

Important updates in family law

Since this booklet was printed, there have been some changes to family law. These changes are explained below.

Changes to family law terms

As of March 1, 2021, the term “custody” has changed to **decision-making responsibility**. And in most situations, the term “access” has changed to **parenting time**. Now, all parents usually have parenting time.

Also, a person who isn’t a parent or step-parent may apply to the court to get a **contact order** to spend time with a child. For example, a grandparent can get this order.

The term shared custody has also changed to **shared parenting time**. And split custody has changed to **split parenting time**.

Duty to think about using out-of-court options

As of March 1, 2021, you **must** think about using alternative dispute resolution (ADR) or a family dispute resolution process to resolve your family law issues out of court if it’s suitable for you.

There are some situations where ADR may not be suitable. For example:

- if you’ve experienced abuse and cannot be protected by ADR
- if you need an emergency order

Family Law Information Program has ended

As of January 1, 2021, the online Family Law Information Program has ended. The program was an online alternative to the in-person Mandatory Information Program (MIP). Contact the family mediation service provider in your community to find out what your options are to attend the MIP. Visit **www.stepstojustice.ca/mediation-services-locations** to find your closest provider.