you and the other parent decide to reward or punish school performance, you will want to define the terms and specify the rewards or punishments you will use.
- If either you or the other parent does not want your children to participate in sex education classes, specify it here. In addition, you must find out whether you will be asked to give permission for your children to take the class.
- Although most children and parents think about post-high school education for their children, such as college or technical training, many families fail to plan until their children reach high school. In fact, there are many planning options available, some of which require more preparation and thought than others. Consider setting up a special account that you will use to pay for your children's education. If you do this, you will want to indicate how money will be deposited into that account. You can also investigate different loans, grants, or scholarships. If the type of training your children receive is important to you, you can specify what programs you will pay for, such as:
  - pay-to-learn apprenticeships
  - trade schools, or
  - two-year or four-year institutions.

### **Solution Ideas:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Education.

\_\_\_\_\_ Our children will attend [choose one]:

\_\_\_\_\_ public school

\_\_\_\_\_ private school

\_\_\_\_\_ home school

\_\_\_\_\_ We will pay for any private or home school as follows [specify]:

\_\_\_\_\_ Any decision to change schools will be made as follows [choose all that apply]:

\_\_\_\_\_ If we agree in writing.

\_\_\_\_\_ After consulting our children.

\_\_\_\_\_ After consulting with \_\_\_\_\_ [parent].

\_\_\_\_\_ Only [parent] may change our children's school enrollment.

\_\_\_\_\_ Any decisions to support our children's special educational needs or talents will be made as follows [choose all that apply]:

\_\_\_\_\_ If we agree in writing.

\_\_\_\_\_ After consulting our children.

\_\_\_\_\_ After consulting with \_\_\_\_\_ [parent].  
\_\_\_\_\_ Only \_\_\_\_\_ [parent] may decide how to support our children's special educational needs.

\_\_\_\_\_ We will participate in parent associations as follows [choose one]:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Either parent may participate.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Only one parent may participate at a time.  
\_\_\_\_\_ [parent] will participate.

\_\_\_\_\_ We will participate in the classroom as follows [choose one]:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Either parent may participate.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Only one parent may participate at a time.  
\_\_\_\_\_ [parent] will participate.

\_\_\_\_\_ We will participate in parent-chaperoned events as follows [choose one]:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Either parent may participate.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Only one parent may participate at a time.  
\_\_\_\_\_ [parent] will participate.

\_\_\_\_\_ We will attend parent-teacher or other school conferences as follows [choose one]:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Both will attend.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Each will schedule a meeting with the teacher or other school official.  
\_\_\_\_\_ [parent] will attend and will inform the other of the matters discussed.  
\_\_\_\_\_ [parent] will attend and will not inform the other of the matters discussed.

\_\_\_\_\_ Emergency contact information needed by a school will be completed as follows [choose one]:  
\_\_\_\_\_ We both will be listed in the following order:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Only \_\_\_\_\_ [parent] will be listed.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Others to be listed will be [list names]:

\_\_\_\_\_ Good school performance means:  
We will encourage good school performance as follows [choose all that apply]:  
\_\_\_\_\_ After discussion and agreement.  
\_\_\_\_\_ After consultation with our children.  
\_\_\_\_\_ With the following rewards:

\_\_\_\_\_ Poor school performance means:  
We will discourage poor school performance by [specify]:

\_\_\_\_\_ Our children [check one] \_\_\_\_\_ may may not attend sex education classes at school.

\_\_\_\_\_ [parent] will notify the school of this decision.

\_\_\_\_\_ Our children's education after high school will be paid for as follows [specify]:

\_\_\_\_\_ An account to pay for education expenses will be established, contributed to, managed, and used as follows [specify]:

\_\_\_\_\_ Any decisions regarding our children's options for education after high school will be made as follows [choose all that apply]:

\_\_\_\_\_ By agreement between parents and children.

\_\_\_\_\_ Based on the children's interest and ability to be accepted at a particular school.

\_\_\_\_\_ Based on what we can afford.

\_\_\_\_\_ Other [specify]:

\_\_\_\_\_ We further agree that [specify]: