

## **CREATING A CO-PARENTING PLAN THAT WORKS**

Creating a co-parenting plan that works is an important tool for ensuring the health and well being of your children. Children benefit when a workable system is created for dividing responsibilities. The plan can work whether parents get along well or not. Primary responsibilities can be rotated where both parents have a right to control or can agree to delegate when they agree that one parent has an issue covered. The plan details how the parents will handle activities of daily living and caring for their children. The parenting plan is a living document that must evolve with the needs of your growing children. Therefore, you do not have to include every potential situation you may encounter in the parenting plan. The plan must be revisited regularly to make sure it meets the needs of your family.

### **Six keys to successful co-parenting:**

1. How you feel about your ex is less important than how you act toward him/her. Putting aside your negative feelings is definitely in the best interest of your children.
2. Respect your need for privacy and the other parent's too. The only information that needs to be shared between co-parents is that pertaining to their children.
3. Each parents' time with their children is sacred. Don't make or change plans for the time your child is scheduled to spend with your ex. Honor the pre-arranged schedule.
4. Each parent has the right to develop his/her own parenting style. As long as no harm is being done, let your ex-spouse relate to your children as he/she sees fit.
5. Acknowledge what your ex-spouse has to offer your child. Remember the qualities that first attracted you. Those qualities still exist and are available to your children.
6. Expect to feel awkward and uncomfortable about this new way of relating. But keep affirming your commitment to the new co-parenting partnership and to your children.

### **Items that should be considered in every co-parenting plan:**

1. **Visitation/Shared Parenting Schedule**
  - a. Residence: define whether residency is primary or shared
  - b. Time shared between mom's home and dad's home. Don't forget to include drop-off and pick-up times and locations