

## **Family Mediation Role Play**

### **Background Information for all:**

Maureen and Steve have been divorced for almost five (5) years, and have two children, Becky and Paul, ages 5 and 8. They have joint legal and joint physical custody. Maureen and Steve live about thirty (30) minutes apart (because Maureen moved during the separation), with the children attending school in the district where Maureen resides even though Steve still resides in the marital home.

Becky is in kindergarten, and Paul is starting to play hockey. Steve has parenting time every Wednesday overnight and every other weekend from Friday after school to Monday before school.

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. Steve often drops the kids off with Maureen on Thursday and Monday mornings at the end of his parenting time, and she gets them off to school.

### **Maureen:**

You want an every-other-weekend schedule and don't want Steve to have the children overnight on school nights. 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 weekday overnights, but you want to see how things go before making that decision.

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. Steve mentioned that Angie could transport the kids to and from school as they went to before school care but I don't want Angie involved and don't want to pay for that either. You just want to do "what is best" for the children and that means more time with you.

**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 have brought up signing the kids up for the before school care program so that you drop the kids off at school and still get to work on time. Maureen has not agreed to this so you often drop them off at Maureen's house before school and she brings them to school on Thursdays and the Monday after your weekends.

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.

Also, you have a lot more availability in the evenings and would like to volunteer to help with the hockey team. Having the children more would help with this.

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 don't have enough 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.

You are the one seeking mediation and if you can't reach an agreement you plan to file a motion for equal parenting time and to allow you enroll the children in before school care and have Angie do some of the transportation, especially in the mornings when there is school.