

Marriage & Family

Tips for Co-parenting

1. Agree to keep conflict away from your children.
2. Use respectful words, and don't put each other down, particularly in front of the children. Don't use sarcasm or make snide or hurtful remarks.
3. Say positive things about each other, particularly when the children are present.
4. Don't make promises you can't keep.
5. Don't make the children feel they must choose between you.
6. Encourage your children to love and respect the other parent. Encourage their connection with the other parent.
7. Send messages to each other directly; don't use the children as messengers.
8. Respect each other's new relationships.
9. Communicate directly with each other about the children instead of with the other parent's new partner.
10. Call a time-out when a discussion becomes too intense. Stop and separate so that you can both calm down. If this pattern continues, it's best to take a longer time-out from direct face-to-face communication for a while and use other methods of communicating information.
11. Allow for each other's parenting styles. Pick your battles. As long as the child is safe, emotionally and physically, he or she can adjust to different parenting styles and rules between households.
12. Practice good communication skills if you need to discuss an issue.
13. Ask new partners and members of your family to respect these guidelines as well.

Alabama Marriage Handbook, 37.