

PARENTHING WEEKLY

The week before the courtroom

Ireland is rebuilding family justice from January 2027. Most of the conflict that fills it starts on an ordinary Tuesday.

5 October to 9 October 2026 | parenthing.ie

Two true things that don't meet

From January 2027, the Family Courts Act 2024 brings dedicated family court divisions and full-time specialist judges. The Department of Justice calls it among the most significant reforms of the family justice system in the history of the State. It is real, and it is overdue.

Almost none of the conflict that pushes separated parents toward court is legal. It is logistical. Who has the children on the mid-term Monday. Who bought the Halloween costume, or whether it got bought twice. A handover that, from 25 October, happens in the dark for the first time since spring.

Jan 2027

Phase 1 of the Family Courts Act 2024
begins: Ireland's first dedicated
family court divisions.

A three-phase rollout to 2029. Source: gov.ie, 2026.

THIS WEEK'S TIP

Sort the next fortnight, not the next hearing

Two dates are already on the way. The clocks go back on Sunday 25 October, so the evening handover that ran in daylight all summer now happens in the dark. The October mid-term lands the week after, five days off school that belong to nobody's rota.

Agree both in one place both homes can see, a week out, not by text three days before. The handover time, the mid-term days, who collects from where. The row is rarely about the plan. It is about a message remembered two different ways.



A reformed court can only rule on what reaches it. Most of co-parenting is settled long before that, in a fortnight nobody designs for.

That part, two parents can still get right between them.

The coordination layer

ParenThing is built for the ordinary week. One shared calendar carrying the handovers and the mid-term, messages tone-checked before they send, and shared costs tracked as requested, agreed, paid or outstanding, so both homes read the same list.

When a mediator, solicitor or support worker is needed, the family invites them in with scoped, read-only access to the part that matters. Less to argue about by the time anyone reaches a courtroom.

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SOURCES

Family Courts Act 2024 implementation plan, Phase 1 from January 2027. Department of Justice, gov.ie

Clocks go back on Sunday 25 October 2026. The Irish Times, irishtimes.com

