

CO-PARENTING RULES *for Happy Families*

Healthy co-parenting isn't about being perfect—
it's about creating consistency, security, and
respect for children.

1



Put the Child's Needs First

- Make decisions based on what benefits the child, not what feels best for either parent.
- Avoid asking children to take sides or carry messages between parents.

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Never Speak Negatively About the Other Parent

- Children identify with both parents.
- Criticizing the other parent can create guilt, anxiety, and loyalty conflicts.

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Keep Rules as Consistent as Possible

Try to align on:

- Bedtimes
- Homework expectations
- Screen time
- Discipline approaches
- Health and safety rules

Perfect consistency isn't necessary, but major differences can be confusing.

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Communicate Respectfully

- Keep conversations focused on parenting issues.
- Use calm, business-like communication when emotions are high.
- Text, email, or co-parenting apps can help if direct conversations are difficult.

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Present a United Front

- Discuss disagreements privately.
- Avoid arguing about parenting decisions in front of children.

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Be Reliable

- Arrive on time for exchanges.
- Follow through on promises.
- Give advance notice when plans need to change.

Reliability helps children feel secure.

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Support the Child's Relationship With Both Parents

- Encourage phone calls and visits.
- Allow children to enjoy time with the other parent without guilt.
- Celebrate the child's love for both parents.

8



Keep Adult Problems Adult Problems

Children should not be involved in:

- Financial disputes
- Legal issues
- Relationship conflicts
- Dating concerns

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Stay Flexible

Life happens:

- School events
- Illnesses
- Special occasions
- Unexpected schedule changes

A little flexibility often reduces conflict and benefits everyone.

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Have Regular Parenting Check-Ins

Consider discussing:

- School progress
- Medical concerns
- Behavioral issues
- Upcoming activities
- Schedule adjustments

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Respect Boundaries

- Each parent's home may operate somewhat differently.
- Focus on major values and safety concerns rather than controlling every detail.

12



Remember the Long-Term Goal

Ask:

"Will this matter to my child in five years?"

This question can help parents choose cooperation over conflict.



Love the child more than you dislike the conflict.



When children feel loved, safe, and free to maintain healthy relationships with both parents, they tend to adjust better and experience less stress during family transitions.

