

## Co-parenting (children of divorce)

The truly awful part of divorce is the pain and suffering it causes children. While there will always be some issues for the children, the parents can do much to mitigate the pain and suffering. Parents must be very adult, very grown up about it and set aside their differences. It means refusing to say a negative thing about the other parent in front of the child. It means never using the child as a weapon to get back at the former spouse. It means supporting the child's relationship with the other parent no matter how little you think of that person. Affirm, "Co-parenting is smooth and trouble free," 100 times a day aloud, especially if it seems like you have no control over the other parent.

If there are safety issues for the child, you take the proper steps for supervision, but you never say anything to the child about the situation.

Here is a good book:

The Co-parenting Survival guide: Letting go of Conflict After a Difficult Divorce.

Here are some contracts you can use to pledge the support and cooperation.

### **Pledge of Agreement**

We, the undersigned, are in agreement that:

- 1) We both love our children tremendously.
- 2) We are committed to our children's welfare and well being.
- 3) We will put aside our own differences to work together as co-parents in our children's best interests.
- 4) When we work together, we will use positive communication and will act in a spirit of cooperation.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Non-Compete Policy**

My priority is to give steadfast, unselfish love to our children first, and material "extras" second and as I deem appropriate, regardless of what my co-parent chooses to do.

I understand that competing with my co-parent for my children's affection will only hurt my children.

Before I give material gifts, I will look closely at my motives and explore my true purpose for bestowing these gifts.

If I feel that my co-parent is entering into a competition with me for our children's affection, I will not enter the competition myself. I will continue to act only in the best interest of our children.

I will try to understand and resolve any issues that keep me from acting in our children's best interests.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **My End of the Bargain**

Even when my co-parent does not comply with the practices of healthy co-parenting:

- I will continue to act in the best interest of our children.
- I will not talk down to my co-parent in front of our children.
- I will prepare myself emotionally for co-parent meetings so that I can remain calm and focused to best help our children.
- I will put the best interests of our children before any negative feelings between myself and my co-parent.
- I will follow through with my financial responsibility for our children.
- I will not use our children as a...
  - Pawn
  - Bargaining Chip
  - Punishment
  - Means of Revenge
  - Messenger

...in my relationship with my co-parent.

- I will not compete with my co-parent for our child's love, or try to prove that I am the "better parent."
- I will not engage in arguments with my co-parent in front of our children.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_