

## “Shared Custody” and “Split Custody”

**Split Custody (Separation of Siblings):** Divorcing parents with more than one child sometimes hit upon the idea that the kids should be divided between the parents. Typically they settle on a "boys-go-with-Dad-and-girls-go-with-Mom" arrangement, but that is not always the case.<sup>1</sup> Courts generally frown on such arrangements but will often tolerate them where the parents agree and there seems to be some basis for separating the siblings. Regardless of how siblings may be separated, a determination of "custody;" that is, decision-making power-for each child must be made.<sup>2</sup>

**Shared Custody:** The term "shared custody" refers to a parenting schedule rather than decision-making power. Shared custody may work in some joint custody situations. Shared custody creates a situation where the child spends equal (or close to equal) blocks of time alternating back-and-forth between the parents. Such an arrangement can often work well in a one-week-here-then-one-week-there scenario. Even two-week cycles can serve the needs of parents and children and can facilitate good, solid, stable family relationships. Our experience, however, is that beyond two-week cycles things seem to begin to deteriorate. It seems that with longer durations, children begin to acclimate to arrangements, rules, habits, schedules, etc. at one household and then must reorganize their lives with every transition. We've seen couples try a one-month-with-Mom-and-then-one-month-with-Dad arrangement and even six-months-and-six-months. Those situations almost always lead to disaster. If you're contemplating such an arrangement, be careful and work closely with a knowledgeable attorney and the advice of a good mental health care professional.

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This article was written by the law office of Cowell Taradash, P.C., whose attorneys are familiar with the latest court decisions, recent changes in the law and even the tendencies of many judges. We can help. Contact us at 866.987.6723 or [info@illinoisdivorce.com](mailto:info@illinoisdivorce.com).