

A Child's Right to a Peaceful, Safe, and Supported Childhood

Each child in this case has right to a childhood that is peaceful, safe, and supported.

You, a party in this case, are ORDERED to review the instructions below. If you don't follow these instructions, your actions may be used as evidence in the case.

Shield the child from adult arguments and the pressures of the legal case.

DO:

- ✓ Reassure the child that the arguments and court case are not the child's fault.
- ✓ Find ways to communicate with the other party without using the child as a go-between or "middleman."
- ✓ Find ways to discuss child support and other legal topics when the child cannot overhear.
- ✓ Model respectful behavior toward the other party and for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Do NOT:

- ✗ "Trash talk" the other party or their family, or otherwise speak negatively about the other party or their family.
- ✗ Use the child to retaliate against the other party.
- ✗ Hide the child from the other party.
- ✗ "Rewrite" or "re-script" facts which the child originally knows to be different.
- ✗ Pressure the child to choose one side over another.
- ✗ Pressure the child to adopt your personal opinion of legal proceedings.

Support the healthy relations with the other party and family.

Unless the court has set limits, DO:

- ✓ Make it easy for the child to freely and privately communicate with the other party and family members.
- ✓ Let the child keep letters and greeting cards received from the other party.
- ✓ Explain that it is okay for the child to have good experiences when with the other party.
- ✓ Allow the child to develop the child's own relationship with the other party, free from the influence of any negative feelings you have.
- ✓ Permit the child to display photographs of the other party in the child's room.

Do NOT:

- ✗ Intercept, "lose," "forget," or otherwise interfere with communications to the child from the other party.
- ✗ Undermine the other party in the eyes of the child by lying to the child or manipulating facts.
- ✗ Try to gain the child as an "ally" against the other party or try to "buy" the child's preference with overindulgence.
- ✗ Try to make the child believe you love the child more than the other party loves the child.
- ✗ Break or hide photos and other items belonging to the child that depict or remind the child of the other party.

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Co-parent to the greatest extent possible regarding possession and access of the child.

Unless the court has set limits, **DO:**

- ✓ Cooperate with the other party in sharing time with the child.
- ✓ Tell the other party about school, camp and sport schedules, and similar events.
- ✓ Explain to the child that the child has homes with all the parties, even if the child spends more time in one home.
- ✓ Where practical, permit the child to carry the child's belongings to and from the homes of the other party or relatives.

Do **NOT:**

- ✗ Suggest to the child that the child has an option to *not* visit the other party during the other party's time of possession and access.
- ✗ "Pump" the child for information about the other party, the other party's home, or the other party's new relationships or possessions.
- ✗ Trivialize or deny the existence of the other party to the child.
- ✗ Reward the child for behaving badly toward to the other party, stepparents, or relatives.
- ✗ Engage in judgmental, opinionated, or negative commentary, physical inspections, or interrogations once the child returns from the child's other home(s).

Protect the child from foreseeable harm.

DO:

- ✓ Tell the other party about medical issues and prescriptions, particularly if the child needs treatment while with the other party.
- ✓ Share contact information for doctors, dentists, counselors, or other professionals.

Do **NOT:**

- ✗ Allow the child to ride in a car driven by an intoxicated or impaired driver.
- ✗ Smoke tobacco around the child.
- ✗ Allow the child to be exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke in a building or car.
- ✗ Allow the child to be exposed to illegal drugs.