

Definitions of Divorce and Parentage Terminology

Allocation of Parental Responsibility

The court process of determining how the parents will make significant decisions and care for child. This used to be known as “custody” before January 1, 2016.

Child Support

Money paid by the supporting parent to help support a child or children

Irreconcilable Differences

When a couple cannot agree about things in their marriage and do not think they can ever come to an agreement. This is the only reason you can get a divorce in Illinois

Maintenance

Money the court orders one spouse to pay the other spouse or ex-spouse. This used to be called “alimony.”

Non-Supporting Parent

The parent who received child support. This used to be known as the “custodial parent” before January 1, 2016. In court orders entered in 2016 or later, a “custodial parent” may be designated for purposes of other state or federal laws that require a custodian, and for purposes of school enrollment. Otherwise the law does not use the term “custodial parent” anymore.

Parentage

The legal relationship between a child and his or her parents, and/or the establishment of this relationship.

Parenting Plan

An agreement between parents that outlines how the parents will make decisions about the child/children and how much time the child/children with each parent, among other things.

Parenting Time

The time that both parents spend with their minor child/children. Parenting time does not need to be equal. Parenting time is one of the parental responsibilities that can be allocated in an allocation of parental responsibilities case. This used to be known as “visitation” before January 1, 2016.

Significant Decision Making Responsibility

The responsibility to make important decisions for a child/children in the areas of education, extracurricular activities, medical care and religion. The court can allocate decision-making responsibility to either or both parents in each of those areas.

Supporting Parent

The parent who is ordered to pay child support. This used to be known as the “non-custodial parent” before January 1, 2016.

Uncontested Divorce

A case in which your spouse is not going to fight over whether there should be a divorce or over any other issue that a judge may need to decide, such as allocation of parental responsibility or maintenance.