

TRAVEL TIPS FOR CO-PARENTING

By Paula J. Smith

It's spring time and many families are starting to make vacation plans with their children.

To make your planning and trip go as smoothly as possible, there are some key things you should keep in mind.

Review any court orders concerning travel with your children. Your parenting plan is likely to have some provision for travel. What advance notice or permission is needed? Make sure you start the process earlier enough to have enough time to address any questions or issues that arise.

An itinerary should be provided to the parent who is not travelling. This should include such information as flight numbers and times, destination and contact information, and the dates at each location.

Know how to contact the other parent at all times. Just because they are not going along, does not mean that they may not be travelling themselves. Know how to reach them in case of an emergency.

Contact information – will your cell service work if you are travelling outside the United States? Are you taking a personal computer? Can your children maintain their communication with their other parent via Skype or FaceTime?

If travelling outside the U.S., passports may need to be obtained or renewed months before actually departing. Both parents will need to execute the application for a child's passport and appear with the child for issuance of a passport. Only in exigent circumstances can one parent apply for and obtain a passport for a child under age 16. More information can be found at the U.S. Department of State Website Travel section.

Additionally, if travelling internationally, check that the passport is valid beyond the anticipated date of return. Some destinations require the expiration date on a passport be at least 6 months after the date of return. Also, an immigration official, airline or travel company may ask you to provide a letter of consent from the non-accompanying parent before the child may board the airline. A sample of this letter may be found on the State Department website (www.state.gov).

Check with the TSA and your airline for other hints and tips for traveling with children.

Know what your medical insurance will cover when you are out of area and if you are out of the country. You may want to obtain a travel policy in the event of an emergency.

And make certain you have enough prescription medications for yourself and you child. Take a new prescription signed by the prescribing doctor with you. And if your children wear prescription eyewear, be sure to have a copy of that script along.

If you aren't travelling or are not the parent with the "big trip" this year, remember that travel and a vacation should be exciting for your child. It is a new adventure. Ask them to take pictures and to tell you about the most exciting, prettiest or most fun thing they experienced.

If you have more questions on travel with children or any other family law matter please contact our office at 303-837-0757 to speak with a knowledgeable attorney