

Fair Fighting Rules for Coparents

Do:

1. Remain calm and avoid overreacting to what your coparent is saying to you. By remaining calm, it is more likely you can breathe and think, and it increases the chance that your coparent will consider your viewpoint.
2. Focus on solving the problem at hand rather than blaming your coparent.
3. Respect the other person's right to have an opinion and to share his or her perspective without interruptions.
4. Use "I" statements to tell the other parent how his or her actions may be impacting you instead of criticizing and using "you" statements.
5. Stay in the present and let go of any old grudges.
6. Tackle only one issue at a time. Don't get distracted by other topics.
7. Stick with the facts and only the facts you know directly.
8. Acknowledge your contribution to the problem by accepting responsibility. Apologize whenever possible.
9. Take a time out when you are getting too upset to problem solve. Allow your coparent to do the same. Be sure to come back to the topic as soon as possible and try again.
10. Catch your coparent doing something right. Acknowledge and appreciate his or her efforts

Don't:

1. Raise your voice or use aggressive language..
2. Interrupt or share your thoughts before you have reflected what your coparent is trying to say.
3. Make assumptions or try to read your coparent's motive.
4. Use degrading language or labels or attack your coparent's character.
5. Accuse or threaten when emotionally distressed.
6. Speak in generalities such as using *always* and *never*.
7. Use defensive body language such as crossing your arms, pointing your finger, rolling your eyes, or balling up your fists.
8. Use any show of force. Besides physical aggression, this also includes blocking your coparent from leaving, refusing to let him or her end the discussion, or destroying property.
9. Be rigid and try to demand your way. Be willing to compromise.
10. Get into any conflicted conversation when your child is present or within earshot.