

Communication is Key

One of the biggest pieces of the co-parenting journey is communication, ongoing communication. It can be exhausting and difficult because you're dealing with someone that you couldn't stay married to for many reasons. There's pain and probably a lot of unforgiveness. Communication is an easy definition, but it's not easy to do. However, communication is very necessary for the journey of co-parenting. It's important for you and even more, it's important for the well-being of your child.

Decision Making

Another aspect of co-parenting is the ongoing joint decision making when it comes to the children's needs and interests. Parents can do this in various ways. Sometimes there's one parent that makes all the decisions. Other times, parents jointly agree on decisions. Many times, legal decrees give them both a voice. There's not a one size fits all answer to how to do that. Decisions will be ongoing, which is why successful communication is important.

Sharing Responsibilities

A third aspect of what co-parenting is the actual sharing of time with the child. You must coordinate the logistical things such as handoffs, schedules, sharing of time, etc. This might sound easy, but it can be hard to work out all those logistics and details. Aside from simple life "stuff" that may make it difficult, you're also dealing with emotions such as anger and hurt. It's critical you do not let those feelings stop your child from being with the other parent. *It's important for children to have mom and dad present.*

CO-PARENTING IS NOT GETTING YOUR EMOTIONAL NEEDS MET. IT IS TAKING CARE OF YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS. IT'S NOT GOING BACK TO HUSBAND AND WIFE ROLES AND HAVING AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION. IT'S NOT BEING MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE HISTORY THAN THE FUTURE. CO-PARENTING IS NOT HISTORY DRIVEN. IT IS FUTURE FOCUSED.

Healthy Co-parenting

Being healthy co-parents can be challenging. *Healthy co-parenting is really based on being able to separate what's personal from what's parental.* You need to understand that your children belong in both places. Parenting is different, rules are different, expectations change values that you were at one point, unified and are now disunified.

As you work to co-parent, you must be sensitive and compassionate of your child. You have to look at life through the eyes of the child and see how much it has changed for them. *Being compassionate doesn't mean you become permissive in your parenting. It just means that you're empathetic with what they're experiencing, what they're going through.* You can all do this together, **there is hope!**