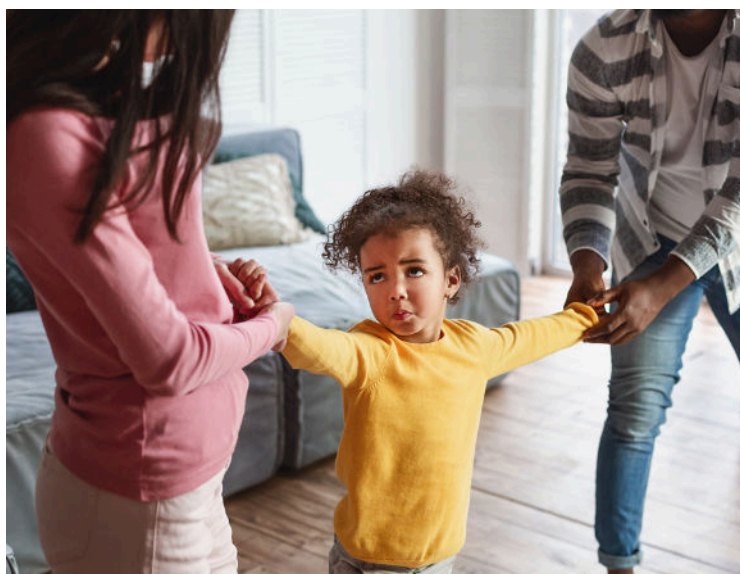




# A WAY OF BEING WITH CHILDREN

## Co-Parenting After Divorce

Tips for Effective Co-Parenting to Support Your Child's Wellbeing



By putting aside personal differences and prioritizing the needs of their children, co-parents can contribute significantly to their children's overall well-being, resilience, and ability to navigate the challenges of a family structure changed by divorce.

The first step to doing this could include creating a co-parenting plan. Develop a detailed co-parenting plan that outlines schedules, responsibilities, and decision-making processes. Having a structured plan reduces conflict and provides clarity for both parents. Should conflict levels be high, it may be helpful to consider having a counselor or mediator present to assist in the creation of this plan. This will set the foundation and serve as a guide to navigate the new changes.



### Does Co-Parenting Make a Difference?

Effective co-parenting is crucial for the well-being and healthy development of children in divorced or separated families. When parents collaborate successfully, they create a stable and supportive environment that fosters emotional security for their children. Effective co-parenting demonstrates to children that both parents are actively involved in their lives and committed to their best interests. This collaborative approach helps children build strong, positive relationships with both parents, providing them with a solid foundation for emotional and social growth.

### Create a United Front When Possible

- **Stick to the Plan:** This is essential to easing anxiety and improving collaboration as it provides a framework that fosters predictability, reduces uncertainty, and promotes mutual understanding.
- **Communication is Key:** Maintain open and honest communication with your ex-spouse. Clear communication helps in understanding expectations and ensures a smoother co-parenting experience.
- **Flexibility is Crucial:** Be open to flexibility in your co-parenting arrangements. Life can be unpredictable, so being adaptable to changes in schedules or plans will make co-parenting more manageable.
- **Respect Boundaries:** Respect each other's personal boundaries and privacy. Try instead to focus on the shared goal of raising your children together. Redirect the focus from personal situations to the impact on your children and their emotional health. This perspective can often diffuse tension and foster collaboration.

# Consistent Parenting Styles

It can sound like a big ask to maintain consistent parenting amidst divorce, but the outcomes are worth the effort. Strive for consistency as much as possible in parenting styles between households. This can be achieved in really small and manageable ways. Having similar rules and routines helps children feel secure and minimizes confusion of what is acceptable in each home. Consistency is important as it provides stability, predictability, and a sense of security for the children, helping them navigate the challenges of divorce more effectively and promoting their overall well-being. Simple tasks that might allow for a consistent approach include:

- Morning school routine
- Similar bedtime
- Mealtime routine
- Chores or responsibilities



## When Things Feel Challenging

- **Utilize Technology:** Embrace technology to facilitate communication and coordination. Shared calendars, messaging apps, and co-parenting platforms can help keep everyone on the same page. Utilize written communication if face-to-face discussions tend to escalate.
- **Seek Professional Help:** If conflicts arise and communication breaks down, consider seeking the assistance of a mediator or counselor. Professional help can provide guidance and strategies for overcoming challenges.
- **Self-Care:** Take care of your own well-being to be the best parent you can be. Prioritize self-care, manage stress, and seek support from friends, family, or a support group.

## Easing Transitions between Homes:

- **Maintain a Positive Environment:** During in-person parent exchanges, strive to keep interactions courteous and focused on the well-being of the child.
- **Be Punctual and Reliable:** Respect the agreed-upon schedule and be punctual for exchanges.
- **Create a Comfortable Transition Space:** Designate a comfortable and familiar space for the child in each home. Having their own belongings, such as toys, clothes, and personal items, in both residences can make the transition smoother and create a sense of continuity for the child.
- **Use a Displayed Calendar:** Using a calendar can be a valuable tool in assisting children with transitions between households by providing clarity, predictability, and a visual representation of their schedule. It will also ease anxiety by reducing uncertainty, promote independence and, for older children, encourage accountability.



Get more resources at: [www.centerforchildcounseling.org/awayofbeing](http://www.centerforchildcounseling.org/awayofbeing)