

Good Communication

Essential for successful co-parenting is good communication. To insure good communication choose your words carefully. It helps to avoid words that:

- Criticize, blame or accuse
- Advise, command or demand
- Insult
- Interrogate rather than question
- Are judgmental
- Assume motive

Where to get help -

Community Resources

Professional counseling can be very helpful to the children and family. The therapist may be a psychiatrist, counselor, social worker, or another professional. Parents may also want to turn first to those in other helping professions whom they know and respect, such as your priest, minister, rabbi, or child's teacher or counselor. Often they can provide the needed help or referral.

Groups for divorced and single parents facing similar problems can offer practical advice and emotional support for the child and family. The Family Resource Guide is available at

www.familyresourceguide.info



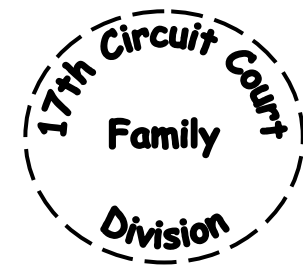
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Co-Parenting Tips



Friend of the Court

"For Our Children"



February 2009

Co-Parenting Tips

The Kent FOC has compiled some information that may assist you in your role as co-parent. The following are some ideas.

Do

- Allow your children to love the other parent.
- Help your children maintain contact with extended family and friends.
- Allow children to express their fears, concerns and complaints.
- Communicate important information regarding medical and school, or any other important events for your children to the other parent.
- Help your children prepare for parenting time emotionally and physically.
- Envision a loving, happy and healthy family for your children.

Do Not

- Talk negatively, insult, or allow others to talk negatively, or insult the other parent where the children can hear you.
- Have arguments or conversations of conflict between you (parents) when the children are present or during parenting time exchanges.
- Ask your children where they want to live.

- Have your children serve as the messenger for your requests to the other parent.
- Bring your children into adult issues and parental conflicts about custody, parenting time, child support or the court.
- Allow a stepparent or significant other to negatively alter your relationship with the other parent.

Keep the Focus on the Children

Be a parent engaged through hope, rather than through revenge. A parent who is interacting through revenge is creating harm for the children. When a parent's motive is for revenge, they make decisions and take actions not because those decisions are right for the children, but because they wish to hurt the other parent. Children in this situation get put in the middle and live with the stress caused by the actions of the parents. Parents who interact through hope set aside their emotions and continue to work on letting go of negative emotions and behaviors so they can co-parent. This involves committed practice that does not put the children in the middle. Parents should remain focused on their children's needs and future rather than on the other parent and the past.

Help for a Blended Family

According to the United States Census Bureau, by 2010 blended families are projected to be the predominant family form in the U.S. A blended family is composed of a biological parent, a step-parent and the children of one or both parents. Here is some information that might be helpful to parents in blended families.

Most common mistakes made by remarried families:

1. Due to the highly emotional situation, a parent may become preoccupied with themselves and neglect sensitivity to their children's experience.
2. A parent could treat the remarriage as an event, rather than a complex reformation of the family, which takes years to accomplish.
3. A parent may have their children cut off one relationship in favor a new one that is created by a blended family.

Some goals to consider to help with the adjustment:

1. Create a working, open, co-parent relationship between former spouses.
2. Work through the emotional divorce or separation from your former spouse or partner.
3. Understand that children do not have the power to decide remarriage, custody or parenting time issues, but consider their input regarding these decisions as they grow older.
4. Allow your children to have the full range of feelings for all parents, accepting that there may be some divided loyalties.
5. See your blended family as strong, healthy and happy. A patient and positive attitude can make a significant difference.