

Shared Parenting During the Coronavirus Crisis

Article

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Related Attorneys

Derren K. Ciaglia

Terry C. Young

On March 24, 2020, the Ninth Judicial Circuit entered an *Emergency Temporary Standing Administrative Order Re: Parenting in Domestic Relations Cases, Orange & Osceola Counties*, which provides pertinent information regarding time-sharing and shared parenting procedures in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19), as well as information pertaining to domestic relations court proceedings.

If you are currently involved in an existing or newly filed domestic relations matter involving minor children, read the Emergency Temporary Standing Administrative Order to see how to engage in time-sharing in light of school closures and in the event a “shelter-in-place” mandate is issued.

A few highlights of the order are as follows:

- Continue to adhere to all court orders (including final and temporary orders) regarding parental responsibility and time-sharing;
- Regular time-sharing as set forth in any Parenting Plan shall continue until the date the School District announces the last day of school at which time summer time-sharing begins;
- Time-sharing exchanges at a school or daycare that is not currently open should be arranged between the parents in writing and if they cannot agree, the exchanges shall take place at the police station or sheriff’s office located closest to the school or daycare;
- In the event a “shelter in place” is issued, the parties are to discuss where the child(ren) are in the best position to meet the requirements of their school, remain with siblings if possible, and be safe. If the parties cannot agree, the parent with majority time-sharing shall keep the child (ren) until the “shelter in place” is lifted or a court order entered; and
- Video-conferencing/phone contact shall be honored as set forth in the parties’ Parenting Plan and should be increased to “regular and consistent contact” to alleviate fears and concerns of the children.