

Custody Tip #7 – For the Best Finish, Pick the Right Start

For our final Custody X Change Custody Tip, we're going to go back to the beginning.

The start date – and even the end date, for that matter, of your visitation plan can make a world of difference.

Let's say the court order comes down as follows:

"... with a time-share percentage of 17% for Father and 83% for Mother (for the period of time from 04/1/08 - 03/31/09)."

And, "The regular parenting schedule begins on 4/6/08, starting within week 1, described ..."

This nails down your visitation to a rigid method for calculating timeshare. It has start and end dates, and a starting date for the basic cycle. In this case, it's exactly one year, starting with the first of April in 2008. And the first week of the basic repeating cycle lines up with the week beginning the 6th of April.

So?

So, this sort of legal text defines the plan exactly; but really, you could have put up a yearlong calendar on the wall, thrown a dart and use the date where the dart stuck to start the visitation plan on – and it wouldn't have make any difference.

Except that it can make a difference.

Here's the thing. **Holidays change drastically** even when the basic schedule is advanced by a week. And as you know from earlier Custody Tips, holidays can be crucially important in affecting your time-share percentage.

This can be proved using **Custody X Change**.

We're going to use one of our basic visitation cycles that we've used before, Alternating Weekends for the Non-Custodial Parent. We'll use a default Holiday setting so the special days are evenly-distributed.

Here's what it looks like:

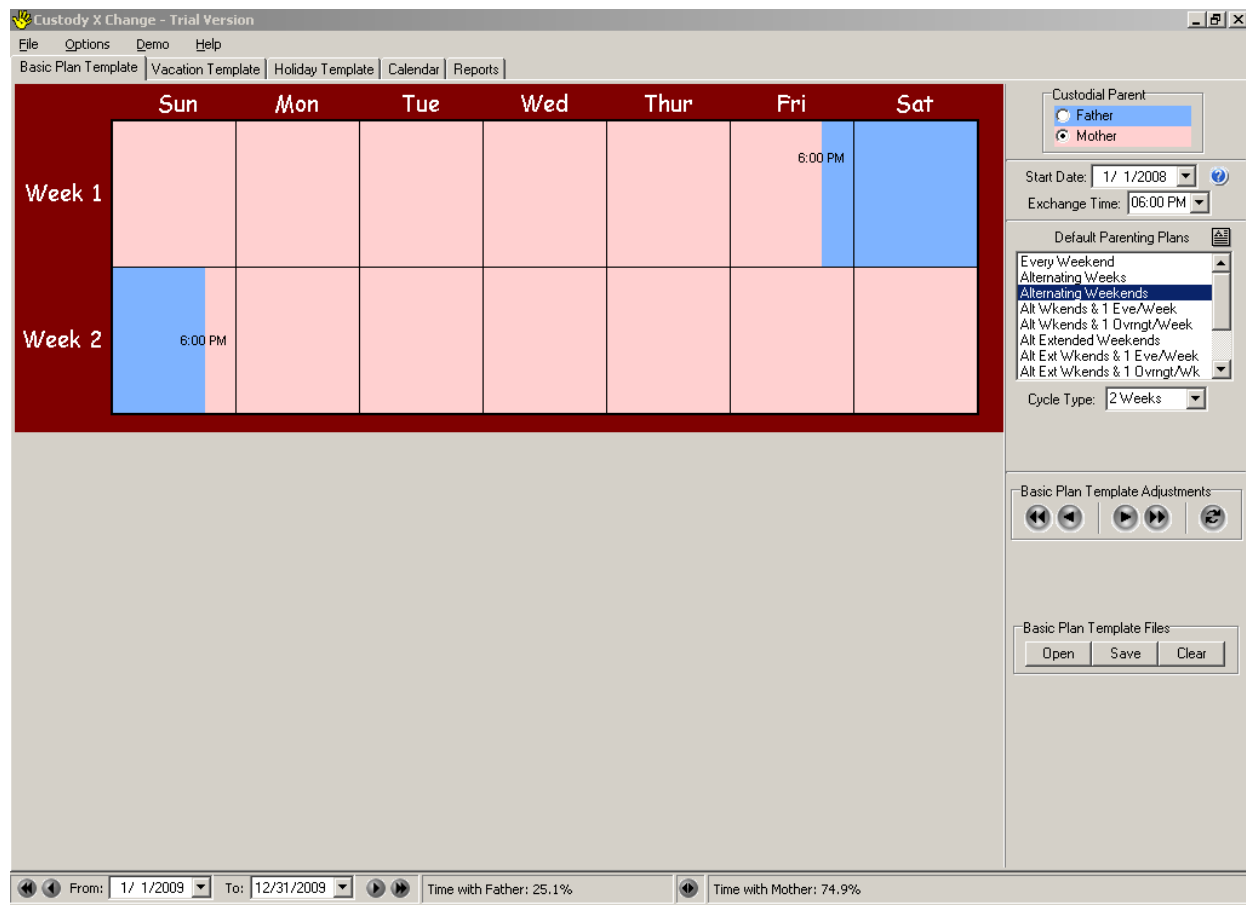


Figure 1: Standard visitation plan with a standard holiday plan.

Study that scenario. Started on January 1, 2008. Dad gets 25.1% in the time-share derby, Mom gets 74.9%. Got it?

Okay. Now...**without changing any other option**....we're going to advance the start date exactly one week...to January 8, 2008. We only changed the start date.

Watch the difference...

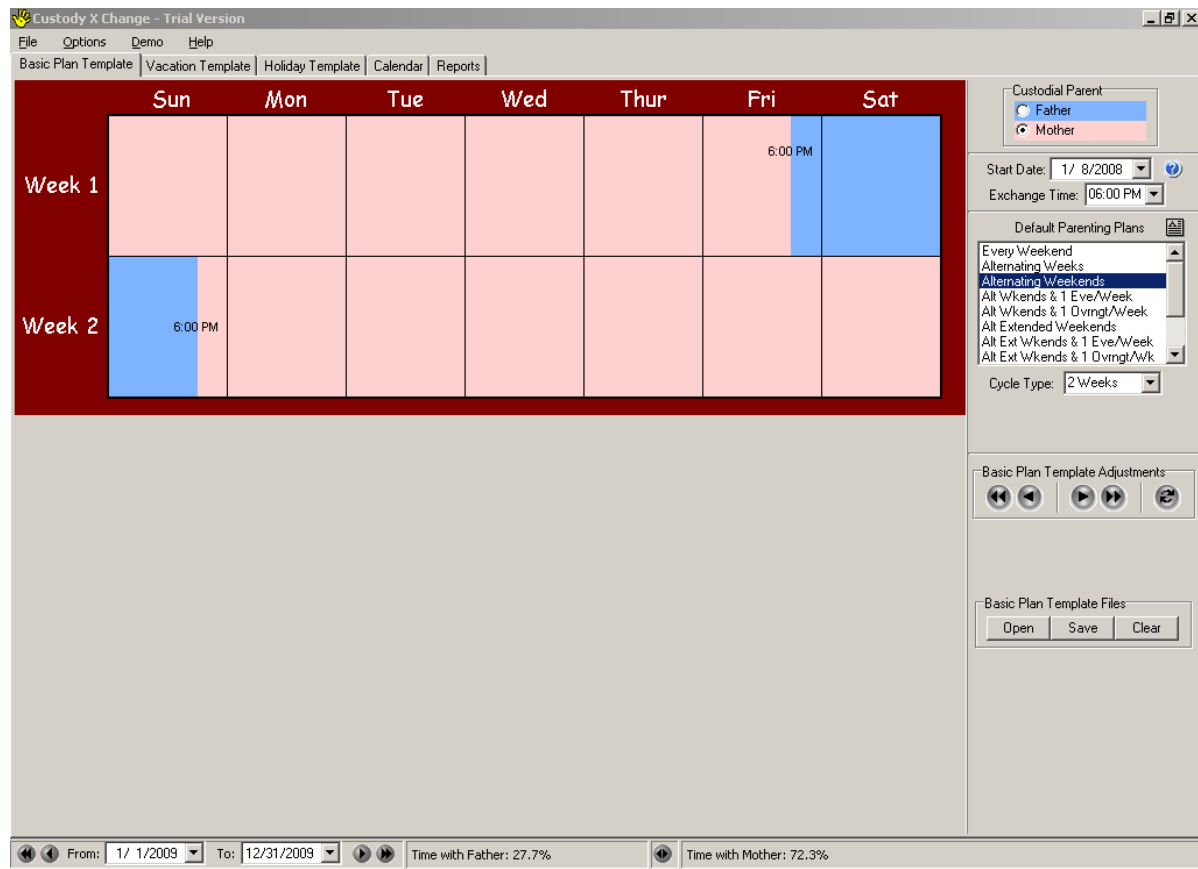


Figure 2: What a difference a week makes.

Oh my goodness. It seems as though NCP's time-share has jumped **over two percentage points** - without doing anything.

That's a pretty big boost – just from changing the date. A boost of 2.6%. Which works out to **over 200 more hours of visitation time** for that cycle.

We promise – do this experiment yourself with Custody X Change. Have a holiday default in place, advance your start date a week, and time-share percentages will definitely change.

You can create your perfect schedule and start it out right. Play with Custody X Change. Find the right start date that allows you maximum time with your child. This small detail can make a big difference when it comes to visitation time - and child support.

Custody X Change can help you or your client create a fair schedule that works for both parents and the children. It's **the essential tool** in making the most of visitation and child support issues.

Don't go into negotiations without it.