

Boundaries ~ Parallel and Co-Parenting Plans

Clear boundaries with your ex create safe and healthy relationships with everyone involved – you, your kids, your new partner, your ex, and your ex's family and friends. Having a high conflict co-parent does make raising kids together more difficult but having boundaries between yourself and the other parent will make it easier to manage your shared parenting. Here are a few ideas to help you work towards setting boundaries with a high-conflict co-parent.

Define your parenting plan and commit to it. Create communication boundaries and healthy communication habits. Select how best to handle the events that you need to talk about. Support each other's privacy in personal life, and don't allow setbacks.

Co-parenting Boundary Tips

Commit to the Parenting Plan

Parenting Communication Tools

Keep Your Personal Life Personal

Watch Out for Setbacks

Consider Parallel Parenting

Talk to Someone for Adjustment

Do any of these areas apply to you? If so, institute Co-parenting boundary Tips

Examples of Poor Boundaries:

Parent Behaviors That Put Children in the Middle:

- Asking children to be messengers to the other parent
- Asking nosy questions about the other parent
- Creating a home-life that your Children hide information
- Creating a need for children to hide their feelings about the other parent
- Demeaning or disrespectful comments about the other parent

Parenting Plans

What is a Parenting Plan?

A parenting plan is a document developed and agreed to by the parents of a minor child, and approved by the court, or if the parents cannot agree, established by the court, which governs the relationship between the parents regarding the child. A parenting plan is a child custody plan that is negotiated by parents, and which may be included in a marital separation agreement or final decree of divorce.

Parenting plans typically include:

- Details about how parents will share daily tasks associated with the upbringing of the child
- Time-sharing schedule that will specify the time the child will spend with each parent
- Designation of who will be responsible for health care, school-related matters, and other activities
- Methods and technologies parents will use to communicate with each other and with the child

What is Co-Parenting and Parallel Parenting?

Co-parenting describes a parenting situation where the parents are not in a marriage, cohabitation, or romantic relationship with one another. Co-parents can problem-solve together and work together for the best interest of the child, even though they do not live together. **Parallel Parenting** is for those parents who may or may not share custody and cannot interact or problem solves with each other.

“Parallel parenting” is a method in which parents’ co-parent through disengaging from each other and have limited direct contact. These parents have demonstrated that they are unable to communicate with each other respectfully. In other words, they remain cooperative in parenting making responsible decisions (medical, education, etc.) but decide on the logistics of day-to-day parenting separately. Parallel parenting is best for high conflict situations and may lay the groundwork for co-parenting. Co-Parenting is for those who can put aside their hostilities and grievances. Both parallel parenting and co-parenting can benefit kids if parents consider what’s in their children’s best interests.

What Are the Benefits of Co-Parenting and Parallel Parenting for Kids?

5 benefits for children:

1. **Hold a sense of security** and are more prone to have higher self-esteem.
2. **Better psychological adjustment into adulthood.** Adults raised in well-adjusted divorced families tend to have higher self-esteem and fewer trust issues.
3. **Most likely to mimic a healthier role model template.**
4. **Foster good communication skills** a life pattern of healthy relationships.
5. **Have better coping and problem-solving skills.** Children and adolescents who witness their parents cooperate are more likely to have better coping and problem-solving skills.