

Planning your child maintenance conversation



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Why having this conversation might be a good idea

Use this form to help you plan a child maintenance conversation with your children's other parent. You could ask the other parent to work through the guide separately so you both have a plan when you start to talk.

If you can work together to agree a child maintenance arrangement that works for both of you, it can have a positive impact on your children.

It does not cost anything to set up your own arrangement, no one else needs to get involved and you may be able to change your arrangement if circumstances change for either of you.

Working out child maintenance payments

If you need help working out the amount of maintenance to pay, go to [gov.uk/calculate-child-maintenance](https://www.gov.uk/calculate-child-maintenance).

You could agree on a regular payment or include payments 'in kind'. These are payments for items such as school uniforms, social activities or food shopping.

The important thing is that you both agree to an arrangement that works so that it gives reliable support towards the everyday costs of raising your children.

1 What do you want to talk about?

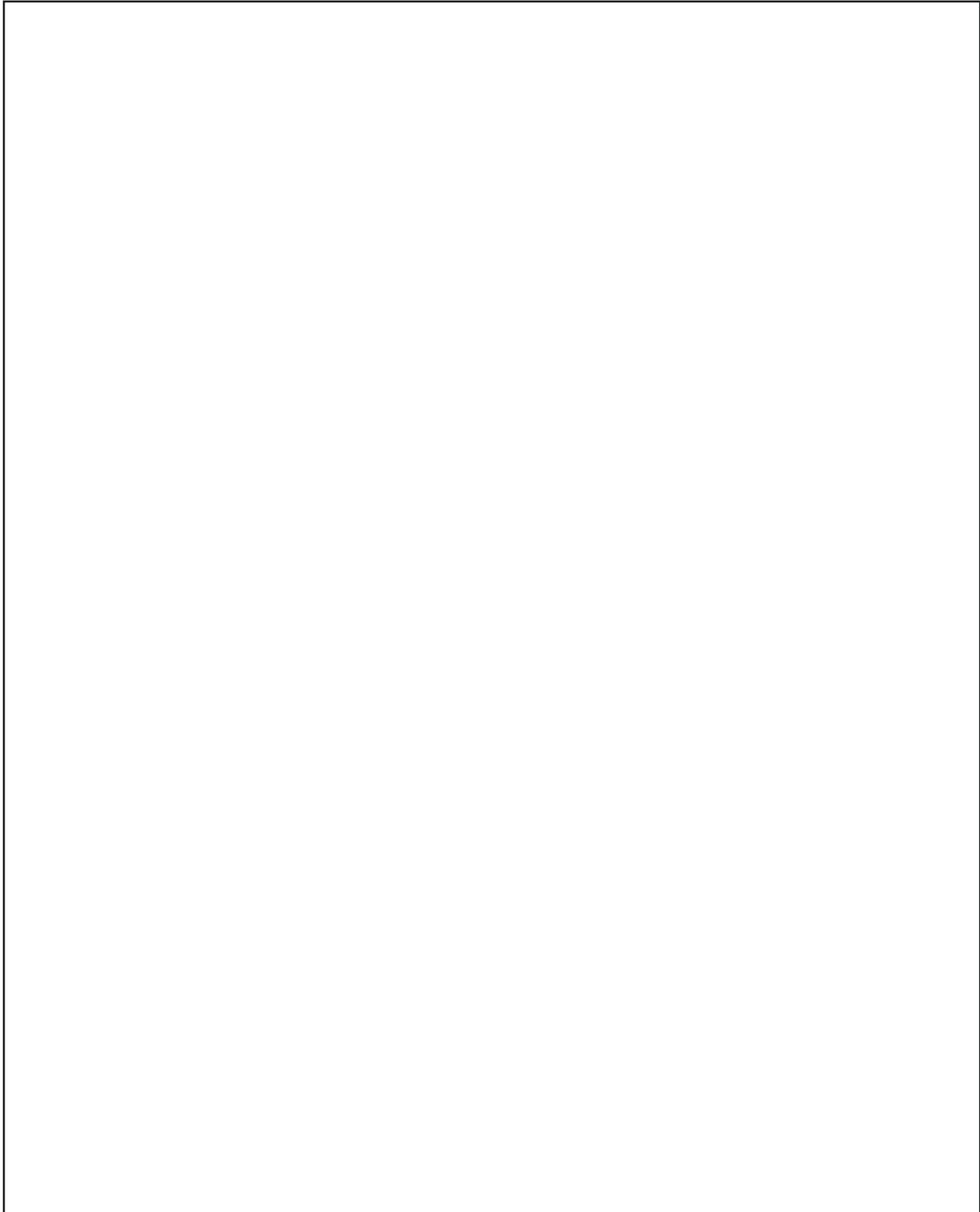
Write a list of everything you want to talk about in terms of arrangements for the children.

Decide which items are most important to sort out.

Then think about which things you are prepared to compromise on.

Talk through your plans with a friend or family member to help you think about any other questions.

If you want to, you can write down your ideas here:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write down their ideas and arrangements for the children.

2 How, where and when do you want to talk?

Think about somewhere to meet where you will both feel able to talk to each other.

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Some people prefer to talk somewhere private, like their home. If you feel uncomfortable going to each other's home, you could ask a friend or relative to let you use their home instead.

Some people prefer to meet somewhere more public, like a cafe or a park.

Think about other forms of communication if meeting in person will not work – for example, text, email or telephone – and agree a time to communicate.

Try to find a suitable time when you are both able to talk openly, without the children around.

Leave yourself plenty of time so you're not under pressure. For example, do not arrange to talk if you have to be at work in an hour's time, or when you need to pick-up or drop-off children.

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3 Would you like someone else to be there?

If you think it would be helpful, you could ask a friend or relative to be there during your conversation. Some people find this helpful, if it is a person that both parents trust and they can stay calm and neutral.

You could also ask a professional family mediator to help you. There's more information about this at www.familymediationcouncil.org.uk

If you want someone else to be with you, make sure you tell the other parent so they know what to expect.

If you want to, you can write down your ideas here:

4 How would you like to explain your ideas?

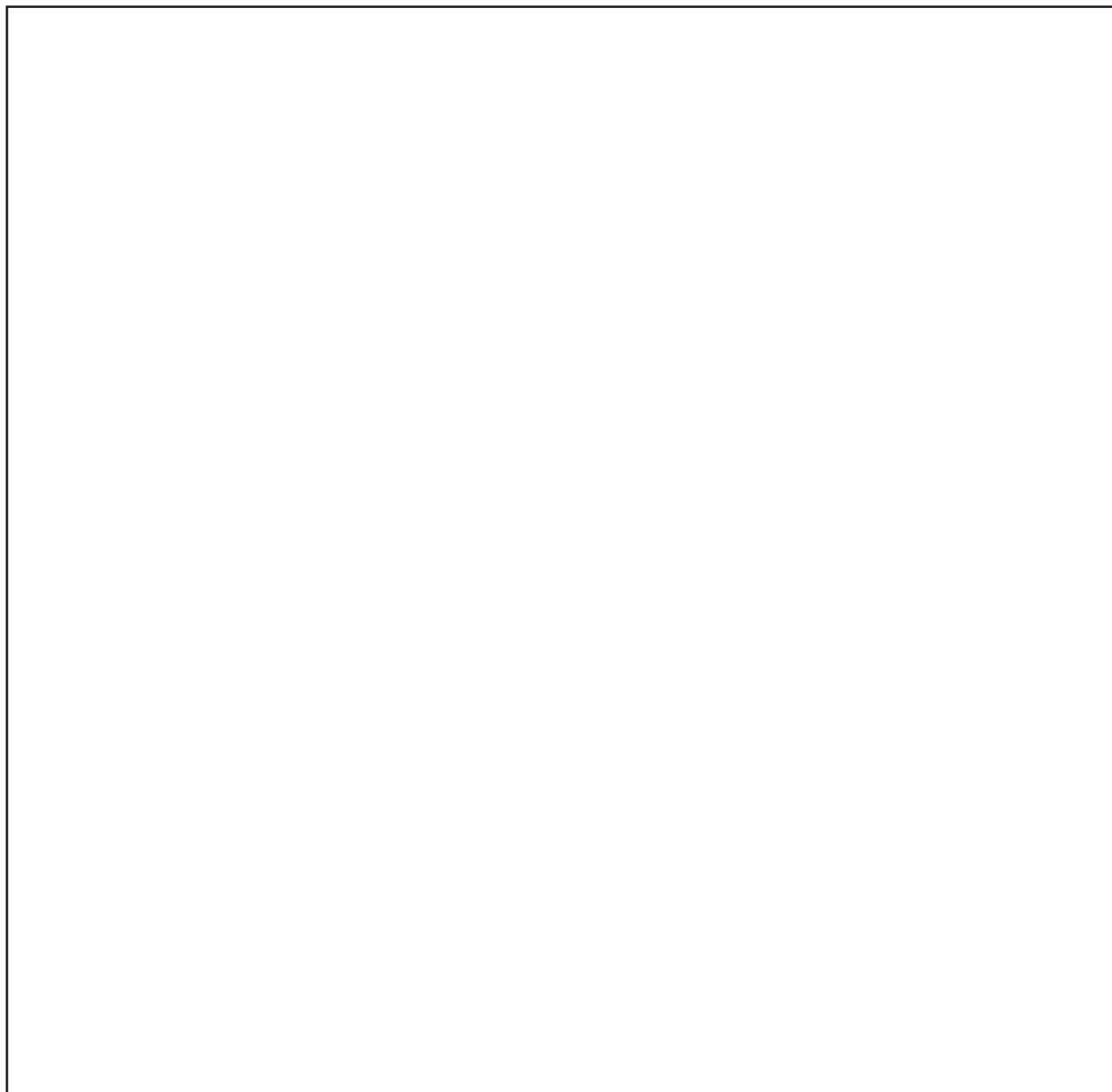
You could write your thoughts down or talk about them.

You might find there are some things that you can easily agree on. Start with those, to get some common ground, even if they're not your top priority.

Be polite and treat the other parent as you'd want to be treated.

Listen to what the other parent is saying. Try not to use phrases that sound like accusations, like 'you never...' or 'you always...'. Using these words could make the conversation much harder.

If you want to, you can write down your ideas here:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write down their ideas. It occupies most of the lower half of the page.