



A Guide to Effective Co-Parenting

———— RABBI SHLOMO SLATKIN, MS, LCPC ————

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Introduction

Congratulations on making it to co-parenting! No doubt you've been through some pretty difficult and dark times and now you just want to make sure that your kids can get through this stage of their life as well adjusted as possible.

Nowadays there are many resources for children to be able to cope and heal after a divorce and the most important thing you can do as their parent is to maintain a home that is as safe and stable.

It's not always easily, especially if your co-parent is not as on board as you are, and indeed sometimes you'll have to be the change you wish to see.

We do recommend scheduling live co-parenting sessions with a therapist whenever possible so that you can solidify your learning with real accountability and feedback from a trained professional.

It may also be helpful to begin getting closure and clarity on the divorce and what went wrong in your previous relationship so that you can come out of this stronger than before.

With best wishes for your relationship success,
Rabbi Shlomo Slatkin, M.S., LCPC

Co-parenting is when parents who are separated, divorced, or unmarried live and care for their children. This can be very difficult for both parents and especially for the children, who have to deal with the sometimes conflicting demands of a household with two parents. However, co-parenting can be quite successful in situations where both parents are dedicated to the child's needs.

Why is co-parenting important?

- To raise your children
- For the well-being of your children
- To make your children feel loved

BENEFITS OF CO-PARENTING

- 1.Children feel loved and secure.
- 2.They benefit from consistency.
- 3.It reduces child's and provides comfort.
- 4.They have better understanding of solving a problem.
- 5.Children can have a healthy role model to follow.
- 6.They are mentally and emotionally healthier.



Worksheet #1

Co-parenting can be very difficult for both parents and especially for the children. However, co-parenting can be quite successful in situations where both parents are dedicated to the child's needs. Answer the following questions to help you explore your thoughts and feelings.

What are your views about co-parenting?

What do you expect from your partner?

What would you like to change in yourself for a better co-parenting?

What would you like you would like your partner to change for better co-parenting?

Worksheet #2

CO-PARENTING PLANNING

Mutual goals that you want to achieve as parents.

GOAL #1

GOAL #2

GOAL #3

Boundaries that you want your partner to maintain

Rules and regulations of coparenting



Co-parenting Checklist

To help you and your co-parent get started with writing your parenting plan, consider this checklist that covers many aspects of raising a child.

- ☐ Parenting Schedule
- ☐ Childcare Arrangements
- ☐ Holidays and Special Dates
- ☐ Extended Family and Friends
- ☐ Schedule Changes
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Healthcare
- ☐ Expenses
- ☐ Communicating With Kids When Away
- ☐ Co-Parent Communication

Worksheet #3

CO-PARENTING PLANNING

TIME-SHARING SCHEDULE

☐ Monthly Schedule

☐ Vacation Times

☐ Holidays

☐ Special Days
(birthdays, parents' birthday,
grandparents' birthday)

☐ Special Occasions
(weddings, graduation, funeral)

☐ School, Sports,
Community and
Church Events

TELEPHONE SCHEDULE

- When children are with Parent 1

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- When children are with Parent 2

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TELEPHONE SCHEDULE

- **Transportation responsibilities exchange times**

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- **Special instructions or restrictions**

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LONG-DISTANCE PARENTING ARRANGEMENT
(if one parent lives more than 100 miles away)

Yearly-time sharing schedule

- **Transportation details**

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- **Logistics of sharing information**

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WHEN MAKING MAJOR DECISIONS

How should major decisions be made and by whom;

- Education
- Day Care
- Medical and dental treatment
- Therapy.....

How will disagreements be resolved?

PROCESS FOR SHARING INFORMATION

School-related information

Extracurricular activities

Health-related information

Community and special events

AGENDA FOR A PARENTING MEETING:

Weekly Agenda:

Monthly Agenda:

CHILD SUPPORT ARRANGEMENT

Amount: (determined by applicable worksheet)

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Should child support be recalculated in the future? if so, when and how?

Payment Schedule

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Payment of child care expenses:

By whom:

Verification:

Procedure to follow if child care expenses change:

Percentage allocation of medical/dental/psychological expenses not by insurance:

Medical Expense Percentage Allocation:

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Dental Expense Percentage Allocation:

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Psychological Expense Percentage Allocation:

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TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COPARENTING

When you need to have a difficult conversation

There are times you will need to have a difficult conversation with your ex and there are various things you can do to ensure that your conversation will go well.

- Start by asking for an appointment to talk- asking "When is a good time to talk about something that's been bothering me?" Asking for an appointment makes sure that the other person is in a frame of mind to actually begin engaging with you. Without it, conversations often fall apart.

USE I STATEMENTS WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO PREVENT REACTIVITY AND DEFENSIVENESS

"You don't"

"I wish you would"

"You never"

"I really want"

"Why can't you?"

"I wish you were"

"Why did you do that?"

"I wish you would have"



Follow the intentional dialogue process whenever possible.

In our marriage counseling practice, we use the Imago dialogue or intentional dialogue to help couples navigate difficult conversations to ensure they are calm and productive.

INTENTIONAL DIALOGUE

THE APPOINTMENT

Ask your spouse when in a good time to share a frustration or even an appreciation with him/her

THE SENDER SENDS

At the appointed time, begin sharing. Use I statements instead of accusing or blaming, sit across from each other, making eye contact for maximum connection.

THE RECEIVER MIRRORS

The receiver repeats verbatim back what he/she is hearing, suppressing the desire to respond or explain. After each mirroring back ask, "Did I Get You? Is there more?"

SUMMARIZE

Where you summarize what you've heard. "In summary what I heard you say..."

VALIDATE

Where you meaningfully state that the sender makes sense, (even if you disagree)

EMPATHIZE

Come up with what you think your partner may be feeling. "I imagine you might be feeling hurt or angry", for example...

Resources:

- <https://mentalhealthworksheets.com/co-parenting-therapy-worksheets-version-2/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKcNyfXbQzQ>
- <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/Art-of-Effective-Coparenting>
- <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/divorce.html>
- <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/parenting-family/co-parenting-tips-for-divorced-parents.htm>
- Worksheet resources
- <https://mentalhealthworksheets.com/?s=co+parenting>
- <http://healingheartsafterdivorce.com/archives/205>

Book List on Coparenting & Divorce

- **Children of the Self-Absorbed – Nina Brown**
- **Co-Parenting After Divorce: A GPS for Healthy Kids – Debra K. Carter**
- **Co-Parenting Handbook – Karen Bonnett**
- **Custody Chaos, Personal Peace – Jeff Wittmann**
- **Divorce Poison – Richard Warshak**
- **Divorce Book for Parents – Vicki Lansky**
- **Ex-Etiquette for Parents – Jann Blackstone-Ford and Sharyl Jupe**
- **For Better or for Worse – Mavis Hetherington**
- **How to avoid the divorce from hell – and dance together at your daughter's wedding – M. Sue Talia**
- **Joint Custody with a jerk, raising a child with an uncooperative Ex – Julie Ross and Judy Corcoran**
- **Learning from Divorce – Christine Coates and E. Robert LaCrosse**
- **Mom's House, Dad's House – Isolina Ricci**
- **Putting Children First – JoAnne Pedro-Carroll**
- **Parenting After Divorce – Phil Stahl**
- **Parenting Apart: How Separated and Divorced Parents Can Raise Happy and Secure Kids – Christina McGhee**
- **Stepfamilies – James H. Bray and John Kelly**
- **The Good Divorce – Constance Ahrons**
- **101 Ways to be long-distance Super Dad or Mom – George Newman**
- **Your Divorce Advisor – Diana Mercer and Marsha Kline Pruett**
- **The Smart Stepmom: Practical Steps to Help You Thrive! – Ron Deal & Laura Petherbridge**
- **Through the Eyes of Children – Janet Johnston, Karen Breunig, Carla Garrity, and Mitchell Baris**
- **Trapped in the Mirror – by Golcomg**
- **Tug of War – Harvey Brownstone**
- **The Smart Stepmom: Practical Steps to Help You Thrive! – Ron Deal & Laura Petherbridge**
- **Mom's House, Dad's House – Isolina Ricci**

We recommend that you utilize
our other coping resources
available on Etsy both for yourself
and your children!

Contact Us

*Speak to a Marriage Counselor at
The Marriage Restoration Project*



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Book a time to talk

www.themarriagerestorationproject.com