

## **Voluntary Parenting Plans**

The law allows parents to come up with their own “Parenting Plans.” This Parenting Plan takes the place of separate custody and parenting time orders. A Parenting Plan may include issues about the children that are not part of

the ordinary custody and parenting time orders. A Parenting Plan includes a schedule of the time each parent spends with the child, a description of which responsibilities each parent has regarding the child and a description of how conflicts will be resolved. The court must approve this plan and it must be in the best interest of a child (see factors on page 13).

Parents agreeing to a Parenting Plan may use terms other than “physical” and “legal” custody, as long as the terms are well defined. Parents must still write down that custody is joint legal or joint physical or sole legal or sole physical custody.

If parents do not agree to a Parenting Plan, the court may create one for the parents. If there has been domestic abuse by one parent against the other parent or the child, the court cannot create a Parenting Plan on its own motion.

## **Minnesota Father’s Adoption Registry**

The Fathers' Adoption Registry is a record of “putative” fathers who voluntarily register any time before their child's birth or within 30 days of the birth. It applies to children born on January 1, 1998 or later, but not before then. A “putative father” means a man who may be a child's father, but who

- is not married to the child's mother on or before the date that the child was or is to be born and
- has not established paternity of the child in a court proceeding.

If adoption proceedings begin for the child, and if the father has placed his name on the registry, the court can find the father so he can participate in the adoption proceedings.

For more information about the adoption registry go to the Minnesota Department of Health’s website here: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/registry/top.htm>

## **Recognition of Parentage Form**

For the voluntary Recognition of Parentage Form and instructions, visit the DHS website here: <http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Legacy/DHS-3159-ENG>. This form is included in the printed version of this booklet.