



When teens call the shots: adjusting your parenting plan

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By [Brette Sember](#)

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Your [parenting plan](#) may roll along smoothly through elementary and middle schools, with slight adjustments for sports and activities. Once your child is a teen though, the parenting schedule becomes more challenging.

Bumps in the road

When children get to high school, their schedule may change drastically (driver's ed, a job, more school activities, school trips, additional homework, and more time with friends), which can mean your parenting plan is no longer going to cut it. You and your ex should pay close attention to your teen's needs and try to balance those with time spent with both parents.

In the end, it likely means both of you will see less of your child, as more of his or her time is filled with other activities. Just remember this is normal for any parent of a teen. Try to remain flexible and work on balancing priorities for everyone. Teens who are forced to skip social

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events that are important to them in order to spend time with a parent can quickly become resentful.

Teens in the driver's seat

In most states, courts listen closely to teens' preferences when it comes to custody and visitation. Even if you've been the residential parent for some time, when your adolescent son or daughter says they really want to live with your ex, there's a good chance the court will heed that preference.

So if your teen talks about wanting to change residence, you should all sit down and try to work out a plan that will accommodate the child's wishes while still allowing time for both parents.

With patience and flexibility, you can ensure you each have adequate time with your teen.

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About Brette Sember

[Brette Sember](#) is a former attorney and author of more than 40 books, including *The Divorce Organizer & Planner*, *The Complete Divorce*, *How to Parent with Your Ex*, *The Essential Supervisor's Handbook*, *The Complete Credit Repair Kit*, *The Original Muffin Tin Cookbook*, and *The Gluten-Free Guide to Travel*. She writes often about law, parenting, food, travel, health, and more. She blogs at [PuttingItAllOnTheTable.com](#).

