

Table 1
Considerations for determining postseparation overnight care of children aged 0-3 years

Bear in mind when using this chart, that...

- 1) The left column reflects conditions within the caregiving environment to be considered in determining the presence or absence, and frequency, of overnights.
- 2) Parents and other decision makers will need to weigh not only the number of overnights, but the spacing and frequency of transitions between homes, and the emotional ease of the exchanges for the child.
- 3) Even when all parenting conditions are met, higher frequency overnights (see right hand column) are not generally indicated for infants 0-18 months. For reasons of temperament or maturation, this will also apply to older infants/toddlers who demonstrate regulation difficulties or other signs that they are stressed by the arrangements.
- 4) When either lower or higher levels of overnights are not indicated initially, they may become so with the child's maturation, and/or with the assistance of educational and/or counseling support for parents, or mediation. An agreed "step-up" plan is helpful in progressing toward overnights.
- 5) This developmentally based guidance for children 0-3 (i.e. up to 48 months) is not intended to override the discretion of parents who jointly elect to follow other schedules in the best interests of their child, and in the context of their own circumstances.

<i>Considerations (In order of importance)</i>	<i>Rare/No overnights indicated</i>	<i>Lower frequency overnights indicated (1-4 per month)</i>	<i>Higher frequency overnights indicated (5+ per month)</i>
1. Safety	A or B are absent	A is established.	A and B are established
A) The child is safe in the care of each parent		B: Conflict is separation-related & non-threatening or endangering	
B) Parents are safe with each other		A is established, B & C are emerging.	A-C are established
2. The child's trust and security with each parent	A or B & C absent		
The young child:			
A) is continuing an established, trusting relationship (of 6 months or more) with a parent			
When resident parent is not present, the young child:			
B) seeks comfort from and is soothed by the other parent			
C) finds support for exploration with the other parent			
3. Parent mental health	Any of A-C are absent	A-C are emerging	A-C are established
The parent has:			
A) sensitivity in recognizing and meeting child's needs			
B) no or well-managed drug and alcohol issues			
C) no or well-managed mental health issues			
4. Health and development	A exists but B is absent; C exists	A and/or C are absent; or A exists but B is emerging/ established	A and C are absent; A exists and B is established
The young child:			
A) has significant developmental or medical needs			
B) such needs are well supported in the proposed arrangement			
C) the infant is exclusively breast-feeding or will not yet accept a bottle			
5. Behavioral adjustment	Any of A-F exist; G is absent	Any of A-F sometimes exist but G is established	Any of A-F are rare; G is established
Relative to temperament and stage of development, the child shows any of the following <i>persistent behaviors (i.e., over 3-4 weeks)</i> :			
A) irritability, frequently unsettled, without medical cause			
B) excessive clinging on separation			
C) frequent crying or other intense upset			
D) aggressive behavior, including self-harming behavior			
E) regression in established behaviors, e.g. toileting, eating, sleeping			
F) low persistence in play and learning			
G) any regressions or difficulties in the above are short lived and readily resolved			
6. Co-parental relationship		A-F are established or emerging	A-F are established
Parents are able to:			
A) communicate civilly about and plan for their young child together			
B) manage conflicts arising, using interventions as needed			
C) be consistent yet responsive with the schedule			
D) value or at least accept the child's relationship with the other parent			
E) put their child's needs before their own wishes for time/contact			
F) ensure low stress exchange of the child at transitions			
7. Pragmatic resources to support sharing of overnights	A, B and C are absent	A and B are established, and C is emerging	A-C are established
Parents:			
A) can be the main caregiver for the young child during scheduled overnight and majority of scheduled day time (excluding work time)			
B) live within a manageable commute of each other			
C) when a parent cannot personally care for the child overnight, care by the other parent is prioritized			
8. Family Factors		A exists if applicable; The importance of B for the child is emerging or established	A exists if applicable; B is established
A) Arrangement reflects status quo and/or older siblings sharing the same overnight schedule are a source of security to the young child			
B) Overnight arrangements would enable maintenance of other relationships that are sources of security to the child, (e.g., grandparents) and/or enable exposure to important elements of each parents' cultural or religious practices.			