# STANDARD PARENTING GUIDELINES

*Onslow Domestic Form 4 (OD-4)*

While what is in a child’s best interest will vary from case to case, the following provisions may be useful to reference in discussions regarding child custody and visitation issues and in the preparation of court orders relating to these issues:

1. Cooperation. The parties shall use their best efforts to cooperate effectively with each other and resolve problems or disagreements that may arise concerning the child. The parties shall be flexible and focused on the child’s needs during these discussions and shall use their best efforts to reach a consensus on important child related matters.
2. Communication and Contact Information. The parties shall communicate with each other in a civil and businesslike manner on matters relating to the minor child. Each party shall at all times keep the other apprised of their residence address and telephone number(s) and shall promptly notify the other of any changes. Contact information and an itinerary shall also be provided in advance of the child going on any overnight trips.
3. Involvement by Both Parents. The child’s best interest requires frequent meaningful contact with both parents. Each parent will use their best efforts to support and encourage the child’s relationship with the other parent. Neither parent will say or do anything, or allow others to say or do anything, in the presence of the child that would interfere with or otherwise diminish the natural love, affection, or respect that the child has for the other parent.
4. Child’s Involvement in Adult Issues. The parties shall not allow the child to become involved in discussions concerning the parents’ adult issues. Disagreements between the parties on custody, visitation, financial support, marital property or other domestic issues shall not be discussed in the presence of the child. While on some occasions it may be useful to determine the child’s preferences on an issue, the actual decisions on child related issues remain the sole responsibility of the parents or the court, not the child. Neither party shall use the child as a messenger from one parent to the other, as such communication is the also the sole responsibility of the parents.
5. Compliance by Friends and Family Members. Each party shall make known to their friends and relatives that may have meaningful contact with the child the substance and intent of these provisions and each party will encourage such friends and relatives to act in accordance with the expectations set forth herein.
6. Withholding of Support or Visitation. A party’s time with the child shall not be withheld because of nonpayment of child support, spousal support or other domestic financial obligations. And, no domestic financial obligations shall be withheld because of problems visiting with the child.
7. Disclosure of Significant Events. Each party shall promptly inform the other of any significant child related event that that arises while the child is in their respective custody, whether the event is a positive or negative one.
8. Suitable Environment. The parties shall keep the child in a clean, wholesome environment at all times. The child shall not be exposed to the use of controlled substances, excessive use of alcohol, or any inappropriate condition hazardous to the welfare of the child.
9. Health Matters. Each party shall inform the other of any significant medical or health problem that arises while the child is in their respective custody. Both parties will provide the other with any medications that the child is taking at the time of transfer of the child. Both parties will provide the other with sufficient information to allow the other to obtain medicine refills if necessary. Both parties will provide the other with names, addresses, phone numbers and other necessary information concerning the child’s health care providers.
10. Access to Medical Information. Each party shall have direct access to the child doctors, dentist, or other physical or mental health care provider the same as if the parent were the sole custodian of the child. Neither party shall attempt to inhibit the free flow of information from any of the child health care providers to the other party. Each party shall immediately notify the other party of any information obtained regarding the health and general welfare of the child.
11. Access to Educational Information. Each party shall have direct access to the child’s teachers, counselors, and school advisors the same as if the parent were the sole custodian of the child. Neither party shall attempt to inhibit the free flow of information to the other parent from any of the child’s teachers, counselors, or other school officials. Each party shall promptly notify the other party of any significant information obtained regarding the child’s education. Such information may include grades, testing results, progress reports, teacher conferences, teacher communications, lessons or tutoring.
12. Release of Information. Medical care providers, educational personnel, religious advisors, and any other person deemed by law to have a confidential relationship to the minor child as patient or pupil are hereby authorized to discuss with both Plaintiff and Defendant all matters regarding the child’s health, education, religious training, and general welfare as if he or she was the full legal custodian of the child.