



Ground Rules for Positive Co-Parenting

The purpose of ground rules for co-parenting is to minimize the occurrence of disagreements and misunderstandings. Each set of co-parents can set up their own guidelines based upon the unique needs of their children. It is helpful to establish the ground rules with the help of a professional counselor who is experienced in working with divorcing parents with regard to parenting. The following are some ideas for ground rules that may be helpful to include. These rules enhance the well-being of our children by promoting cooperation and communication between the parents.

1. We agree to protect our children from negativity. We will not say negative things about one another to the child directly or within the child's hearing. We want to be sure that our children do not hear complaints, criticisms or insults about the other parent.
2. We will do everything possible to keep our children from feeling caught in the middle between the two of us. We will not involve our children in our issues, including legal and financial issues. We will not ask our children to choose sides or feel the need to prefer either one of us over the other.
3. We agree to develop trust by being reliable. We will be prompt when picking up or dropping off our children. If one of us will be late, we will inform the other person as soon as possible. We will make child support payments on time and reimburse one another in a timely fashion. We will follow through with our commitments to one another and to our children.
4. We will encourage our child's relationship with one another. We will be cheerful and positive about having our child spend time with one another. We will do everything we can to support our children's relationship with the other parent.



5. We will not introduce our children to a new boyfriend or girlfriend until we are confident that this is going to be a long-term relationship.
6. We will communicate with one another in a business-like manner. We will be brief, focused and cordial. We agree to be focused on solutions and not engage in blaming, insults or criticism. If either one of us becomes emotional, we will end the communication and try to talk later when feelings are in check.
7. If we have some feedback or want to share information, particularly when there is a potential for disagreement, we will always ask for permission first.
8. We will always consult with one another on issues related to our child. Decisions like choice of schools, physician, therapist, medical or dental treatment, problem behaviors and similar situations are best done through our discussion and mutual agreement.
9. If we have trouble honoring our ground rules, and one of us expresses the idea that we need the help of a professional counselor to help us, we will obtain the help of a professional counselor.
10. We will speak respectfully to one another in conversations, in text messages, or voice messages, because we care about our children.
11. We will keep our focus on our children and refrain from using antagonism, insults, accusations, blame or guilt against one another. We will see ourselves as being on the same team, parents who are children, rather than opposing teams.
12. If we are having difficulty refraining from negativity about the other parent, we will obtain the help of a professional counselor to work through our unresolved feelings about the ended relationship. By fully processing our feelings about the relationship, we will be able to keep our focus on our children.