



# Charting Overnight Decisions for Infants and Toddlers (CODIT)

Jennifer McIntosh, Marsha Pruett & Joan Kelly, 2015

The CODIT is a simple way to consider key questions that helpfully inform decisions about overnight care for very young children (0-3 years) after parental separation. The CODIT is based on a review of current developmental science (Pruett, McIntosh, & Kelly, 2014) and the authors' consensus about its application to overnight decisions (McIntosh, Pruett, & Kelly, 2014\*). The grid from the latter paper has been adapted here for easier use, and a chart has been added, to assist considerations.

## Completing the CODIT profile:

There are 8 factors, each with its own questions. Work through the factors in order.

a) For each question, circle the answer that is currently true for this child and family, as follows:

- **Present** (continually present/established)
- **Emerging** (sometimes present)
- **Absent** (rarely or never present).

b) Then mark the box in the colored column to the right, that best fits all answers for that factor.

c) On the last page, you can chart your answers on the graph provided.

## LEVEL 1: GATEWAY FACTORS.

<p><b>Factor 1. Safety</b></p> <p>A) The child is safe in the care of each parent</p> <p>B) Parents are safe with each other.</p>	<p>Absent Emerging Present</p> <p>Absent Emerging Present</p>	<p>A &amp;/or B are absent</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>A &amp; B are present. Conflict is not threatening or dangerous</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>A &amp; B are present. Conflict is well managed</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Factor 2. The child's age, and trust and security with each parent</b></p> <p>The young child:</p> <p>A) has an established, trusting relationship (6 months +) with both parents</p> <p>When resident parent is not present, child:</p> <p>B) seeks comfort from, and is soothed by the other parent</p> <p>C) finds support for play and exploration with the other parent</p>	<p>Absent Emerging Present</p> <p>Absent Emerging Present</p> <p>Absent Emerging Present</p> <p>Absent Emerging Present</p>	<p>For child of any age; A is &gt; 6 months and/or B is absent or emerging</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>For child of any age: A is present &amp; B &amp;/or C are emerging</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>A - C are present</p> <input type="checkbox"/>

## LEVEL 2: KEY FACTORS

<p><b>Factor 3. Parenting</b></p> <p>The parent:</p> <p>A) is sensitive to and consistently recognizes and meets child's needs</p> <p>B) does not seriously misuse drugs/alcohol, &amp; use does not affect consistent responsive parenting that meets child's physical and emotional needs</p> <p>C) has no serious mental illness, and/or any mental health issues are well managed and do not affect consistent, responsive parenting that meets child's physical and emotional needs.</p>	<p>Absent Emerging Present</p> <p>Absent Emerging Present</p> <p>Absent Emerging Present</p>	<p>Any of A-C are absent</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>A is present. B &amp;/or C are emerging</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>A-C are present</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
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<p><b>Factor 4. Child's health &amp; development</b></p> <p>A) The child has significant developmental or medical needs</p> <p>B) Such needs are well supported in the proposed arrangement</p> <p>C) The child is exclusively breast-feeding/does not accept a bottle.</p>	<p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p>	<p>A or B &amp; C absent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>A is present, B &amp; C are emerging</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>A-C are present</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Factor 5. Child's adjustment</b></p> <p>Relative to temperament and stage of development, child shows any of these behaviors persistently (over 2-4 weeks*):</p> <p>A) irritability; frequently unsettled, without medical cause</p> <p>B) excessive clinging on separation, distressed on exchange between parents</p> <p>C) frequent crying/ intense upset</p> <p>D) aggressive behavior, including self-harming behavior</p> <p>E) marked regression in established behaviors e.g. toileting, eating, sleeping</p> <p>F) low persistence in play &amp; learning</p> <p>G) any regressions, difficulties in above are short lived and readily resolved</p> <p><i>,* for more, see DC: 0-3 Revised Diagnostic Criteria</i></p>	<p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p>	<p>Any of A-F exist; G is absent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Any of A-F are emerging, but G is present</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Any of A-F are rare; G is present</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Factor 6. Co-parental relationship</b></p> <p>Parents are able to:</p> <p>A) communicate civilly about and plan for their young child together</p> <p>B) manage conflicts arising, using interventions as needed</p> <p>C) be consistent yet responsive with the schedule</p> <p>D) facilitate low stress exchange of the child at transitions</p> <p>E) value or at least accept the child's relationship with the other parent</p> <p>F) put their child's needs before their own wishes for time/contact</p>	<p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p>	<p>Most of A-F are absent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Most of A-F are emerging</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>A-F are present</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Factor 7. Pragmatic resources to support sharing of overnights</b></p> <p>A) Each parent can be the main care giver for the child during scheduled overnight and the majority of scheduled day time*</p> <p>B) Parents live within a manageable commute of each other</p> <p>C) Both parents prioritize personal care for child by self or by other parent</p>	<p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p> <p>Absent    Emerging    Present</p>	<p>A or B are absent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>A is present, B or C is emerging</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>A-C are present</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

\* (excluding work time, although care by a parent during the other parent's work time may be preferable in some situations, e.g. may ease the need for long day care, and/or reduce number of day-time care-givers in the child's week)



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## LEVEL 3: FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The following items are important to consider. Some will be more or less relevant in different circumstances.

<b>Factor 8. Family and Situational Factors</b>									
A) Arrangement reflects a status quo that worked well for the child (i.e. arrangement is similar to those prior to separation)	Absent	Emerging	Present	Most relevant items are absent	Relevant items are sometimes true or mixed absent & present	All relevant items are present			
B) Overnights would assist with parents' work commitments	Absent	Emerging	Present						
C) Older siblings are present and a source of security to the young child	Absent	Emerging	Present						
D) Overnights enable time with others who are important sources of security to child: e.g., grandparents who live at a distance	Absent	Emerging	Present						
E) Overnights enable exposure to important elements of parents' culture/ religion	Absent	Emerging	Present				☐	☐	☐
F) Other relevant considerations in this case?	Absent	Emerging	Present						

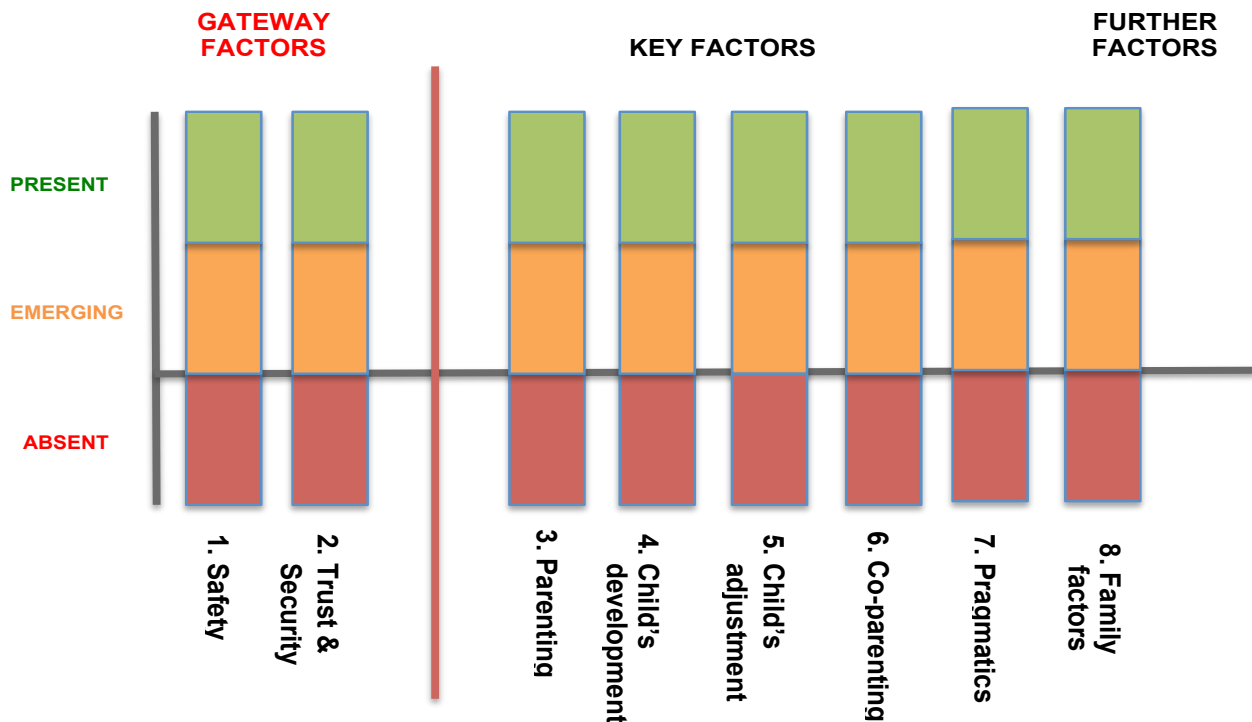
If you find visuals helpful, you can chart the CODIT profile on the next page, by putting an “x” in the relevant color for each factor. The profile highlights strengths, and also areas that may warrant further attention. Weighing up the CODIT profile with other factors relevant to this case is important, as is considering spacing and clustering of overnight time.



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## THE CODIT PROFILE



The CODIT is not a diagnostic instrument. The profile should not be used as the sole basis for decisions, nor override the discretion of parents who jointly elect to follow other schedules.

## GUIDE FOR CONSIDERING THE CODIT PROFILE

### No/rare overnights Indicated when:

Either or both Gateway Factors are absent, and/or most Key Factors are absent.  
Day-time contact may or may not be indicated

### Lower range overnights indicated (1-4 per month) when:

Both Gateway Factors factors are present and most Key Factors are emerging.

### Higher range overnights indicated (5+ per month\*) when:

Both Gateway Factors are present and most Key Factors are present.

### Notes on Age of Infant:

Even when all parenting conditions are met, high numbers of overnights (more than weekly) are not generally indicated for young infants 0-18 months subject to family law disputes. For reasons of temperament or maturation, this may also apply to toddlers who show signs of being significantly stressed by the arrangements. Equally, given temperament, maturation and other factors, some young infants will manage higher frequency overnights well. The decision is best made and monitored case by case. *18 months is a protective reference point and not an absolute cut off.* Overnight thresholds may likely be different for infants and toddlers who have established trust with both parents and a supportive community for example, compared to infants without established bi-lateral security, whose parents had no prior relationship, do not trust each other, and/or have few supports for effective co-parenting. When lower or higher levels of overnights are not indicated initially, they may become so with the child's maturation, and/or with professional assistance. An agreed "step-up" plan is helpful. Refer to McIntosh, Pruett, & Kelly 2014 for details.