

In May 2006, the Herald asked the Ministry of Justice for information about Care of Children Act cases. The request was prompted by concerns raised by fathers' protest groups that there was a lack of gender-based information about Family Court cases. The first response to the request arrived on June 23. More complete information was supplied on Sept 4.

Final Parenting Order Day To Day Care and Contact Arrangements

December 2005 – May 2006

Background

A parenting order is an order made by the Family Court that says who is responsible for **day-to-day care** of a child, and when and how someone else important in the child's life can have **contact** with them.

Day-to-day care of a child - is where the child lives on a daily basis, and who is responsible for everyday things, like making sure the child is safe, that they get to school, and that they're warm and properly fed, for example

Contact with the child - this is how and when a child gets to spend time with a parent or other person who does not have day-to-day care of them.

Statistics

During the 6-month period from 1 December 2005 to 31 May 2006, 2751 final parenting orders were made in the Family court, of which 2004 involved day-to-day care and contact orders, 641 involved only day-to-day care orders and 66 involved only contact orders.

To understand the nature of these parenting order arrangements, relationship to child information is required for each case party granted day-to-day care or contact with the child. However this information is currently only available in the Ministry's Case Management System (CMS) on cases created since 1 July 2005. This means that families applying for parenting orders who have had guardianship matters before the court prior to July 2005 will not have this relationship to child information recorded in CMS.

Of the 2751 final parenting orders made in the 6-month period to 31 May 2006, 1310 cases were created since 1 July 2005 (therefore relationship to child information was recorded) and 1441 cases were created prior to 1 July 2005 (therefore relationship to child information was not recorded). Of the 1310 for which we hold relationship to child information, 1006 involve both day-to-day care and contact orders, 280 involve day-to-day care orders only and 24 involve contact orders only.

Contact Orders

The table below shows the details of contact orders made in favour of mothers and fathers during the period 1 December 2005 to 31 May 2006 on cases where full case party relationship to child data is available.

TABLE 1

Volume of Contact Orders for Mother and Father of Child
Made on Final Parenting Orders Between 1 December, 2005 and 31 May 2006
By Type of Contact Granted

Party	Contact Type				Total Contact Orders
	Direct/ Holidays Only	Direct/ Weekends	Direct/ Other	Indirect	
Father	10	83	742	30	865
Mother	6	26	288	11	331

Note that:

- i) contact orders may be made in favour of both the mother and the father in instances where another party is granted day-to-day care of the child
- ii) other direct contact refers to any direct contact of a frequency other than on weekends or holidays only.
- iii) indirect contact refers to contact via letter, telephone, email, etc

Day-to-Day Care Orders

The table below shows the detail of day-to-day care orders made during the period 1 December to 31 May 2006 on cases where full case party relationship to child data is available.

TABLE 2

Volume of Day-to-Day Care Orders Made on Final Parenting Orders
Between 1 December, 2005 and 31 May 2006
By Nature of Day-to-Day Care Arrangement

Day-to-Day Care Arrangement	Day-to-Day Care Orders
Mother Only	850
Father Only	146
Other Party	152
Shared - Mother & Father	124
Shared - Mother & Other Party	9
Shared - Father & Other Party	2
Shared - Mother, Father & Other Party	3
Total	1286

Note that:

- i) Any person or group of persons other than the mother or father of the child are referred to as an 'Other Party'. This may include one or more grandparents, other family/whanau, guardians to the child or non-family members
- ii) Shared day-to-day care arrangements may vary. Any order made which grants some day-to-day care responsibility to more than one of mother, father or other party to the child, is classified as a shared arrangement, no matter the nature or frequency of day-to-day care granted to each party.