

Things to Consider if There Are Children Involved:

Visitation:

1. Safety: Do you think the defendant will be safe visiting with the children? Why? Why not? If you truly believe your children will not be safe you can request no visitation between the children and defendant, if appropriate. You can tell the judge this, but be prepared to explain why you are concerned.

2. Schedule: Consider what days and times work best for you and the children. Come to court with suggestions/preferences and specific times of the day and week. Be prepared with an alternate preference if the judge does not accept your first schedule. Identify why this is the best for you. How long will this schedule be in effect?

3. Supervision: Are you concerned for your children while they are with the other parent? What are your concerns? Would you prefer that the visits be supervised to ensure safety?

If yes:

- A.** Do you know someone who could supervise (who is willing and safe)? If so, can that person come to court to say this or provide you with confirmation? What is this person's schedule?
- B.** Would you prefer a neutral 3rd party to supervise? The court could potentially order this via agencies, although this is rare.

4. Drop Off/Pick Up Arrangements: Consider what arrangements are necessary to keep you safe when you exchange the children. If pick up and drop off arrangements are not specific, this could cause problems. Come to court prepared to articulate when/where drop off/pick up of children should occur.

Some options are:

- A.** Home
- B.** Curbside
- C.** Police Station
- D.** Other

5. Phone Contact: The judge may discuss non-abusive phone contact or text messaging regarding parenting issues. If you perceive this to be a problem, be prepared to raise this with the judge.

Some alternatives are:

- A.** Contact through a third party
- B.** Written contract
- C.** Other

There also can be parental phone contact between the defendant and the children. Do you want liberal and unrestricted contact? Do you want the defendant to call at specific times/days of the week (ex. Every evening between 7:00-8:00)? Would it be best if the children call the defendant? Figure out what you feel will work best for your situation. **Keep safety in mind for you and your children, as well as maintaining the Final Restraining Order. Ultimately, it is best to minimize the opportunity for problems/conflict.**

Financial:

1. Support: Do you rely on the defendant for financial support? If so, the judge can order payment. Come to court prepared with a request for how much financial support you will need for the children. Be prepared to tell the judge this. If you do believe you need financial support from the defendant, figure out how much you will need.

- A. Money to support paying your rent/mortgage
- B. Money for day care
- C. Other

Child Protection and Permanency:

If your children are being harmed, or potentially being harmed, there may be a need to notify Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P), formerly referred to as DYFS. Has CP&P already been involved with your family? Is CP&P aware of your current application for a restraining order? CP&P could assist you with coordinating social services (therapeutic intervention, supervised visitation, etc.).