

Family Mediation Role Play

Background Information for all:

Maureen and Steve have been divorced for five (5) years, and have two children, Becky and Paul, ages 6 and 8. They have joint legal and joint physical custody of the two (2) children. Maureen and Steve live about thirty (30) minutes apart, with the children attending school in the district where Maureen resides.

The parenting schedule they put in place when they divorced isn't working now that Becky is in kindergarten, and Paul is starting to play hockey. Parents have alternate weekends from Friday after school to Monday before school. Maureen has the children Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday overnight, and Steve has every Thursday overnight with drop off at school on Friday morning. Maureen has never liked that Steve has an overnight during the week, and she does not think it is best if the children are overnight on Sundays for his weekends. It is difficult for Steve to get them to school on time and still get to work, so he often drops them with Maureen during the week, and she gets them off to school.

Maureen:

You want an every-other-weekend schedule and no time for the children with Steve during the week. Their drive to school is too long for the children in the morning, and Steve often cannot even transport them on time, so he depends on you. Maybe in the summer, the schedule could include some overnights, but you want to see how things go before making that decision.

You will be starting a part time job to make ends meet, so you need to know what daycare the children will need before and after school. You will not always be there to help Steve out. Also, daycare was not factored into the child support when you divorced, so now Steve will need to pay his share.

Steve keeps "calling and calling" to talk to the children at night, and you are often at hockey practice with Paul, or running errands. When you do not call Steve back, he continues to text and call and this is like "harassment" as far as you are concerned. You have never been able to communicate with Steve, without getting into a fight, and the children don't want to talk to him every day. You would like to think about one of those co-parenting websites you have heard about.

The children have mentioned that Steve has a girlfriend, Angie, who is there sometimes on the weekends. This is not something he discussed with you, and you have no idea who she is. It would be nice if you knew something about the person who spends time with your children. You just want to do "what is best" for the children and that means more time with you.

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Steve:

You know that Maureen thinks that the children are still too young to be away from her for very long, but you are seeking a one week on, one week off schedule with your children. Maureen did do most of the parenting, but that is because you worked full time to support them! Yes, the drive is long to school each day, but she is the one who moved after the divorce, and the children don't seem to mind the drive.

You are trying to get your hours at work changed, but right now the company is short on help, so you are covering more shifts than usual. You are not sure when that will change. You know that daycare will be a big cost and she thinks you will pay for one half the daycare cost plus child support. That is not in your budget right now.

Maureen seems never to be around when you try to reach the children, and the court order says you are supposed to be able to contact them when they are not with you. You have no idea about Paul's hockey schedule, and have only been told about one (1) game so far. You used to play hockey when you were young, and would love to be able to see him play.

There is just no way to talk to Maureen about how to work things out. She keeps mentioning a co-parent website, but that just costs more money. If she would just be fair, everything would be fine. You just want to do "what is best" for the children and are adamant that you do not lose time with them. In fact, as they get older you would like to have them 1/2 the time.

Maureen has asked about your girlfriend, Angie, but is that really her business? She gets along great with the kids. You just want to get on with your life and be a father to your children.