

building a new parenting relationship

It's important that you can establish a business-like relationship with your child's other parent. This will help your child feel safe and loved. It will also mean that your child is less likely to suffer emotional harm and develop risky behaviour.

Accept that your child's other parent still has a role

- You will never be able to establish a workable relationship with your child's other parent if you are still angry with them.
- Whatever has happened in your relationship, you must accept that you are still both parents to your child.
- Try to focus on any positive things that the other parent can offer your child rather than the things they are less good at.

Make sure you communicate with the other parent

- It is vital that you find ways to communicate. Failure to do so can put your child at risk.
- Good communication builds trust between separating parents.
- You need to pass all the important information about your children between you including – school, health, appointments, behaviour and reactions to the separation.
- If you can't talk to each other face-to-face, try using the phone, email or SMS text.
- Don't ask your child to communicate with the other parent on your behalf!

Agree to work together

- Your children will feel a great sense of security if they know that their parents are working together for their wellbeing.
- No one is asking you to be best friends – simply that you agree to put your child's needs before your own differences.
- Try to understand what the other parent is going through – it will help you understand their actions!

Set minimum standards and be 'good enough' parents

- It can be difficult to reach agreement about many things after separation.
- Mothers and fathers tend to provide care in different ways – this can lead to arguments about whose way is better.
- Agree some basic rules that you will both stick to around things like diet, bed time, the amount of TV allowed etc.
- Beyond these minimum standards, accept that the other parent is doing a 'good enough' job.

Keep your children out of any disputes

- Never withhold contact as a way of getting your own way.
- Never withhold child maintenance as a way of getting your own way.
- Don't 'bad mouth' the other parent around your children.

Trouble shooting

- Agree a way to resolve difficulties if and when they arise – make sure that it is away from your children.
- Find a way of saying if you are unhappy about something that reduces the risk of conflict – and say it before you get to boiling point!
- Listen to the other parent's experience – it will be different to your own.