

# Co-Parenting vs Parallel Parenting

**Co-parenting** describes a parenting situation in which two separated or divorced parents work together to take care of their children. Each has equal value and responsibility for the child's welfare and upbringing. The child has access to both parents to routinely convey that it is okay to love both parents.

In co-parenting, healthy communication between the parents is not about personal sharing. We recommend a business-type relationship, that is cooperative and solution-focused. It is all about how to make things work best for the children. Both parents agree that the other is of equal importance in the child's life and they rely on each other for help in covering all the bases with the children.

It is always the best option scenario that children have two parents who can communicate and work together amiably after divorce or separation. But when parents don't get along or have ongoing escalated conflict over parenting issues, then co-parenting can have some drawbacks for children. Children need to be protected from all conflict between parents. In fact, when parents fail in this vein, it sometimes is devastating for a child's emotional health as they are often caught in the middle.

Co-parenting is a great option when both parents support the other in having a relationship with the children. But when parents are not cooperating with one another, parallel parenting may be better.

What are differences between co-parenting and parallel parenting?

**Parallel parenting** is different than co-parenting in that it arranges a means for high conflict parents to disengage from each other while they both still have an active relationship with their children. This is a better scenario for parents who have demonstrated the inability to communicate respectfully or to work in a productive manner with one another. In parallel parenting, each parent decides separately the logistics the regular parenting. Here are the general guidelines for a parallel parenting arrangement to work:

1. **Every detail in the parenting plan is in the court order.**
2. **There are no changes to the schedule are made without written agreement.**

3. **All communication is funneled through something like My Family Wizard. Posts are non-personal, business-like and relate only to information relevant to your children's well-being.**
4. **Parents do not address one another to discuss problems or concerns.**
5. **Parents go through legal channels to resolve problems and make changes to the parenting plan when needed.**
6. **The two parents do not attempt to influence one another about parenting choices or decisions.**
7. **Children do not carry information back and forth between parents.**

Parallel parenting allows conflicts between co-parents to die down and often lay the groundwork for future co-parenting. Time heals a lot and sometimes parents can learn to put aside their hostilities and finally treat each other with respect by taking a break from relating to the other parent when it is toxic. Regardless, both parallel parenting and co-parenting benefit kids because there is nothing more important than the relationship itself when it comes to their best interest.

Whether your co-parent or you parallel parent, the key to success to keep the focus on the best interests of the children. It is so important that you do your part to maintain a cordial relationship with the parents. When children to see that their parents are working together for their well-being they will feel loved and know that they are important to you. This is what I believe children need after divorce above all else.