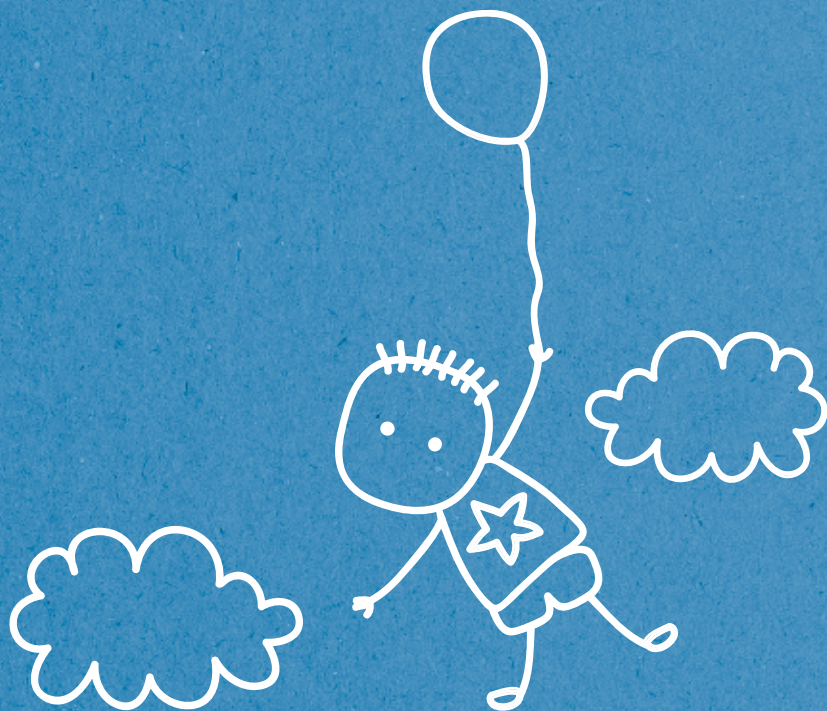


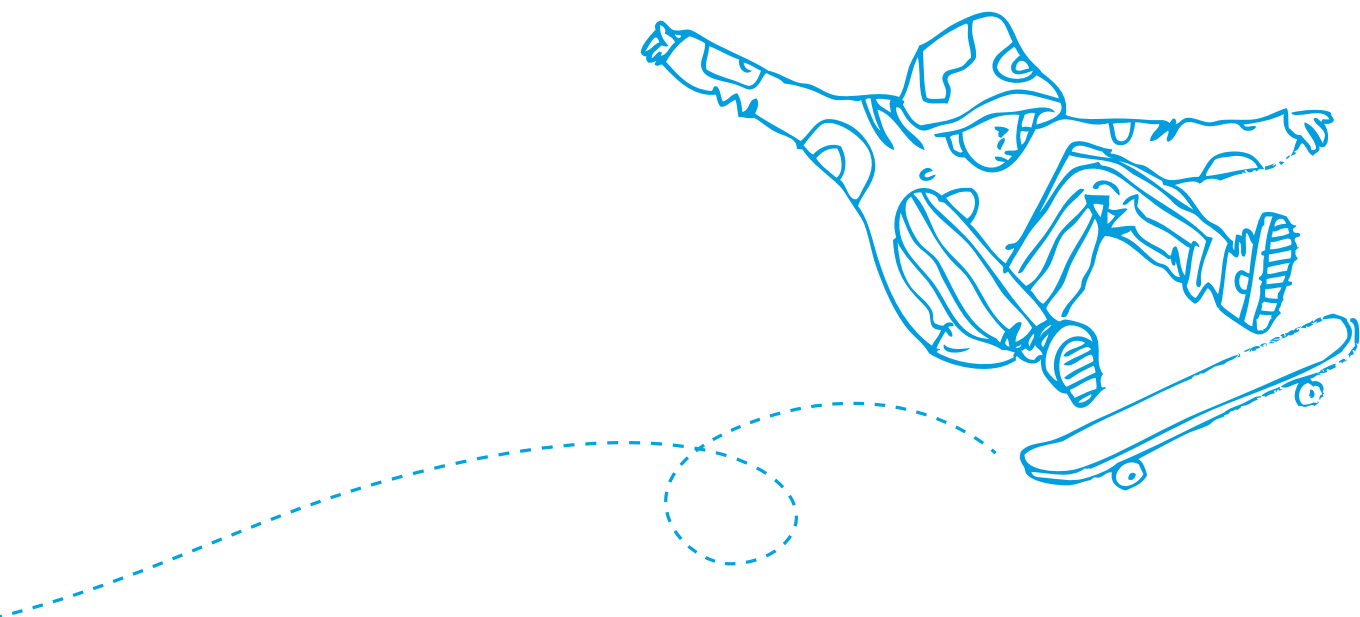
Your Parenting Plan

Charter for Grandchildren.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The Scottish Government's aspiration for children and young people is clear: we want Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow up.



This means that parents or guardians, grandparents, teachers, doctors, social workers, youth workers and other people who are responsible for helping children and making decisions about their lives must do all they can to protect and care for them, to help them to do well at school and to make sure that they are happy, supported and confident.

Families are important to children

Families come in all shapes and sizes. Although parents are usually responsible for caring for their children and making sure their needs are met, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins can all play an important role in nurturing and supporting children.

Grandparents can be a source of stability and support. Whatever the situation, grandparents should work to put the interests and welfare of the child first. Sometimes this may be at the expense of grandparents' personal preferences.

The support grandparents can give

All families experience difficulties. These can range from family quarrels through to divorce and separation, ill health or bereavement. Children and young people face their own difficulties too, for example with their relationships, at school or college, or with the strong emotions and challenges they face as they grow up.

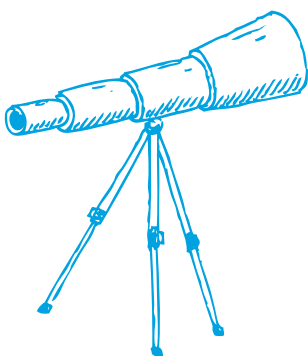
During these times, children and young people can benefit from extra support. They may need someone to talk to, or simply a safe place where they can have fun. Grandparents can and do provide a vital source of stability in their grandchildren's lives.

Sources of specialist support and advice for parents and others with parental responsibilities are listed towards the rear of the *Your Parenting Plan* guide.

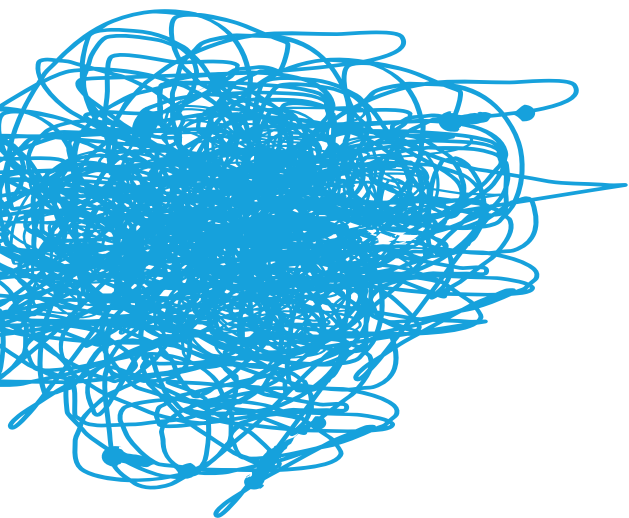
About Your Parenting Plan

Written for parents who live apart or who are separating and published by The Scottish Government, *Your Parenting Plan* is a comprehensive guide to agreeing practical arrangements for the care and wellbeing of children (a 'Parenting Plan').

It contains detailed information on the kinds of things all parents should consider, from living arrangements to school and health matters, and lists many helpful organisations.



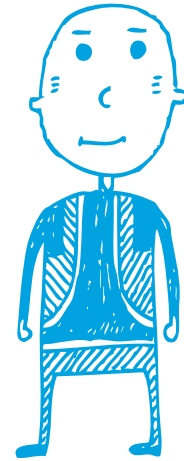
Copies of *Your Parenting Plan* and supporting materials can be downloaded or paper copies requested at mygov.scot/parentingplan



"Every Christmas it's the same. First my Dad insists that I have a huge turkey lunch at his house, then a few hours later my Mum makes me eat the same thing for my dinner...I don't even like turkey!"



“I never see Granny and Grandad now. I used to go to their house a lot.”



About Parenting Plans

Parenting Plans are agreements between parents (or those with parental responsibilities) who live apart. Parenting Plans set out practical, workable arrangements for the care and welfare of their children. Family mediators and family law solicitors can help parents and carers to make Parenting Plans.

If you are a carer or a legal guardian for a grandchild, it may be beneficial for you to work with the child’s parents to agree a Parenting Plan. The *Your Parenting Plan* guide can help you do this.

If a family mediator or solicitor is not promoting a Parenting Plan, there may be good reasons for this including the welfare of the child.

When making a Parenting Plan is not appropriate

Using *Your Parenting Plan* is not recommended if there is a history of violence or abuse, if one person is fearful of another, or if one of the adults involved has made threats or other attempts to control one of the other people involved.

Where there are any safety concerns, either about children or any adults involved, it is vital to seek further advice. Ask your local Social Work Department, a solicitor, or one of the agencies listed under “Support for Families” at the rear of the *Your Parenting Plan* guide.

For more guidance on when making a Parenting Plan is appropriate, see the “First Steps” section of *Your Parenting Plan*.

What’s in a Parenting Plan?

A typical plan might cover:

- Where your children will live and when they will spend time with each parent
- Who else can look after them
- How children can maintain relationships with other people who are important to them
- School and school holidays
- Trips away and special days such as birthdays, Christmas and other celebrations
- Health
- Money matters
- How you will share important information about your children
- How you will review the plan as the child grows up or circumstances change

If contact with a grandchild is lost

Sometimes, a child or young person can lose contact with their grandparents. There may have been a family quarrel, a house move, or a change in who is caring for the children.

When there are problems in families, solutions can be hard to find. Tempers can run high, and family members may take sides. Everyone involved should be prepared to put the welfare of the child first and look for a way forward that's best for them.

Whatever the problem in your family, it is important to look beyond your own feelings and to help the children stay in touch with the people who are important to them. Doing so will make it easier for them to adjust to any new situations.

Intergenerational Mediation can help in these circumstances. To find services near you, contact Relationships Scotland on 0345 119 2020 or see details of family mediation services on page 36 of the *Your Parenting Plan* guide.

Doing what's best for children

It is important that parents, grandparents and other family members speak to, and treat each other, with respect. You may not get on, but you can still be civil for the sake of the children.

Try to avoid arguing with, or criticising, family members in front of the children. Doing this is likely to be very upsetting for children and make it harder for them to be open with you about what's going on in their lives.

On occasions, professional organisations such as social work departments or the courts can become involved and may have to make decisions that will have a lasting impact on the child.

In these circumstances it is vital that the loving and supportive role that grandparents and the wider family can play is respected and protected for the child.

When contact is not possible

Sometimes the courts or other authorities with responsibilities for children may decide that it is not appropriate for a child to keep in touch with family members, including grandparents.

These decisions are taken very seriously and are made because restricting contact is seen to be in the best interests of the child.

It may still be possible for contact to be kept up in a supervised way, for example through child contact centres. For more information on family contact options, speak to a solicitor or contact one of the agencies listed under "Support for Families" at the rear of the *Your Parenting Plan* guide.





Families are important to children – Children have a right to expect:

- To be involved with, and helped to understand, decisions made about their lives.
- To be treated fairly.
- To know and maintain relationships with their family (except in very exceptional circumstances) and other people who are important to them.
- To know their family history.
- That the adults in their lives will put their needs first and protect them from disputes between adults.
- That the adults in their lives will try to resolve any difficulties they have with each other directly and never expect children to take sides.
- That social workers, when making assessments about their lives, will take into account the loving and supporting role grandparents can play.
- That the courts, when making decisions about their lives, will take into account the loving and supporting role grandparents can play.
- That lawyers and other advisers will encourage adults to use relationship counselling or family mediation when they seek advice on matters affecting them and their children.



“Makes me wonder how we ever managed without a proper plan for the school holidays.”

“It wasn’t so bad. It reminded me we used to talk a lot about all kinds of things. It’s easier now when we do see each other.”

“I liked that mum and dad both asked me what I think.”

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