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Q

How much should I contribute to my 7 year old son's daycare and babysitting expenses now that my wife and I have separated and my son is living with my wife?

A

You and your wife should each contribute, proportionate to your incomes, to your son's daycare and babysitting expenses. In doing so, you would only contribute to the expense incurred as a result of your wife's employment, illness, disability or education or training for any employment. If your wife were going out for the day with friends, and had to get a babysitter, then you would not have to contribute to that expense. If however, your son is attending a daycare and the daycare's payment options don't meet your wife's work schedule you may still have to contribute to a full time placement at the daycare even if your son were only attending part time.

If any tax deductions are available, they must be taken into account in calculating your share of the expense. You must be realistic, however, when there is a situation where no receipt is provided by the babysitter. Rightly or wrongly, and we won't go into a discussion of the "underground economy", many babysitters lower their rates when they know that the babysitting expense will not be declaring the payment on their income tax returns. You may therefore not get the benefit of a tax deduction when you calculate your proportionate share of the expense.

Generally the parent who has custody of the child will choose the babysitter/daycare provider as long as it is a reasonable and affordable choice.

I have a reduced hourly rate for a consultation if you wish to discuss any family law issues with me.

The advice offered in this column is intended for informational purposes only. Use of this column is not intended to replace or substitute any professional, financial, medical, legal, or other professional advice.

## ARTS



**PARTY OF 80 ATTEND PARTY OF 8'S OPENING:** The Party of 8's opening of their new exhibit at the Red Door Gallery was a big success with close to 80 people attending. There to greet their guests were artists (from left to right) Donna Adams, Jan Zimmerman, Maggie Atkinson, Inge Kremer, Andres Silvera, Eileen Simpson, Adrienne Houston and Lynda Burns. The show runs to Sunday, Nov. 15 at The Red Door Gallery, 127 Mill St. in downtown Georgetown, Thursday to Sunday, noon to 5. Come out and see an eclectic show of many disciplines and subject matter in the town's newest art gallery.

Photo by Joanne Macdonald



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