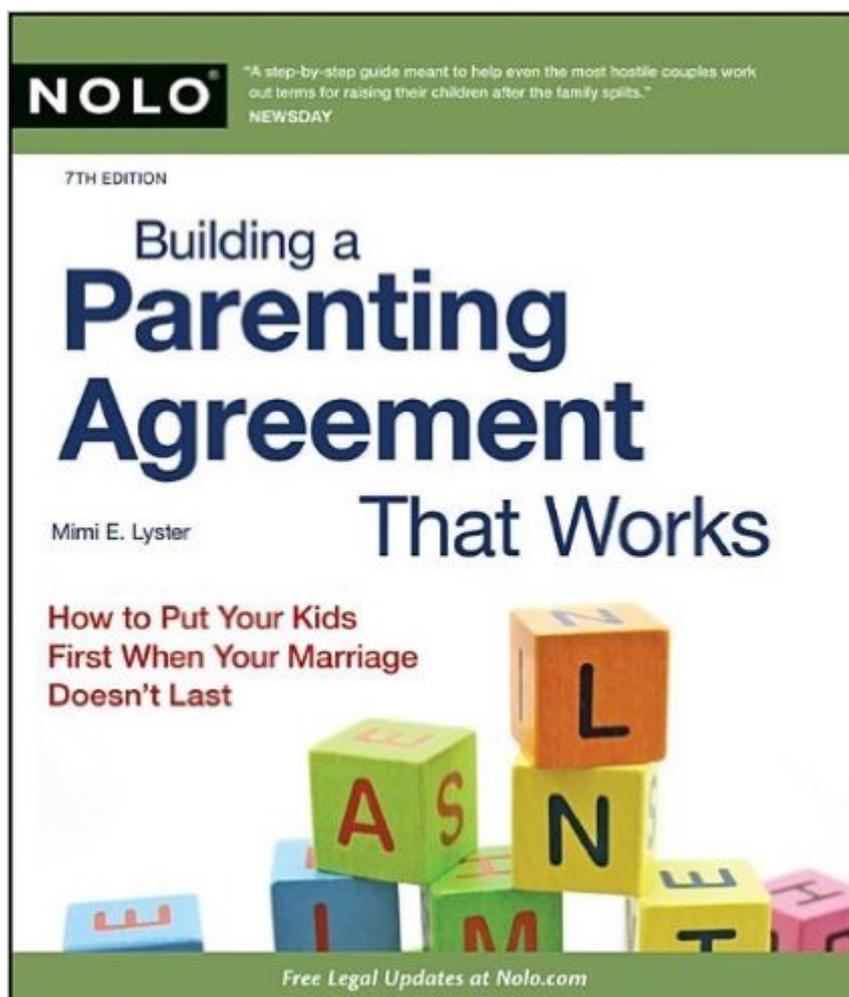


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# Building A Parenting Agreement That Works: Child Custody Agreements Step By Step



## Synopsis

Avoid custody battles -- save time, money and grief. Working out a fair and realistic child-custody agreement is one of the most difficult tasks for parents going through a divorce or separation. Building a Parenting Agreement That Works is the only book to show separating or divorcing parents how to overcome obstacles and create win-win custody agreements. A professional mediator, author Mimi Lyster sets out 40 issues separating parents typically face, and presents all the options to resolving them. The book walks you through all the factors you must consider, including: medical care education religious training living arrangements holidays money issues dealing with changes in an existing agreement working with professionals The updated 7th edition includes checklists and worksheets to help you complete the included fill-in-the-blank custody agreement, and provides the current custody laws of your state. It also contains new information on "moveaway" laws.

## Book Information

Series: Building a Parenting Agreement That Works

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## Customer Reviews

As a mediator, I've spent a lot of time helping divorcing parents work out a fair and realistic parenting plan or custody agreement that works for them and their children. The plan needs to protect the best interests of the children, and it is the parents who know the children best. Absent any abuse, it really is the parents, not the court or other experts, who need to work together to create a parenting plan that will work for everyone involved. That is where this book comes in. "Building a Parenting Agreement That Works: Child Custody Agreements Step by Step" by Mimi

Lyster Zimmelman contains practical solutions and sample language to assist divorcing parents overcome obstacles and build win-win custody agreements that allow everyone, parents and children, to live in their new arrangement. Obviously, I believe a mediator is greatly beneficial when disputing parties are trying to reach agreement, but for many, using a text such as Zimmelman's "Building a Parenting Agreement That Works" will assist them with successfully navigating these difficult waters in a stressful time. The book does a very good job of covering all the important ingredients of a successful parenting agreement. And I should point out that a successful parenting agreement is one that works for the people involved. You don't want to use a cookie cutter plan for everyone, but rather design the plan that works for the people and situations involved. After a short introduction that explains the book, part one focuses on getting started and covers topics such as taking stock of your situation, an introduction to parenting agreements, getting organized, and advice on how to negotiate a parenting agreement. Part two of the book focuses on the actual Parenting Agreement.

As a self-help book on settling separate parenting issues, this book is oddly structured. There is a lot of repetition of material, particularly in the early chapters. In some regards the book benefits from being read end-to-end, but it actively encourages jumping around and not necessarily reading everything. There are fairly useful worksheets to help guide discussions about potentially tense decision points, though a few of the topics are decidedly odd (teen marriage?). There is no mention of how to approach a co-parent who may not even be willing to fill out worksheets, and while there are a few suggestions of alternate plans that parents might consider as compromise, I honestly felt that there could have been more creativity exhibited and encouraged in the suggestions. There are a lot of mentions that folks facing situations involving domestic violence or substance abuse issues should consult professional help, but aside from mentioning it repeatedly, there's not a lot of advice on the topic. A whole separate book could be dedicated to just that aspect of things, but it gets fairly glossed over here. Most of the examples and discussion center around parents who both want to be involved, who live in relatively close proximity, and who have older children, so the book does not particularly address a lot of ideas on how to work with situations involving very young children or parents who are far removed from one another. Aside from those limitations, however, it could be a very good workbook for many people trying to build a cooperative plan for raising their child(ren). The chapter on mediation, in particular, was useful for explaining how one might go about obtaining mediation and what to expect; the author is also a mediator, so that makes sense.

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