

How to Start a Parenting Time or Custody Case

The Kent County Friend of the Court does not start parenting time or custody cases. If you want to start a parenting time or custody case, you have to **file a new case** with the [Circuit Court](#). Filing a case means opening a court case to get a court order for custody or parenting time.

If you already have a child support case, you should not open a new case. You need to file a motion in your existing case if you want to change parenting time or custody.

Why Do I Need to Start a Case?

- The Friend of the Court (FOC) cannot **investigate** or make any recommendations to the court about **custody** or **parenting time** if you do not have a court case.
- FOC cannot enforce parenting time without a **court order**, and you need court case to get a court order.
- Or you can file a new case directly with the circuit court.

Can I File My Case in Kent County?

- You **cannot** file a new case if you already have a parenting time or custody case in any other county in Michigan or in any other state.
- If you have a parenting time and custody case in another state already, consider consulting a legal professional.
- If you already have a support or paternity case in **Kent County**, **do not** file a new case. You can file a [motion](#) in your current case or request mediation.

How Do I File a New Case?

- You can use [Michigan Legal Help](#) to complete the forms needed to start a new case.
- If you are filing a new divorce case in Kent County, you can use [TurboCourt](#) to complete the required forms.
- You can use the [Legal Assistance Center](#) to help you start a new case. You can reach the Legal Assistance Center at 616-632-6000.