



Guide to Good Divorce Spring 2020 Enews

A Special Edition on the COVID-19 (CoronaVirus)

The [Texas Supreme Court](#) has issued an emergency order regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on court-ordered child possession schedules.

By Trey Yates

The COVID-19 (CoronaVirus) crisis is affecting all of our lives on many levels in Texas and throughout the greater Houston area. This is especially true of divorced or separated parents of minor children who are concerned about how school and business closures will affect court-ordered visitation and possession schedules.



“Parents may believe that court-ordered child possession schedules are affected by school closures,” said Trey Yates, founder and director of the Guide to Good Divorce seminar program. “The impact of school closures has been clarified by the Texas Supreme Court Emergency Order regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.”

If you are in this category, you may be understandably confused regarding when and if exchanges should occur if schools are closed indefinitely. Or, you may be wondering how this crisis might impact your court-ordered possession schedule if unique situations develop such as job loss, etc. Clearly there are more questions than answers at this juncture about how this pandemic may continue to develop in the weeks and months ahead.

If you need immediate legal advice in connection with your divorce, child custody matter and/or possession schedule, we invite you to contact our office at 713-932-7177.

Read the Supreme Court of Texas second emergency order regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster and its effect on court-ordered possession schedules [here](#)

Guidelines for divorced/separated parents sharing custody of children during the COVID-19 pandemic

From the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML)

1. Be Healthy

Comply with all CDC and local and state guidelines and model good behavior for your children with intensive hand washing, wiping down surfaces and other objects that are frequently touched, and maintaining *social distancing*. This also means BE INFORMED. Stay in touch with the most reliable media sources and avoid the rumor mill on social media.

2. Be Mindful

Be honest about the seriousness of the pandemic but maintain a calm attitude and convey to your children your belief that everything will return to normal in time. Avoid making careless comments in front of the children and exposing them to endless media coverage intended for adults. Don't leave the news on 24/7, for instance. But, at the same time, encourage your children to ask questions and express their concerns and answer them truthfully at a level that is age-appropriate.

3. Be Compliant with court orders and custody agreements.

As much as possible, try to avoid reinventing the wheel despite the unusual circumstances. The custody agreement or court order exists to prevent endless haggling over the details of timesharing. In some jurisdictions, there are even standing orders mandating that, if schools are closed, custody agreements should remain in force as though school were still in session.

4. Be Creative

At the same time, it would be foolish to expect that nothing will change when people are being advised not to fly and vacation attractions such as amusement parks, museums, and entertainment venues are closing all over the US and the world. In addition, some parents will have to work extra hours to help deal with the crisis and other parents may be out of work or working reduced hours for a time. Plans will inevitably have to change. Encourage closeness with the parent who is not going to see the child through shared books, movies, games and FaceTime or Skype.

5. Be Transparent

Provide honest information to your co-parent about any suspected or confirmed exposure to the virus, and try to agree on what steps each of you will take to protect the child from exposure. Certainly, both parents should be informed at once if the child is exhibiting any possible symptoms of the virus.

6. Be Generous

Try to provide makeup time to the parent who missed out, if at all possible. Family law judges expect reasonable accommodations when they can be made and will take

seriously concerns raised in later filings about parents who are inflexible in highly unusual circumstances.

7. Be Understanding

There is no doubt that the pandemic will pose an economic hardship and lead to lost earnings for many, many parents, both those who are paying child support and those who are receiving child support. The parent who is paying should try to provide something, even if it can't be the full amount. The parent who is receiving payments should try to be accommodating under these challenging and temporary circumstances.

Adversity can become an opportunity for parents to come together and focus on what is best for the child. For many children, the strange days of the pandemic will leave vivid memories. It's important for every child to know and remember that both parents did everything they could to explain what was happening and to keep their child safe.

If you need immediate legal advice in connection with your divorce or child custody matter, we invite you to contact Trey Yates at 713-932-7177.

Here are two helpful, fact-based websites that offer current updates on the COVID-19 pandemic in the state of Texas and in Harris County.

<https://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Resources/2019-Novel-Coronavirus>
<https://www.dshs.texas.gov>



Divorce Happens.

The Guide to Good Divorce Seminar

Saturday, September 26, 2020
8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
The Houstonian Hotel
111 N. Post Oak Lane, Houston, TX 77024

Join other women and discover the keys to unlocking your next best life! For details on seminars, upcoming workshops and other events, visit www.GuideToGoodDivorce.com or call 713-932-7177.

The Guide to
**GOOD
DIVORCE**
SM
Unlock the door to your next best life.

Finances Before, During and After Divorce (Free download)

The decision to end a marriage is hardly ever easy, and the process itself is often filled with questions and uncertainty. Your lawyer will advise you to collect a variety of financial records and to compile detailed information about your family's monthly expenses. Although this is time consuming, this task will be an important part of your financial planning process.

The American Bar Association Section of Family Law has created this handbook to help you acquire a basic understanding of your finances, think through your options, and make the best possible financial decisions in your divorce case and beyond. If you have questions, please talk to your lawyer. For immediate assistance, call the law office of Trey Yates 713-932-7177.

