

Maryland Judiciary

*Children & Family Video Library*

## **Parenting Plans (Part 7): How to Change a Parenting Plan**

I'm here to help you create a parenting plan. This series has all the information you need to navigate this court process smoothly.

Let's get started.

In this video, we'll cover what happens when you have a parenting plan written into a custody order and you want to change it. We'll go over what the process looks like if you agree on making a change. We'll also explain what happens if you don't agree.

By the way, great news that you have a plan in place. It's your roadmap for caring for your child. You can always agree to deviate from it, but if you can't agree on a change, follow the plan.

### **CHAPTER HEADING: AGREE TO CHANGE**

If your parenting plan no longer meets your child's needs, you and the other party or parties can informally modify or change it. What if you want the court to enforce those modifications? If you together or with a mediator can reach an agreement on a modified plan, file it with the court. Ask the court to change your custody order to reflect the new terms. If the court agrees that those terms are in your child's best interest, your modified plan can be placed in a consent order.

### **CHAPTER HEADING: COURT-ORDERED CHANGE**

If you are unable to agree on new terms, you can go to court. Without an agreement, the court will only modify a custody order if one party can show that there has been a "material change in circumstances." The court must also decide if the modification is in the best interest of your child. These are high burdens to meet. Consider talking to a lawyer. Speak with one for free at the Maryland Courts' Self-Help Center by calling 410-260-1392. Or find a family law self-help center near you at [mdcourts.gov/familyselfhelp](http://mdcourts.gov/familyselfhelp).

### **CHAPTER HEADING: LET'S REVIEW**

Life happens. When things change, you and the other party or parties can agree to informally modify your parenting plan. But if you want the court to enforce that change, submit your new plan to court. If you cannot agree on a new plan, you must prove that there has been a "material change in circumstances."

We get it. Co-parenting with someone you don't live with is challenging. It involves adapting to change and minimizing disruptions. On the upside, developing these skills helps create stability and security for your child. And that we can all agree, is in the best interest of your child. That's why you are the experts.