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HARRIS LAW & CO.

Protecting Families & Businesses Through All of Life's Journeys

IS COVID AFFECTING YOUR PARENTING TIME?

Many co-parents are asking the question. What do you do with your current parenting plan under stay at home orders? How do you split time during a pandemic? What is best to keep your children safe during this time? What if your co-parent isn't on the same page?

We understand these are difficult times and that co-parenting outside a pandemic is hard enough. Now, as parents, you are being asked to do more than ever before. While we stress communication and cooperation with your co-parent, we understand that legal intervention may still be needed. Attorney Rebekkah Mouw has already successfully navigated these issues for her family law clients in the court room. Here is what we know.

1. Parenting is Essential

South Dakota Courts have already found that parenting is an essential function of society. You cannot just ignore your parenting plan or cut off your co-parent from access to their children. Not without an agreement or a further court order. Remember, if you and your co-parent agree to modify parenting time during the pandemic, you need to have your attorney draw up your agreement. It is important to keep your attorney in the loop and ensure that you have documentation showing your agreement.



A well-drafted agreement can help both co-parents maintain a cordial relationship during this time for the benefit of your children.

2. Courts Have Discretion

While any current custody order is still legally binding, the Courts are recognizing that circumstances may result in temporary orders being issued. If you believe the situation has changed and your children are at risk, call your attorney. You may need to ask the Court to grant a temporary order given the change in circumstances.

CO-PARENTING IN A CRISIS...

What is the "right" thing to do in terms of co-parenting during a crisis? This is uncharted territory. Routines have been blown apart with kids at home and parents in new work environments or out of work completely. Everyone's schedules have changed. Now is not the time to rehash old arguments. Your kids need stability and are already feeling unsettled and anxious. Unless your co-parent is already high-conflict and needs clear boundaries, the name of the game is now flexibility & working together. Keep your sanity and your children's by uniting as a team during this crisis and problem-solving together.



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Rebekkah J. Mouw
is a skilled
advocate on our
Family Law Team.

Our Passion Shows!



Thank you for
helping us better
serve our
community by
referring us to
your friends &
family.

Check out our
website for other
helpful articles,
videos, & seminar
opportunities.

While many judges are enforcing shared parenting plans already in place, the Court will consider external factors in the event there is a heightened concern. Remember, the Court is concerned about the best interest of your children—that’s it. At the end of the day, keep the communication open with your attorney so you understand all of your options.

If you have concerns about your custody arrangement or are having problems enforcing a current custody order, give our Family Law team a call today at 605-777-1772. We are here for you.

**This article is for general informational purposes and is not intended to give legal advice. Past experience and results do not guarantee future results or similar outcomes. Please consult with an attorney about your situation.*