

An act relating to parenting and time-sharing of minor children; amending s. 61.13, F.S.; deleting the requirement for an unanticipated change in circumstances in order to modify a parenting plan or time-sharing schedule; creating a rebuttable presumption that equal time-sharing is in the best interests of a child; providing a standard of evidence to rebut such presumption; requiring a court to evaluate certain factors and make specific written findings of fact when creating or modifying a time-sharing schedule; providing an exception; authorizing modification of a time-sharing schedule under certain circumstances; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (c) of subsection (2) and subsection (3) of section 61.13, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

61.13 Support of children; parenting and time-sharing; powers of court.-

(2)

(c) The court shall determine all matters relating to parenting and time-sharing of each minor child of the parties in

accordance with the best interests of the child and in accordance with the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act, except that modification of a parenting plan and time-sharing schedule requires a showing of a substantial ~~and~~, material, ~~and unanticipated~~ change of circumstances.

1. It is the public policy of this state that each minor child has frequent and continuing contact with both parents after the parents separate or the marriage of the parties is dissolved and to encourage parents to share the rights and responsibilities, and joys, of childrearing. Unless ~~Except as~~ otherwise provided in this section or agreed to by the parties ~~paragraph~~, there is a ~~no~~ rebuttable presumption that equal ~~for~~ ~~or against the father or mother of the child or for or against~~ any specific time-sharing of a minor child is in the best interests of the minor child. To rebut this presumption, a party must prove by a preponderance of the evidence that equal timesharing is not in the best interests of the minor child. Except when a time-sharing schedule is agreed to by the parties and approved by the court, the court must evaluate all of the factors set forth in subsection (3) and make specific written findings of fact ~~schedule~~ when creating or modifying a timesharing schedule ~~the parenting plan of the child.~~

2. The court shall order that the parental responsibility for a minor child be shared by both parents unless the court finds that shared parental responsibility would be detrimental

to the child. The following evidence creates a rebuttable presumption of detriment to the child:

a. A parent has been convicted of a misdemeanor of the first degree or higher involving domestic violence, as defined in s. 741.28 and chapter 775;

b. A parent meets the criteria of s. 39.806(1) (d); or

c. A parent has been convicted of or had adjudication withheld for an offense enumerated in s. 943.0435(1) (h) 1.a., and at the time of the offense:

(I) The parent was 18 years of age or older.

(II) The victim was under 18 years of age or the parent believed the victim to be under 18 years of age.

If the presumption is not rebutted after the convicted parent is advised by the court that the presumption exists, shared parental responsibility, including time-sharing with the child, and decisions made regarding the child, may not be granted to the convicted parent. However, the convicted parent is not relieved of any obligation to provide financial support. If the court determines that shared parental responsibility would be detrimental to the child, it may order sole parental responsibility and make such arrangements for time-sharing as specified in the parenting plan as will best protect the child or abused spouse from further harm. Whether or not there is a conviction of any offense of domestic violence or child abuse or

the existence of an injunction for protection against domestic violence, the court shall consider evidence of domestic violence or child abuse as evidence of detriment to the child.

3. In ordering shared parental responsibility, the court may consider the expressed desires of the parents and may grant to one party the ultimate responsibility over specific aspects of the child's welfare or may divide those responsibilities between the parties based on the best interests of the child. Areas of responsibility may include education, health care, and any other responsibilities that the court finds unique to a particular family.

4. The court shall order sole parental responsibility for a minor child to one parent, with or without time-sharing with the other parent if it is in the best interests of the minor child.

5. There is a rebuttable presumption against granting time-sharing with a minor child if a parent has been convicted of or had adjudication withheld for an offense enumerated in s. 943.0435(1)(h)1.a., and at the time of the offense:

- a. The parent was 18 years of age or older.
- b. The victim was under 18 years of age or the parent believed the victim to be under 18 years of age.

A parent may rebut the presumption upon a specific finding in writing by the court that the parent poses no significant risk

of harm to the child and that time-sharing is in the best interests of the minor child. If the presumption is rebutted, the court shall consider all time-sharing factors in subsection (3) when developing a time-sharing schedule.

6. Access to records and information pertaining to a minor child, including, but not limited to, medical, dental, and school records, may not be denied to either parent. Full rights under this subparagraph apply to either parent unless a court order specifically revokes these rights, including any restrictions on these rights as provided in a domestic violence injunction. A parent having rights under this subparagraph has the same rights upon request as to form, substance, and manner of access as are available to the other parent of a child, including, without limitation, the right to in-person communication with medical, dental, and education providers.

(3) For purposes of establishing or modifying parental responsibility and creating, developing, approving, or modifying a parenting plan, including a time-sharing schedule, which governs each parent's relationship with his or her minor child and the relationship between each parent with regard to his or her minor child, the best interests ~~interest~~ of the child must ~~shall~~ be the primary consideration. A determination of parental responsibility, a parenting plan, or a time-sharing schedule may not be modified without a showing of a substantial and, ~~material, and unanticipated~~ change in circumstances and a

determination that the modification is in the best interests of the child. If the parents of a child are residing greater than 50 miles apart at the time of the entry of the last order establishing time sharing and a parent moves within 50 miles of the other parent, then that move may be considered a substantial and material change in circumstances for the purpose of a modification to the time-sharing schedule, so long as there is a determination that the modification is in the best interests of the child. Determination of the best interests of the child shall be made by evaluating all of the factors affecting the welfare and interests of the particular minor child and the circumstances of that family, including, but not limited to:

(a) The demonstrated capacity and disposition of each parent to facilitate and encourage a close and continuing parent-child relationship, to honor the time-sharing schedule, and to be reasonable when changes are required.

(b) The anticipated division of parental responsibilities after the litigation, including the extent to which parental responsibilities will be delegated to third parties.

(c) The demonstrated capacity and disposition of each parent to determine, consider, and act upon the needs of the child as opposed to the needs or desires of the parent.

(d) The length of time the child has lived in a stable, satisfactory environment and the desirability of maintaining continuity.

(e) The geographic viability of the parenting plan, with special attention paid to the needs of school-age children and the amount of time to be spent traveling to effectuate the parenting plan. This factor does not create a presumption for or against relocation of either parent with a child.

(f) The moral fitness of the parents.

(g) The mental and physical health of the parents.

(h) The home, school, and community record of the child.

(i) The reasonable preference of the child, if the court deems the child to be of sufficient intelligence, understanding, and experience to express a preference.

(j) The demonstrated knowledge, capacity, and disposition of each parent to be informed of the circumstances of the minor child, including, but not limited to, the child's friends, teachers, medical care providers, daily activities, and favorite things.

(k) The demonstrated capacity and disposition of each parent to provide a consistent routine for the child, such as discipline, and daily schedules for homework, meals, and bedtime.

(l) The demonstrated capacity of each parent to communicate with and keep the other parent informed of issues and activities regarding the minor child, and the willingness of each parent to adopt a unified front on all major issues when dealing with the child.

(m) Evidence of domestic violence, sexual violence, child abuse, child abandonment, or child neglect, regardless of whether a prior or pending action relating to those issues has been brought. If the court accepts evidence of prior or pending actions regarding domestic violence, sexual violence, child abuse, child abandonment, or child neglect, the court must specifically acknowledge in writing that such evidence was considered when evaluating the best interests of the child.

(n) Evidence that either parent has knowingly provided false information to the court regarding any prior or pending action regarding domestic violence, sexual violence, child abuse, child abandonment, or child neglect.

(o) The particular parenting tasks customarily performed by each parent and the division of parental responsibilities before the institution of litigation and during the pending litigation, including the extent to which parenting responsibilities were undertaken by third parties.

(p) The demonstrated capacity and disposition of each parent to participate and be involved in the child's school and extracurricular activities.

(q) The demonstrated capacity and disposition of each parent to maintain an environment for the child which is free from substance abuse.

(r) The capacity and disposition of each parent to protect the child from the ongoing litigation as demonstrated by not



discussing the litigation with the child, not sharing documents or electronic media related to the litigation with the child, and refraining from disparaging comments about the other parent to the child.

(s) The developmental stages and needs of the child and the demonstrated capacity and disposition of each parent to meet the child's developmental needs.

(t) Any other factor that is relevant to the determination of a specific parenting plan, including the time-sharing schedule.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.