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**Common child custody and placement issues during the summer**

By Jamie Anne Epstein

Summer is a time of warmth, relaxation, and family fun. But for parents who are separated or divorced, the summer season can also bring challenges when it comes to child custody and placement. These issues can be complex and difficult to navigate, but with planning and communication, parents can work together to ensure a smooth summer for everyone involved.

**Vacation plans**

One of the most common issues that arise during the summer is scheduling conflicts due to vacation plans. Both parents may have different vacation schedules, and each may want to take their child on a trip during their designated parenting time. This can lead to disputes over scheduling, particularly if both parents have inflexible schedules. It may require negotiation and compromise to find a solution that works for everyone. For example, parents could agree to alternate years in which one parent gets preference in choosing the dates of their vacation, while the other parent is able to pick dates first in the following year.

**Summer camps**

Summer camps and other activities can also create conflicts over placement schedules. Children may attend day camps, overnight camps, or other activities that require transportation and coordination between parents. Parents may need to adjust their work schedules or transportation arrangements to accommodate their child's activities. For example, if a child is attending an overnight camp during one parent's parenting time, the other parent may need to arrange transportation to and from the camp or may need to adjust their own parenting time to accommodate the camp schedule.

**Extended parenting time**

Another common issue during the summer months is extended parenting time. Parents may want to spend more time with their child while they are out of school, leading to conflicts over scheduling and parenting time. For example, one parent may want to have the child for an entire week or longer, while the other parent may only agree to a few days.

**Moving**

Relocation can also be a challenge during the summer months. Parents may want to move to a new city before the next school year begins. This can be a complex issue that requires legal intervention if the other parent objects. If one parent wants to relocate with the child, they must provide written notice to the other parent and obtain their consent or a court order allowing the move.

**Minimizing conflicts**

To minimize conflicts over custody and placement issues during the summer, parents should communicate openly and plan ahead. They should discuss their schedules and activities in advance and try to come up with a plan that works for everyone. Parents should also be willing to be flexible and make adjustments when necessary. For example, if one parent's work schedule changes unexpectedly, they should be willing to adjust their parenting time accordingly.

In addition, parents should try to be respectful and considerate of each other's needs and schedules. They should avoid making unilateral decisions that affect the other parent's parenting time and should be willing to compromise when conflicts arise.

If parents are unable to resolve custody and placement issues on their own, they may need to seek the assistance of a mediator or family law attorney. A mediator can help parents come to a mutually agreeable solution, while an attorney can provide legal guidance and representation in court if necessary.

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