

tips + resources
for co-parents to
navigate divorce
and its aftermath

CO-PARENTING IN HIGH CONFLICT SITUATIONS



Use Neutral Communication

I recommend the BIFF method developed by Bill Eddy: **B**rief, **I**nformative, **F**riendly and **F**irm. Keep your messages (email unless urgent) concise; include only info required; be kind and respectful in your tone, but firm with boundaries and necessary deadlines.



Do not ever put your child(ren) in the middle of your conflict

If you can't resolve in communication with your co-parent, decide if you need to seek legal advice. If it doesn't involve the health, safety or welfare of your child, you probably need to see that you cannot change what happens in their home, but you can manage yours. You cannot decide for your co-parent and may need to learn an important and difficult mantra, "Let It Go!"



Remind yourself you will always be a co-parent

You had a child(ren) with them and therefore need to stay in each other's lives after your marriage has ended. There is nothing to win, no one to convince who is the victim in divorce or otherwise. Court is a terrible place to be for families. There is just your healthy life to live with your child(ren) moving forward as you align the values you have together and prepare for what's next and best for them and you.



Consider a Parallel Parenting Model of Co-Parenting when you can't agree

In this method, each parent has their own parenting approach when the children are with them. It attempts to minimize contact between parents while allowing both to spend adequate time with their children. In your home, one set of rules may apply and it may look different than your co-parent's. It can be harder to manage for tweens and teens but is sometimes necessary and is better than putting them in the middle of conflict.



Show your children the way to de-escalation for themselves

Build self-confidence in your child by watching them do difficult tasks safely, including dealing with a difficult parent. Allow them to "fail" to remember what's needed in your home without rescuing them (and consider duplicating items in both homes), give them responsibility they can manage in your home that increases as age appropriate, and role model what it looks like, as needed, when difficulty arises.

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