

Ages and Stages

Age	Characteristics	Parenting Time
Infant 0 – 18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Establishing relationship with outside world...<i>crying patterns change to express different needs.</i> – Vulnerable to sudden changes of environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Extended periods of time away from either parent is NOT recommended. – Frequent and consistent contact with both parents.
Toddler 18 months – 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Self-centered. – Needs consistency and routines. – Fears abandonment. – Needs nurturing and warmth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Parenting time can be longer, but extended periods of time away from either parent is NOT recommended. – Frequent and consistent contact with both parents. – Attachment with both parents should continue to be promoted.
Preschool 2 – 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Magical thinking. – Fantasy play. – Identification and socialization from parents in the same and opposite sex roles. – Developmentally self-centered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Parenting time can extend to several days. – Consistency and routine very important. – Children should be allowed to contact the away parent as needed to maintain attachment.
Elementary School 6 – 9 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fantasies of reuniting. – Expands beyond the family...developing peer and community relationships. – Begins to empathize with the feelings of others – Expands social skills and interest in physical activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Parenting time can be extended to one-week periods. – Children need to maintain contact with school, peer group and extracurricular activities during time with either parent. – Children should be encouraged to “check-in” with the away parent.
Middle School (Pre-Teen) 10 – 12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Concrete thinking...no “gray” areas. – Begins to move away from family and reject family activities. – Seeks approval from peers. – May exhibit self-image problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Parenting time can be longer than one week at a time. – Children need to maintain contact with school, peer group and extracurricular activities during time with either parent. – Children should be encouraged to “check-in” with the away parent.
High School (Teens) 13 – 18 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Begins to move away from family and reject family activities. – Seeks approval from peers. – May exhibit self-image problems. – Begins to seek intimacy in peer relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Flexible parenting time – recommended that teens are allowed to help set up the schedule. – The children should NOT be allowed to cancel the time with either parent. – Children should be encouraged to “check-in” with the away parent.