

How Do I Organize Information for My Family Law Case?

A GUIDE TO HELP PEOPLE ORGANIZE AND TRACK INFORMATION RELATED TO THEIR FAMILY LAW MATTER





Please note: This document does not contain legal advice. If you or someone you care about requires legal advice, please consult with a lawyer.

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A guide to help people organize and track information related to their family law matter

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Setting up for success

Information is key to a family court case. One of the most important things you can do to set yourself up for success in court is to have your information organized. Judges make their decisions based on the law and the information, or evidence, you are able to give them.

When they try to get court orders, many people have a problem: they have lost or cannot find information they need, such as emails, texts, school records, or financial records (invoices, receipts). Trials often take place a long time — months or even years — after an event has occurred. In that time, documents or information can get lost or destroyed.

If you do not keep careful records, you may find yourself trying to get bank statements that are no longer available online. Or you might have to scroll through an extensive text message history to find a specific message.

How to use these charts

We have designed these charts to help you keep track of events or payments as they happen. We provide instructions for filling out each chart. By using these charts, you will avoid losing your information.

Some of these charts ask you to track information you may not think is necessary today. However, it can be hard to predict what will be useful information in a future court case. The charts in this guide track some of the often-needed information in a family law case.

These charts may also be helpful for when you are speaking to lawyers or other support workers. Family cases are often complicated and long. If your information is organized, that can help a lawyer or support worker understand your case and give the best advice possible. Having organized information may also help you tell your story to others, without having to relive traumatic events.

When filled out, these charts may contain personal or sensitive information. These charts are not designed to be filed in court or given to the other side of a legal dispute. It is important that you keep your charts private and only share them with your lawyer or support persons helping you with your legal case.

Child Support Charts

Why keep charts on support payments?

These charts will help you keep all information about child support payments in one place. It will be easier to refer to these charts than to have to scroll through your bank records, especially when you need to quickly figure out what is happening with child support payments.

You can also use the charts to share information with your lawyer or your advocate. Plus, you can use the charts to calculate how much support you are owed. They will help you keep track of support payments and notice if arrears are starting to increase. Note: We have not included a chart for spousal support payments, but if needed, you could use a similar format to track payments of spousal support.

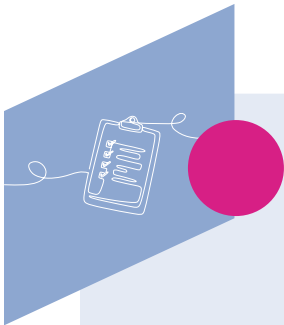
When these charts may not apply

In some circumstances, these charts may not work and will need to be modified. We recommend you seek legal advice if any of the following circumstances apply to you:

- The payor has an “imputed” income (the court has inferred an income that the payor could or should be earning, even if they are not actually earning this amount)
- The payor has claimed undue hardship
- Child support is not based off the *Federal Child Support Guidelines* table amount for the payor’s income, due to a court order or agreement
- The child is over 19 years old
- One of the parents is a step-parent
- The parties are in a shared parenting arrangement and an amount different than an offset has been ordered.

Parties should always seek legal advice on child support, for there may be circumstances in their case where the table amount or an offset for shared parenting is not appropriate.

Besides completing these child support charts, always keep receipts, invoices, or bank statements that demonstrate the payments made. The table itself is not *evidence*. It is a record that you can use to help you find the right evidence and keep track of information.



Organizing and storing documents

If you have physical documents, you can store them in a binder or box. It is a good idea to also create a digital copy and store that in a safe and organized way.

When you are making digital copies of documents, it is important to make your files legible and organized. Some people make digital copies by taking photos of their physical documents using their phone. Though this is a good first step, it is important to make sure these photos show the full document, are clear, and are of a high enough resolution that they can be printed and attached to court documents. If you can, a better option is to use a scanner or a phone app that will take photos and convert your documents into PDFs.


Once you have the digital files, the best practice is to label your digital files in a consistent and clear manner. Starting file names with the date will sort them automatically. For example, “2023-04-23-Receipt for Soccer.”


Though organizing documents can be a lot of work, giving organized documents to a lawyer can save you time and money. Keeping documents organized is something you can ask for help with. If you have a family law advocate or a support person, they may be able to help you.

a. Chart for Primary Parenting


Use this chart to track payments of child support when one parent has 60% or more of the parenting time (primary parenting).

How to fill out the primary parenting chart


 **DATE:** Put the date that child support should be paid according to your court order or agreement. If there is no order or agreement, put the first day of each month.

 **PAYOR'S INCOME:** Put the annual income of the person who will be paying child support in that month.

- If there is no order or agreement about child support, you may need to use the payor's annual income based on the best information you have. If you have a copy of the payor's income tax return or notice of assessment, their income should be listed on that government form (line 150).
- If there is an order or agreement, you may use the income used for the child support calculation. For example, the income in August 2023 may be the income from the person's 2022 income tax return.

 **CHILD SUPPORT AMOUNT:** Use this [online calculator](#) to find the monthly child support amount for the payor's income.

 **CHILD SUPPORT PAID:** Here put the amount of child support actually paid.

 **PAYMENT DETAILS:** You may choose not to use this column. However, when someone is paying irregularly or using different methods of payment, it can be helpful information to prove the amount paid in court. You can write the date of payment and how it was made, for example:

- e-transfer sent on 2024-Jan-01 from name@gmail.com and deposited into account ending #0000. Screenshot saved in Child Support folder.
- \$500 cash given to me on 2024-Jan-01 at transition.

 **ARREARS:** The amount will be the "Child Support Amount" minus the "Child Support Paid."

See the sample chart for primary parenting on the following page.




SAMPLE CHART FOR PRIMARY PARENTING


DATE	PAYOR'S INCOME	CHILD SUPPORT AMOUNT	CHILD SUPPORT PAID	PAYMENT DETAILS	ARREARS
2023-Apr-01	\$65,000	\$616	\$616		\$0
2023-May-01	\$65,000	\$616	\$616		\$0
2023-Jun-01	\$80,000	\$765	\$616		\$149
2023-Jul-01	\$80,000	\$765	\$616		\$149
2023-Aug-01	\$80,000	\$765	\$765		\$0
Total Arrears					\$298

b. Chart for Shared Parenting


Use this chart to track payments of child support when both parents have at least 40% of the parenting time. For families that share parenting time, courts often order an “offset” payment. This is based on what each parent would owe the other using the child support tables contained in the *Federal Child Support Guidelines* and then subtracting one from the other. This is not the only option, so it is important that you get legal advice about your case.

How to fill out the shared parenting chart

-  **DATE:** Put the date that child support should be paid according to your order or agreement. If there is no order or agreement, put the first day of each month.
-  **PARTY 1'S INCOME:** Put the annual income of the person with the higher income used to calculate child support in that month.
 - If there is no order or agreement about child support, use their annual income.
 - If there is an order or agreement, you may use the income used for the child support calculation. For example, the income in August 2023 may be the income from the person's 2022 income tax return.
-  **TABLE AMOUNT:** Use this [online calculator](#) to find the monthly child support amount for Party 1's income.


 **PARTY 2'S INCOME:** Put the annual income of the person with the lower income used to calculate child support in that month.

- If there is no order or agreement about child support, use their annual income.
- If there is an order or agreement, you may use the income used for the child support calculation. For example, the income in August 2023 may be the income from the person's 2022 income tax return.

 **TABLE AMOUNT:** Use this [online calculator](#) to find the monthly child support amount for Party 2's income.

 **CHILD SUPPORT AMOUNT:**

- If there is no court order or agreement, you should seek legal advice about child support. But for the purpose of this chart, the amount will be the "Table Amount" for Party 1 minus the "Table Amount" for Party 2.
- If there is a court order or agreement, calculate child support according to the order or agreement. It is likely the amount will be the "Table Amount" for Party 1 minus the "Table Amount" for Party 2.

 **CHILD SUPPORT PAID:** Here put the amount of child support actually paid by Party 1 to Party 2.

 **ARREARS:** The amount will be the "Child Support Amount" minus the "Child Support Paid."

SAMPLE CHART FOR SHARED PARENTING

DATE	PARTY 1'S INCOME	TABLE AMOUNT	PARTY 2'S INCOME	TABLE AMOUNT	CHILD SUPPORT AMOUNT	CHILD SUPPORT PAID	ARREARS
2023-Apr-01	\$100,000	\$946	\$50,000	\$470	\$476	\$476	\$0
2023-May-01	\$100,000	\$946	\$50,000	\$470	\$476	\$200	\$276
2023-Jun-01	\$100,000	\$946	\$50,000	\$470	\$476	\$200	\$276
Total Arrears							\$552

c. Chart for Special Expenses

Basic child support is intended to help the primary parent with the ordinary costs of caring for a child, like food, clothing, shelter, and transportation. Special and extraordinary expenses are sometimes called “special expenses” or “section 7 expenses,” in reference to the related section of the *Federal Child Support Guidelines*. They include expenses over and above the normal costs of caring for a child. Special expenses may include:








- Child care expenses if these were needed due to the parent’s employment, illness, disability, etc. (For example, daycare or before- and after-school care)
- Medical and dental insurance premiums for the child
- Medical and dental expenses that are not covered by insurance or extended health benefits, and add up to more than \$100 per year (for example, braces, counselling, physiotherapy, prescription drugs, hearing aids, glasses)
- Extraordinary school expenses that are necessary for a child’s particular needs (although not “ordinary” school fees for materials, supplies, lunches, etc.)
- Expenses for extracurricular activities in some circumstances
- Post-secondary education expenses (although legal advice is advisable in this area).

Special and extraordinary expenses are usually shared between the parents, in proportion to each parent’s income. It is not always obvious if certain expenses will fall under section 7. In some cases, even if an expense is for the child’s benefit, a court may find it was not reasonable given the party’s financial circumstances. This is why it is a good idea to get legal advice or a court order to clarify what should be included.

Besides tracking expenses with this chart, be sure to keep receipts and invoices related to all expenses and keep them organized. You can use a digital or hard copy, but you may need these receipts to prove in court that you paid these costs. For more tips on organizing financial records, see sidebar on page xx.

Special and extraordinary expenses are usually shared between the parents, in proportion to each parent’s income. In some cases, even if an expense is for the child’s benefit, a court may find it was not reasonable given the party’s financial circumstances.

How to fill out the special expenses chart

-  **DATE:** Put the date the expense was incurred.
-  **EXPENSE INFORMATION:** Provide a brief description of the expense. You can also include here information about the receipt or payment. For example, you could write “Daycare for January, invoice and receipt for payment are in Expenses folder, digital file called 2023-01-01-DAYCARE RECEIPT.”
-  **TOTAL EXPENSE:** Track the total cost of the amount.
-  **EXPENSE AMOUNT (LESS SUBSIDY, ETC.):** Here put what you actually have to pay. If a government subsidy or tax credit or insurance covered part of the cost, subtract that cost.
-  **PARTY 1 % AND PARTY 2 %:** In each column, include the percentage of the expense for which each party is responsible. Typically, this is proportionate to the parties’ incomes. So if Party 1 makes \$30,000 and party 2 makes \$70,000, the percentages are 30% and 70%, respectively. If you have a different percentage split in your order or agreement, use that amount.
-  **PAID BY PARTY 1 AND PAID BY PARTY 2:** Put the actual amount each party paid towards the expense.
-  **OWING TO PARTY 1:** If the parties have each paid the correct percent of the expense, then put \$0 here. If not, indicate how much is owed to Party 1 (or that Party 1 has to pay to Party 2).

SAMPLE SPECIAL EXPENSES CHART

DATE	EXPENSE INFO	TOTAL EXPENSE	AMOUNT AFTER SUBSIDY, ETC.	PARTY 1 %	PARTY 2 %	PAID BY PARTY 1	PAID BY PARTY 2	OWING TO PARTY 1
2023-Jan-01	Daycare for January	\$1500	\$1000	30%	70%	\$1000	\$0	\$700
2023-Feb-01	Daycare for February	\$1500	\$1000	30%	70%	\$0	\$1000	-\$300
2023-Mar-01	Daycare for March	\$1500	\$1000	30%	70%	\$500	\$500	\$200
Total Owing								\$600

Event Charts

Why keep charts about events?

These charts provide a place to record events related to parenting or family violence as they occur. It can be easier to see patterns of behaviour when we have them written down.





It is also easier to share information with support workers and lawyers when that information is organized. You can use these charts as a tool when you communicate with others, without having to verbally disclose abuse every time you speak to a new support worker or lawyer.

Having your experiences organized in a chart can make it easier to speak to your lawyer about what has happened. And for legal proceedings, having details, like exactly when something happened, can be important. If you have to write an affidavit, you will need to give precise dates and details wherever possible; these can be very difficult to remember and reassemble later.

a. Parenting Issues Chart

Use this chart to keep track of problems (or successes) with parenting issues. You do not need to include everything that happens in this chart.

How to fill out the parenting issues chart

-  **DATE:** Put the date of the event.
-  **CATEGORY:** Using one or two words, categorize the issue. Examples would be medical, school, extracurricular, parenting exchanges, or co-parenting.
-  **SUMMARY:** Record what happened. Try to be clear and concise. If there are more details than you can put in a few sentences, consider writing them down somewhere else. Remember, this chart is supposed to be a *quick reference* for someone to get a sense of what has happened, and for you to use when organizing your case.
-  **EVIDENCE:** Record what evidence you would have to prove that this event happened (including your own memory). If someone witnessed the event, you can record their name. If there are emails or school attendance records, indicate that. If your evidence includes digital or hard-copy documents, make sure they are somewhere you can access them in the future. If you are saving them digitally, make sure that you label them clearly, that they are organized, and that the documents are legible (see sidebar page XX).

SAMPLE PARENTING ISSUES CHART





DATE	ISSUE	SUMMARY	EVIDENCE
2019-Sep-01	Medical	<p><i>Person</i> was supposed to take <i>child</i> to a medical appointment on their parenting time. I communicated the information beforehand, but received a call from the doctor's office saying that the <i>child</i> had not been brought for the appointment.</p> <p>I followed up with <i>person</i> the next day by sending them an email and asked for them to reschedule the appointment. They responded and said I was "controlling their parenting time," that they had decided to go camping instead, and did not address rescheduling the appointment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Email to <i>other parent</i> confirming medial appointment■ Email from doctor saying <i>child</i> was a no-show■ Follow-up emails with <i>other parent</i>
2020-Oct-03	School	<p><i>Child</i> has been arriving late to school on <i>other parent's</i> week. <i>Child's</i> teacher spoke to me at school pickup about this and told me that they are concerned about the <i>child</i> being consistently late in <i>other parent's</i> care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ School attendance records

b. Family Violence Chart

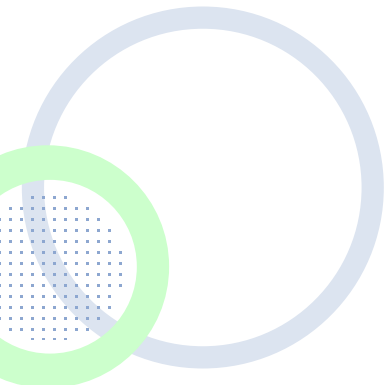
Use this chart to keep track of incidents of family violence. Because these charts are used for court, we suggest you keep track of incidents that fall within the court definition of family violence.

This chart will contain sensitive and private information. Though all your court documents and information should be kept secure and private, it is especially important that you keep this document in a safe place.

How to fill out the family violence chart

-  **DATE:** Put the date that the family violence occurred. Instead of one date, you can also use a range, if the behaviour happened multiple times or over a period of time.
-  **CATEGORY OF FAMILY VIOLENCE:** Using one or two words, categorize the violence. You can use the legal definitions of family violence (see sidebar page 15) to categorize the event.
-  **DETAILS:** Describe briefly what happened. If there is a short text message or email, you may want to include the relevant pieces of the message. If there are more details than you can put in a few sentences, consider writing them down somewhere else. Remember, this chart is supposed to be a *quick reference* for someone to get a sense of what has happened, and for you to use when organizing your case.
-  **EVIDENCE:** Briefly record the type of evidence you have. It could be your memory, a diary entry, or an actual text message.

See the sample family violence chart on page 16.



How the law defines family violence

The *Family Law Act* definition of family violence includes, with or without an intent to harm a family member:

- Physical abuse of a family member, including forced confinement or deprivation of the necessities of life, but not including the use of reasonable force to protect oneself or others from harm
- Sexual abuse of a family member
- Attempts to physically or sexually abuse a family member
- Psychological or emotional abuse of a family member, including
 - Intimidation, harassment, coercion, or threats, including threats respecting other persons, pets or property
 - Unreasonable restrictions on, or prevention of, a family member's financial or personal autonomy
 - Stalking or following of the family member, and
 - Intentional damage to property, and
 - In the case of a child, direct or indirect exposure to family violence.

The *Divorce Act* definition of family violence includes any conduct, whether or not the conduct constitutes a criminal offence, by a family member towards another family member, that is violent or threatening or that constitutes a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour or that causes that other family member to fear for their own safety or for that of another person — and in the case of a child, the direct or indirect exposure to such conduct — and includes:

- Physical abuse, including forced confinement but excluding the use of reasonable force to protect themselves or another person
- Sexual abuse
- Threats to kill or cause bodily harm to any person
- Harassment, including stalking
- The failure to provide the necessities of life
- Psychological abuse
- Financial abuse
- Threats to kill or harm an animal or damage property, and
- The killing or harming of an animal or the damaging of property.

SAMPLE FAMILY VIOLENCE CHART

DATE	CATEGORY OF FAMILY VIOLENCE	DETAILS	EVIDENCE
2019-Sep-01	Physical abuse, Threats	<i>Other party</i> got angry when I came home late from work. <i>Other party</i> shoved me into the wall and grabbed my wrist. He said he would “make everything worse” if I was ever out after work again.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Photos of bruising on my wrist ■ My memory
2020-Nov-02	Coercion/Threats	<i>Other party</i> texted me and said he would not pay child support if I continued dating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Screenshots of text, saved on computer as “2020-11-02-Threat re Child Support”
2020-Nov-07	Stalking	<i>Other party</i> followed me in his car from my workplace to <i>new partner’s</i> house.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Photo of <i>other party’s</i> car parked on <i>new partner’s</i> street

Legal Charts

Why keep charts of legal events?


These charts allow you to keep track of court appearances and documents filed in court. When your file is more complicated, with the help of these charts, duty counsel and other summary advice services will be able to give you better information because they can quickly understand the history of your file.

Also, by keeping a record, you will be better able to understand what has happened in your file. It can feel like nothing is happening because you have not yet received the final orders you want. But these charts can help you understand all the steps that are happening. During legal proceedings, it can also feel like there are too many things happening, and a chart may help you stay organized and focused.

a. Court Appearance Chart


Use this chart to list court appearances related to your family law matter. This chart will help you keep track of the dates, who was there, and the orders that were made.


How to fill out this chart


 **DATE:** Put the date of the court appearance. If it went over multiple days (for example, a week-long trial), indicate all the days you were in court.

 **COURT APPEARANCE:** Record what type of court appearance it was. For example:

- Provincial Court: family management conference, family settlement conference, trial preparation conference, hearing, trial, list day, for decision
- Supreme Court: judicial case conference, chambers hearing, trial management conference, trial.

 **DOCUMENT:** A court appearance is normally triggered by the filing of a document. Record that here. For example, if you are at a family management conference, it may be because someone filed an Application About a Family Law Matter asking the court for an order.

 **WHO WAS THERE:** Record which judge was presiding and also who else was at the court appearance, including which lawyers. Even if you yourself were not at a court appearance, include it in your chart.

 **ORDERS:** Note what orders were made. If you are not sure, you can ask the court registry for a court summary sheet.


SAMPLE COURT APPEARANCE CHART


DATE	COURT APPEARANCE	DOCUMENT	WHO WAS THERE	ORDERS
2024-Jul-02	Hearing	Application About a Protection Order filed same date	Judge <i>name</i> ME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Ex parte</i> protection order made against <i>other party</i>
2024-Sep-03	Family management conference	Application About a Family Law Matter filed 2024-Aug-01	Judge <i>name</i> Me <i>Other party</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Other party</i> to pay \$200 of child support a month starting on DATE ■ <i>Other party</i> to file a financial statement within 30 days
2024-Nov-01	List day/hearing	Application About a Case Management Order	Judge <i>name</i> Me <i>Lawyer</i> <i>Other party</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Other party</i> fined for not filing a financial statement/breaching court order ■ <i>Other party</i> to file a financial statement within 15 days
2024-Nov-22	List day/hearing	Application About a Case Management Order	Judge <i>name</i> Me <i>Lawyer</i> <i>Other party</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Order made for police to disclose their files
2024-Dec-27	Family settlement conference	Application About a Family Law Matter filed 2024-Aug-01	Judge <i>name</i> Me <i>Lawyer</i> <i>Other party</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consent order about child support, <i>other party</i> income set at \$60,000 and monthly support \$567 paid to me
2025-Jan-06	Trial	Application About a Family Law Matter filed 2024-Aug-01	Judge <i>name</i> Me <i>Lawyer</i> <i>Other party</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Orders made for parenting time and parenting responsibilities

b. Filed Documents Chart


Use this chart to keep a record of documents filed in court in your family law matter. During legal proceedings, a lot of documents can be filed. Information such as when a document was filed and who filed it can be very important.


How to fill out the filed documents chart

 **No.:** You can use this number to organize your documents. When you receive a document, you can put it in a binder and the “Doc No.” can correspond to the binder tab. Or you can file the document in a digital folder, and the No. corresponds to the file name. Keep the documents in chronological order.

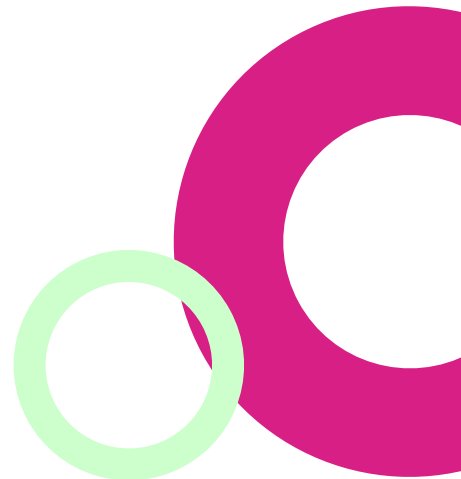
 **DATE FILED:** Record the date the document was filed in court. If the document was not filed in court, it does not need to be in this chart.

 **DOCUMENT FILED:** Record the title of the document here.

 **WHO FILED:** Note the person who filed the document in court. Typically, this will be you or the other party. It may also be a report writer, in the case of a Views of the Child Report, or a lawyer for the children.

 **DETAILS:** If there is anything else important about the document, you can record it here. For example, if the document was served on you or another person, put the date it was served and who it was served on.

See the sample filed documents chart on the following page.



SAMPLE FILED DOCUMENTS CHART

NO.	DATE FILED	DOCUMENT FILED	WHO FILED	DETAILS
1	2024-Jul-02	Application About a Protection Order (Form 12)	Me	<i>Ex parte</i>
2	2024-Jul-02	Protection Order	Court	Served on <i>other party</i> 2024-Jul-03
3	2024-Jul-03	Affidavit of Personal Service (Form 48)	Sheriff	Document served was Protection Order
4	2024-Aug-01	Application About a Family Law Matter (Form 3)	Me	Served on <i>other party</i> 2024-Aug-02
5	2024-Aug-06	Certificate of Service (Form 7)	Me	Document served was Application About a Family Law Matter
6	2024-Aug-12	Reply (Form 6)	Other party	Served on me 2024-Aug-11
7	2024-Oct-15	Application About a Case Management Order (Form 10)	Me	Served on <i>other party</i> 2024-Oct-15
8	2024-Nov-01	Order (Form 44)	Me	Order for financial disclosure
9	2024-Nov-04	Application About a case Management Order (Form 10)	Me	Served on <i>other party</i> 2024-NOV-20
10	2024-Dec-03	Order (Form 44)	Me	Order for police record disclosure
11	2024-Dec-27	Consent Order following Family Settlement Conference (Form 44)	Other Party	From family settlement conference
12	2025-Jan-06	Final Order (Form 44)	Other Party	From trial



Conclusion

On the [Rise website](#), under Resources, you can find blank templates of the charts described in this guide. You can use these templates to make your own charts. Remember, your charts will contain personal information. It is important that you keep your charts private and only share them with your lawyer or support persons helping you with your legal case.

Though information is key to a family law case, completing all the charts in this guide may be overwhelming, especially if you are recently separated and are experiencing many changes.

Remember, you do not have to complete all the charts. It is okay to work on the ones you are able to and that are relevant to your case. You could start with one chart that seems the most important, or even come back to the charts when you have more time.

If filling out any of the charts is too much right now, you can also start by gathering documents and making sure they are stored in a digital folder, box, or binder. Anything you can do to stay organized is valuable.

Organizing may seem like an easy task, but it can be time-consuming and emotionally challenging when the subject matter is your family. It is okay to ask for help or support when you are working on these charts.



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Our office is located on the ancestral and unceded land of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam),
Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətaʔ/Seilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.