

POLICY OF THE STATE

ORS 107.101 Policy regarding parenting. It is the policy of this state to:

- (1) Assure minor children of frequent and continuing contact with parents who have shown the ability to act in the best interests of the child;
- (2) Encourage such parents to share in the rights and responsibilities of raising their children after the parents have separated or dissolved their marriage;
- (3) Encourage parents to develop their own parenting plan with the assistance of legal and mediation professionals, if necessary;
- (4) Grant parents and courts the widest discretion in developing a parenting plan; and
- (5) Consider the best interests of the child and the safety of the parties in developing a parenting plan. [1997 c.707 §1]

PARENTING PLANS

ORS 107.102 Parenting plan; content. (1) In any proceeding to establish or modify a judgment providing for parenting time with a child, except for matters filed under ORS 107.700 to 107.735, there shall be developed and filed with the court a parenting plan to be included in the judgment. A parenting plan may be either general or detailed.

(2) A general parenting plan may include a general outline of how parental responsibilities and parenting time will be shared and may allow the parents to develop a more detailed agreement on an informal basis. However, a general parenting plan must set forth the minimum amount of parenting time and access a noncustodial parent is entitled to have.

(3) A detailed parenting plan may include, but need not be limited to, provisions relating to:

- (a) Residential schedule;
- (b) Holiday, birthday and vacation planning;
- (c) Weekends, including holidays, and school in-service days preceding or following weekends;
- (d) Decision-making and responsibility;
- (e) Information sharing and access;
- (f) Relocation of parents;

- (g) Telephone access;
- (h) Transportation; and
- (i) Methods for resolving disputes.

(4) In addition to the provisions listed in subsection (3) of this section, a detailed parenting plan may include one or both of the following requirements:

(a) That the custodial parent notify the noncustodial parent regarding specified matters concerning the child.

(b) That the custodial parent provide the noncustodial parent with an opportunity to comment regarding specified matters concerning the child.

(5) (a) The court shall develop a detailed parenting plan when:

(A) So requested by either parent; or

(B) The parent or parents are unable to develop a parenting plan.

(b) In developing a parenting plan under this subsection, the court may consider only the best interests of the child and the safety of the parties.

(c) In developing a parenting plan under this subsection, the court may order equal parenting time. If a parent requests that the court order equal parenting time in the parenting plan, the court may deny the request if the court determines, by written findings, that equal parenting time is not in the best interests of the child or endangers the safety of the parties. [1997 c.707 §2; 2019 c.288 §1; 2019 c.289 §1]

FACTORS TO DETERMINE CUSTODY

ORS 107.137 Factors considered in determining custody of child.

(1) Except as provided in subsection (6) of this section, in determining custody of a minor child under ORS 107.105 or 107.135, the court shall give primary consideration to the best interests and welfare of the child. In determining the best interests and welfare of the child, the court shall consider the following relevant factors:

- (a) The emotional ties between the child and other family members;
- (b) The interest of the parties in and attitude toward the child;
- (c) The desirability of continuing an existing relationship;

(d) The abuse of one parent by the other;

(e) The preference for the primary caregiver of the child, if the caregiver is deemed fit by the court; and

(f) The willingness and ability of each parent to facilitate and encourage a close and continuing relationship between the other parent and the child. However, the court may not consider such willingness and ability if one parent shows that the other parent has sexually assaulted or engaged in a pattern of behavior of abuse against the parent or a child and that a continuing relationship with the other parent will endanger the health or safety of either parent or the child.

(2) The best interests and welfare of the child in a custody matter shall not be determined by isolating any one of the relevant factors referred to in subsection (1) of this section, or any other relevant factor, and relying on it to the exclusion of other factors. However, if a parent has committed abuse as defined in ORS 107.705, other than as described in subsection (6) of this section, there is a rebuttable presumption that it is not in the best interests and welfare of the child to award sole or joint custody of the child to the parent who committed the abuse.

(3) If a party has a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), the court may not consider that party's disability in determining custody unless the court finds that behaviors or limitations of the party that are related to the party's disability are endangering or will likely endanger the health, safety or welfare of the child.

(4) In determining custody of a minor child under ORS 107.105 or 107.135, the court shall consider the conduct, marital status, income, social environment or lifestyle of either party only if it is shown that any of these factors are causing or may cause emotional or physical damage to the child.

(5) No preference in custody shall be given to the mother over the father for the sole reason that she is the mother, nor shall any preference be given to the father over the mother for the sole reason that he is the father.

(6) (a) The court determining custody of a minor child under ORS 107.105 or 107.135 shall not award sole or joint custody of the child to a parent if:

(A) The court finds that the parent has been convicted of rape under ORS 163.365 or 163.375 or other comparable law of another jurisdiction; and

(B) The rape resulted in the conception of the child.

(b) A denial of custody under this subsection does not relieve the parent of any obligation to pay child support. [1975 c.722 §2; 1987 c.795 §14; 1997 c.707 §35; 1999 c.762 §2; 2011 c.438 §3; 2013 c.72 §1]

POLICY OF THE STATE

ORS 107.149 Policy regarding parents and their children. It is the policy of this state to assure minor children of frequent and continuing contact with parents who have shown the ability to act in the best interest of the child and to encourage parents to share in the rights and responsibilities of raising their children after the parents have separated or dissolved their marriage. [1987 c.795 §2]

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT RIGHTS

ORS 107.154 Authority of parent when other parent granted sole custody of child. Unless otherwise ordered by the court, an order of sole custody to one parent shall not deprive the other parent of the following authority:

- (1) To inspect and receive school records and to consult with school staff concerning the child’s welfare and education, to the same extent as the custodial parent may inspect and receive such records and consult with such staff;
- (2) To inspect and receive governmental agency and law enforcement records concerning the child to the same extent as the custodial parent may inspect and receive such records;
- (3) To consult with any person who may provide care or treatment for the child and to inspect and receive the child’s medical, dental and psychological records, to the same extent as the custodial parent may consult with such person and inspect and receive such records;
- (4) To authorize emergency medical, dental, psychological, psychiatric or other health care for the child if the custodial parent is, for practical purposes, unavailable; or
- (5) To apply to be the child’s conservator, guardian ad litem or both. [1987 c.795 §3]

JOINT CUSTODY

ORS 107.169 Joint custody of child; modification.

- (1) As used in this chapter, “joint custody” means an arrangement by which parents share rights and responsibilities for major decisions concerning the child, including, but not limited to, the child’s residence, education, health care and religious training. An order providing for joint custody may specify one home as the primary residence of the child and designate one parent to have sole power to make decisions about specific matters while both parents retain equal rights and responsibilities for other decisions.
- (2) The existence of an order of joint custody shall not, by itself, determine the responsibility

of each parent to provide for the support of the child.

(3) The court shall not order joint custody, unless both parents agree to the terms and conditions of the order.

(4) When parents have agreed to joint custody in an order or a judgment, the court may not overrule that agreement by ordering sole custody to one parent.

(5) Modification of a joint custody order shall require showing of changed circumstances and a showing that the modification is in the best interests of the child such as would support modification of a sole custody order. Inability or unwillingness to continue to cooperate shall constitute a change of circumstances sufficient to modify a joint custody order.

(6)(a) The inability of a parent to comply with the terms and conditions of a joint custody order due to the parent's temporary absence does not constitute a change of circumstances if the parent's temporary absence is caused by the parent being:

(A) Called into state active duty as defined in the Oregon Code of Military Justice; or

(B) Called into active federal service under Title 10 of the United States Code as a member of the Oregon National Guard.

(b) As used in this subsection, "temporary absence" means a period not exceeding 30 consecutive months. [1987 c.795 §6; 2003 c.576 §114; 2005 c.79 §3; 2013 c.81 §21]

REQUESTS FOR JOINT CUSTODY; MEDIATION

ORS 107.179 Request for joint custody of children; mediation.

(1) When either party to a child custody issue, other than one involving temporary custody, whether the issue arises from a case of marital annulment, dissolution or separation, or from a determination of parentage, requests the court to grant joint custody of the minor children of the parties under ORS 107.105, the court, if the other party objects to the request for joint custody, shall proceed under this section. The request under this subsection must be made, in the petition or the response, or otherwise not less than 30 days before the date of trial in the case, except for good cause shown. The court in such circumstances, except as provided in subsection (3) of this section, shall direct the parties to participate in mediation in an effort to resolve their differences concerning custody. The court may order such participation in mediation within a mediation program established by the court or as conducted by any mediator approved by the court. Unless the court or the county provides a mediation service available to the parties, the court may order that the costs of the mediation be paid by one or both of the parties, as the court finds equitable upon consideration of the relative ability of the parties to pay those costs. If, after 90 days, the parties do not arrive at a resolution of their differences, the court shall proceed to determine custody.

(2) At its discretion, the court may:

(a) Order mediation under this section prior to trial and postpone trial of the case pending the outcome of the mediation, in which case the issue of custody shall be tried only upon failure to resolve the issue of custody by mediation;

(b) Order mediation under this section prior to trial and proceed to try the case as to issues other than custody while the parties are at the same time engaged in the mediation, in which case the issue of custody shall be tried separately upon failure to resolve the issue of custody by mediation; or

(c) Complete the trial of the case on all issues and order mediation under this section upon the conclusion of the trial, postponing entry of the judgment pending outcome of the mediation, in which case the court may enter a limited judgment as to issues other than custody upon completion of the trial or may postpone entry of any judgment until the expiration of the mediation period or agreement of the parties as to custody.

(3) If either party objects to mediation on the grounds that to participate in mediation would subject the party to severe emotional distress and moves the court to waive mediation, the court shall hold a hearing on the motion. If the court finds it likely that participation in mediation will subject the party to severe emotional distress, the court may waive the requirement of mediation.

(4) Communications made by or to a mediator or between parties as a part of mediation ordered under this section are privileged and are not admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding. [1987 c.795 §13; 2003 c.576 §116; 2017 c.651 §13]

EVALUATION, PARENT COORDINATION, AND OTHER SERVICES

ORS 107.425 Investigation of parties in domestic relations suit involving children; physical, psychological, psychiatric or mental health examinations; parenting plan services; counsel for children.

(1) In suits or proceedings described in subsection (4) of this section in which there are minor children involved, the court may cause an investigation to be made as to the character, family relations, past conduct, earning ability and financial worth of the parties for the purpose of protecting the children's future interest. The court may defer the entry of a general judgment until the court is satisfied that its judgment in such suit or proceeding will properly protect the welfare of such children. The investigative findings shall be offered as and subject to all rules of evidence. Costs of the investigation may be charged against one or more of the parties or as a cost in the proceedings but shall not be charged against funds appropriated for public defense services.

(2) The court, on its own motion or on the motion of a party, may order an independent physical, psychological, psychiatric or mental health examination of a party or the children and

may require any party and the children to be interviewed, evaluated and tested by an expert or panel of experts. The court may also authorize the expert or panel of experts to interview other persons and to request other persons to make available to the expert or panel of experts records deemed by the court or the expert or panel of experts to be relevant to the evaluation. The court may order the parties to authorize the disclosure of such records. In the event the parties are unable to stipulate to the selection of an expert or panel of experts to conduct the examination or evaluation, the court shall appoint a qualified expert or panel of experts. The court shall direct one or more of the parties to pay for the examination or evaluation in the absence of an agreement between the parties as to the responsibility for payment but shall not direct that the expenses be charged against funds appropriated for public defense services. If more than one party is directed to pay, the court may determine the amount that each party will pay based on financial ability.

(3) (a) In addition to an investigation, examination or evaluation under subsections (1) and (2) of this section, the court may appoint an individual or a panel or may designate a program to assist the court in creating parenting plans or resolving disputes regarding parenting time and to assist parents in creating and implementing parenting plans. The services provided to the court and to parents under this section may include:

(A) Gathering information;

(B) Monitoring compliance with court orders;

(C) Providing the parents, their attorneys, if any, and the court with recommendations for new or modified parenting time provisions; and

(D) Providing parents with problem solving, conflict management and parenting time coordination services or other services approved by the court.

(b) Services provided under this section may require the provider to possess and utilize mediation skills, but the services are not comprised exclusively of mediation services under ORS 107.755 to 107.795. If only mediation services are provided, the provisions of ORS 107.755 to 107.795 apply.

(c) The court may order one or more of the parties to pay for services provided under this subsection, if the parties are unable to agree on their respective responsibilities for payment. The court may not order that expenses be charged against funds appropriated for public defense services.

(d) The presiding judge of each judicial district shall establish qualifications for the appointment and training of individuals and panels and the designation of programs under this section. In establishing qualifications, a presiding judge shall take into consideration any guidelines recommended by the statewide family law advisory committee.

(4) The provisions of this section apply when:

- (a) A person files a domestic relations suit, as defined in ORS 107.510;
- (b) A motion to modify an existing judgment in a domestic relations suit is before the court;
- (c) A parent of a child born to a person who is not married initiates a civil proceeding to determine custody or support under ORS 109.103;
- (d) A person petitions or files a motion for intervention under ORS 109.119;
- (e) A person or the administrator files a petition under ORS 109.125 to establish parentage and parentage is established; or
- (f) A habeas corpus proceeding is before the court.

(5) Application of the provisions of subsection (1), (2) or (3) of this section to the proceedings under subsection (4) of this section does not prevent initiation, entry or enforcement of an order of support.

(6) The court, on its own motion or on the motion of a party, may appoint counsel for the children. However, if requested to do so by one or more of the children, the court shall appoint counsel for the child or children. A reasonable fee for an attorney so appointed may be charged against one or more of the parties or as a cost in the proceedings but shall not be charged against funds appropriated for public defense services.

(7) Prior to the entry of an order, the court on its own motion or on the motion of a party may take testimony from or confer with the child or children of the marriage and may exclude from the conference the parents and other persons if the court finds that such action would be likely to be in the best interests of the child or children. However, the court shall permit an attorney for each party to attend the conference and question the child, and the conference shall be reported. [1971 c.280 §3; 1973 c.502 §11; 1981 c.775 §5; 1981 s.s. c.3 §34; 1983 c.369 §1; 1983 c.386 §1; 1989 c.188 §1; 1989 c.1084 §1; 1999 c.569 §4; 2001 c.873 §§6,6a,6c; 2003 c.73 §§51,52; 2003 c.576 §§121,122; 2007 c.454 §12; 2017 c.651 §14]