

Hang on! Help is on the way. Try these super strategies for making family life easier.

Katy Family Gram

Tips for co-parenting through divorce

Written by Katy Magazine's Staff and Parent Panel

Divorce is never easy. This is especially true when children are involved. How you react is vitally important to the overall health and well-being of your child. Here are a few tips for parenting through and after divorce.

AGREE TO AGREE Tell your ex that your No. 1 goal is to raise happy, well-adjusted children, and live by that. Ask your ex if he or she agrees and try to keep that motto as your foundation for communication.

COMMUNICATE WELL Discuss important school issues, schedule changes, and other parenting matters. Don't leave out info that you know your spouse needs to have because you're hurt or mad.

DON'T ENGAGE When things get heated between you and your ex, remain calm and walk away quietly. Have a "no conflict in front of the kids" policy.

SPEAK POSITIVELY Never say bad things about your ex. Take it a step further and try saying positive things about them once in a while. This eases the tension and helps children see the good in people.



SHOW RESPECT Demonstrate manners, courtesy, and respect for the other person even if you don't feel it in return. Kindly remind them to show you respect as well.

ESTABLISH RULES Try to agree on certain rules, standards, and schedules so the children know what to expect and can count on some consistency among households.

DON'T REACT When your child tells you something negative about your ex, remain neutral. You can speak to your ex privately and get to the bottom of the issue later if necessary.

DON'T COMPETE Don't try to outdo each other by buying gifts or planning over-the-top vacations and outings.

CHOOSE YOUR WORDS

Communicate with your ex like you would a teacher or acquaintance. Beware of harsh words, accusations, or long, angry emails. Stick to parenting topics, and don't rehash old hurts.

LET IT GO Keep the dialogue going on important topics like medical issues or your child's college choice, but let go of the little things that cause unnecessary strife.

TREAD CAREFULLY During the early stages of separation or divorce, don't bring boyfriends or girlfriends to school events or children's games if it will cause pain for your ex.

SEEK HELP See a counselor or join a divorce recovery group to help you learn how to navigate through co-parenting issues.

COME FROM A GOOD PLACE If you consistently reach out to your ex from a supportive place, they just might reciprocate. Rise above.

TALK TO YOUR KIDS Your child will take his cues from you. If you're upset and angry, he will be too. Take time to discuss his feelings and reassure him how much both parents love him. Ask your ex to do the same.

GO DIRECT Don't ask your child to tell your ex things for you. You never want to put a child in the middle of parental communication. **KM**

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