



**LIFE AFTER DIVORCE**  
COACHING

## Ep. 150 - Summer Custody: Balancing Fun and Fairness



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WITH JEFF WILSON & DOREEN YAFFA

Doreen 00:00  
Hey, Jeff.

Jeff 00:01  
Hey Doreen, how are you?

Doreen 00:02  
Well, I think we have to give ourselves a big high five.

Jeff 00:05  
High five, ready to go.

Doreen 00:07  
Today is 150 episodes that we have done.

Jeff 00:12  
Yeah.

Doreen 00:13

And every week like clockwork, so I love it. Like I just so you know how you get empowered when you do certain things. I just love doing these episodes, I enjoy speaking with you, I enjoy speaking with the public. And I feel so honored to have the opportunity. I'm hoping to make a difference out there.

00:35

I think that's what motivates me is making a difference out there. I know we have great listeners out there that we hear from every now and then. And it just motivates me. I can't wait to 202 5300 and just keep going.

Doreen 00:47

Yeah, yeah. So today we're gonna talk about because we're in the middle of summer, right? Well, we're actually in the more the beginning of summer. And so one of the things that always comes up for me as a lawyer is about the summer access plans. What is going on with the kids over the summer? So I think if you've got kids, and you're dealing with that this was a great episode for you.

Doreen 01:20

Are you ready to create a life that's better than ever before? We are Doreen Yaffa and Jeff Wilson and we are here to give you the strategies you need to create the life after divorce that you deserve, and desire. As partners both in marriage and coaching. We use our expertise as well as our own personal experiences to help you make the next chapter of your life, the best chapter.

Doreen 01:52

Where do we want to start?

01:54

I think my first question is, is summertime access to the kids or summertime schedule? Is that something that is worked out during the divorce?

Doreen 02:03

Yes. So in I'm going to talk obviously, about Florida, because that's where I practice law. And in Florida, we have what's known as a parenting plan. And part of that parenting plan, which is a comprehensive plan about things such as parental responsibility, access, some people call it or know it as time sharing or custody arrangements. And then all kinds of other things like pickup and drop off points and vacations and holidays. Part of his summer as well. You know, some parents like to maintain the same schedule in the summer that they keep during the year. Other parents like to have a different schedule in the summer. So the answer the question is most yes, it is part of the parenting plan that at least in Florida is part of what you must have in place. That includes summer access. When you get divorced, or if you have a paternity case.

03:07

Yeah, it must be difficult, though, because plans change. Yeah. So let's say this year, you want to take the child this place, and then on this week, and then we're gonna go here. And so how flexible, how does a parent stay flexible? How do their time shift?

Doreen 03:28

Well, what I recommend, and I think is probably most lawyers recommend is when you're setting up your proposed parenting plan, access schedule, that and then you come to terms with it, it is a fallback position. Meaning that if you don't agree to something different than then what's in the plan, that's going to be what it's going to be. And that's what the court is approving right. So the answer to the question is hopefully most parents have the ability to be flexible because this plan is just a fallback plan. It does provide consistency and general understandings and that's important especially with children we all know that children need consistency children like to know when they're going with each parent. Generally, you know, like they like to know Mondays and Tuesdays with mom and Wednesday and Thursday on dad's house and we alternate the weekends or week on week off or whatever it looks like. They like that. It's helpful to just routines right and most kids are really busy. So they get to and especially as they get older, they get to be aware of that and plan pack for going to dad's house you know, especially if drop off and pickup is at school. You want to make arrangements. I know that in my example when when the kids you know we were dealing with our parenting plan. The kids came to us when they were older and asked us to change the plan. So I because they were we had a more flexible plan where during the week there was more back and forth between how to households. And as they got busier, and they started getting more involved in their school, you know, their activities and stuff. They were schlepping all of their stuff. You know, we had two kids in volleyball, one kid who was an equestrian. Spencer was playing football and you're you're you're having to not only like pick up and drop offs at school. So what does that look like when you have to bring your change of clothes and your stuff for the weekend? Or a saddle? Yeah, remember that? Remember that? And all the stuff that goes with it. So they said, Wouldn't it be easier if we just did one week on one week off? But turning to summer, you know, in your parenting plan, look at that, specifically, think about what your summers look like now for the kids, what you anticipate they might look like in the near future, and even into the distant future. If you if your kids are kids that are

going to be enjoying summer camps, you know, what does that look like? Are the camps here, local boot camps going to be somewhere else? Are they going to be out of state? You know, all those possibilities should be explored. And then a lot of people as we know, they like to take vacations with their children during the summer. So a lot of times in the parenting plan, or most often, in the parenting plan there is this, what they call in Florida uninterrupted time sharing with your child where you get to have blocks of time. Generally, you know, they use like a two week block of time, where you give notice to the other parent. And this is my time that I'd like to take the kids for two weeks of uninterrupted time. And then you know, there's certain certain mechanisms so that there is an overlap in those weeks, meaning both parents want the same two weeks, you know, we come up with what that looks like. And that way you can plan your vacations for the summer well in advance.

06:59

What about the costs? Is that something that's worked into the plan? The camps? What else they need?

Doreen 07:07

Yeah, yes. So some, some lawyers put the costs relevant to activities and camps and private schools and all that within the parenting plan. And other times as part of a separate document, which is like the marital settlement agreement, or the paternity agreement. So there's a parenting plan in Florida, and then there's the marital settlement agreement. So it could be in either place. But yes, absolutely don't want to leave those cost considerations. Because child support only covers the basic necessities, that's what that's what it's meant to do. It's, you know, the shelter, the food, the ongoing, you know, general daily expenses of the child. And that's usually derived from a computation that in Florida, the legislature has come up with child support guidelines, based on parents income, and based on the number of overnights, right. The extras are the activities, and the summer camps and all those things. So yeah, it's it's very relevant, and it should be part of it. I think one of the other important things to remember when you're devising your parenting plan is not only the summer considerations, and what that looks like, and what you anticipate it to look like in the future, and what you want to do with your children and how you carve that into it. But also, you know, keep in mind that while you try to think about what it looks like, you can't always make every consideration right, things happen. And so if circumstances change, such as, let's say the child got into a great summer program, you know, there's lots of programs out there, where children have to basically apply for certain types of summer camps, like educational higher level summer camps, right. And they either get in or they don't. And so when those happen, and if that wasn't contemplated at the time you entered into the agreement, the courts generally are there to assist at the parents can agree. Right. The problem that you have is, is in most cases, it has to be uninterested, debated at the time that you entered into the agreement, right. So maybe if the child was accepted to a summer program, that wouldn't necessarily have been anticipated. Parents don't agree, you can generally ask the court to assess be aware, though, that most court systems take a while to get into court on so it may be that if you don't raise that issue soon enough. Now, summer's over, right?

09:53

It seems like it all falls back to what's in the child's best interest also.

Doreen 09:59

Yeah, well. The issue is, is that when one parent thinks is in the child's best interest may differ from what the other parent thinks, many times when it comes to summer programs and camps, and even vacations, you know, parents just have different opinions. So how do you overcome something? Well, I mean, hopefully your parenting plan might dictate some of how that can be resolved. Sometimes in certain cases, one parent has what they call ultimate decision making over certain things. And that could include summer camps. Other time, but that's rare. Other times the parents have a mechanism in the parenting plan that they'll go to mediation if they can't agree, and if not, then you're kind of left with going to court maybe depending on you know, the legalities of your your agreement. But again, at least in Florida, and most of our before most of our courts, you're not going to get in real fast. So you know, pre planning, I think is key as well. But it takes two to tango, my dear. Right? Yeah.

Maybe you can negotiate something. If you feel strongly about doing something in the summer with your child, and you need to be a little more flexible with your visitation schedule, your access schedule than your you know, you might have to give something up.

11:33

If you allow this, I'll allow you too.

Doreen 11:36

Yeah. You know, like, I'll give you thanksgiving this year or something like that. Yeah, it depends.

Jeff 11:41

Like negotiating tool.

Doreen 11:42

Yeah. You know, I never had those issues in my divorce. I mean, in my, not my divorce. Sorry. It was Sam, I don't think I don't think the only conflict we ever had was about volleyball. Do you remember? Only because it was so overly consuming. With the amount of practices and games that it took away from family time and took away from dinner, dinner was something remember, we used to always do, it was the one time we get together with a family where the kids are going in every direction. We're going in every direction, and we used to really try to have a nice family dinner. That was my objection to it in the long run. I think he was right. But don't tell them. Yeah, just kidding. kind of out there. Hey, Sam, if you're listening, you were right. Because look what happened it really, you know, volleyball, and still and they have volleyball camp in the summer to BS, but it's still great, like teamwork, understandings moving forward into their adulthood. Obviously, great exercise. And look, Megan got a full ride, you know, for volleyball at a great school playing d-one volleyball.

12:52

It really comes to tough times like that. And also, the other thing that we were having a difficulty with was travel. Travel. \*inaudible\*

Doreen 13:04

Right. We were in travel clubs, right. But I miss it. I so miss it now.

13:14

You know, we're sitting there saying how tough it was and what we miss it.

Doreen 13:18

I know. It's like, we used a bitch and moan about some of it with the travel. And you know, it was like these quick turnaround flights, you know, or not even flights, we used to drive mostly to Orlando because most of the travel was local. And then you're in the in the hotel for the weekend. But my gosh, I so missed those days. So for all of you out there that are you know, I know, there's a lot of kids out there playing sports, and you know, you're going and you're sitting at practices, and you're sitting at the games and you're traveling, potentially enjoy it, because it goes by so quick. And what I would give code to one more game, right, right, I guess we'll have grandkids one day and we can go watch them play and do things. Something to look forward to right.

14:06

I guess the other part of this summer that we have to consider is the going back to school prep, right part of the summertime as well as you know, yeah together and start planning the back to school and getting the supplies and..

Doreen 14:21

Remember what we used to do? We used to put the kids back into more of a regular routine two weeks before school started. Because we were less strict about the or I should say more lenient about like bedtimes and things like that and getting up earlier and and then we used to like to get them into

that routine. Again because it takes the physical body time to get into that routine again. So we used to be like okay, let's start getting ready for school. So we'd be it mean like getting back to school, right like, we can stay up till 11 o'clock and 12 o'clock at night or morning anymore, we have to start getting into a regular routine and get our sleep habits back to school.

Jeff 15:05

And not be setting up for success. \*inaudible\*

Doreen 15:09

Summer is a great time, you know, it's a time to really enjoy and, and have time with your kids, it really you know if you can avoid and just try to come from a place of enjoyment and not hassle, like, you know, because a lot of parents work too. And so they're trying their best to find things for their children to do. You know, they a lot of parents don't want their kids just hanging out at home all day. Or, you know, as they get older, you know, just kind of doing well chilling, but also getting their cars and going places like they like to know that they have structure. So hopefully the coparents, the parents are on board together.

15:54

That's what I meant by you know, the kids best interest. I mean, if they know that, you know, sitting idle, you know, and playing video games all day or not having structure is not good for them. They're gonna both be on the same page.

Doreen 16:07

Maybe?

Jeff 16:08

Maybe what?

Doreen 16:09

I mean, you didn't experience that.

Jeff 16:12

Well, that's true.

Doreen 16:13

Yeah. So we hope for that. We hope for that.

Jeff 16:18

You know, back when I was a child, you know.

Doreen 16:20

I'm talking about with..

Jeff 16:23

Spencer?

Doreen 16:23

Yes. Well, it was always a challenge in the summer trying to figure it out. Yeah. Because there wasn't always an agreement between you and your ex.

Jeff 16:35

That's true.

Doreen 16:35

Right. But I think you were able to, to make it work anyhow. For the most part, for the most part.

Yeah. He and yeah, then you have the kids that they fight you on it. They don't they'd rather just stay home sleep until one o'clock. And, you know, not not get out there and do things. Remember that?

Jeff 16:55

Yeah.

Doreen 16:55

And again, with the girls and Sam, my ex, it wasn't an option. They were gonna go to summer camp. They they used to have like a week off, or maybe two weeks off between school and the camp starting and we used to structure it to where there was horseback camp, volleyball camp, art camp, sleepaway camp, you know, throughout the years.

17:16

I remember fighting me tooth and nail,

Doreen 17:20

To get him up.

Jeff 17:24

Grab them and put them on a plane and took them. And that was some thankfully was when I picked him up. And then he had such a great time..

17:34

You know, and of course, next year came around, it was a different story. Again, but, you know, sometimes, you know, better than the child,

Doreen 17:44

I think one of the key you will, of course, right? We all know better of what we need to do, don't we? And, you know, children don't possess, their brains have not physically developed to the part where their prefrontal cortex is working, like, healthy adults. So we are their thinking brain for them, that is part of being a parent, right? To assist them and to parent them, and to show examples and how things in that family how they believe it should occur. For us, it was, you know, there's routines and things and you just don't sit idle at home, that was our way that was for our family, you know, and so you have to sometimes push a little harder and get them to do thing. You're the parent. I think one of the key things going back to it is planning. You know, a lot of these summer programs, summer camps, I know you have to wait until they open up, you know, meaning you can't register be too before a certain time, but many of them are the same every year. Maybe the weeks change, maybe the amounts change, but they generally you know, we know in your local area, what camps are available. Don't wait to last minute, start talking with the coach your coparent about it in advance. And if you know what kind of camps currently and if you're going through divorce your kids enjoy, put it in your your parenting plan now saying that we both agree that the children will attend volleyball camp at whatever place or even just volleyball camp would be helpful anything to take away any disagreement in the future. The more solid you can make that parenting plan the better. Again, it's a fallback position. Right? Yeah, that's it. Everybody enjoy the summer. No, no, the summer has just started we've got all kinds of plans going on. It's it's hot. Like it's a hotter today. We went to the gym this morning and we, you know, got out of the gym and I don't know what time it was, but it was still you know, morning time and it was it was already like what was it?

Jeff 19:59

It's about 90 degree, I think.

Doreen 20:00

Yeah, it was already hot. So I was thinking, you know, it's very hard to be outside for a long period of time. So make sure everybody hydrates and takes care of themselves, especially if you're dealing with people that aren't healthy. Or, you know, like my mom had an issue recently with being dehydrated

ended up in the hospital, so just be careful.

Jeff 20:22

And don't forget the sunblock and the hats.

Doreen 20:24

All the things, all the things, all the things,

Jeff 20:28

Protect the kids and protect ourselves.

Doreen 20:29

Yeah, but have a great time the summer. Okay, enjoy it and love to hear all your experiences. All right, everybody. Thank you, everybody have have an amazing week and we'll talk to you next week. Bye.

Jeff 20:53

You have the vision of what you want your life to look like after divorce, but maybe you just don't know how to get there. So if you're ready to take control of your life and want to find out more about our coaching, visit us at [lad-coaching.com](http://lad-coaching.com). That's LAD as in [lad-coaching.com](http://lad-coaching.com).

Doreen 21:14

Until next time, have an amazing rest of your day. And remember, yes, you can...

Doreen & Jeff 21:21

Have an amazing life after divorce.