

COPARENTING TIPS FOR DADS (AND THEIR COPARENTS)



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance



HIMRF
HEALTHY MARRIAGE & RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD

DID YOU KNOW?



Coparents may be married, cohabiting, separated, or divorced.



They may live together in the same household, but in many cases they do not.



They may also be foster parents, grandparents, or other extended family members.

CHILDREN TEND TO DO BEST WHEN THEIR COPARENTS:

- Understand and support each other's parenting style.
- Communicate effectively and manage any disagreements in respectful ways.
- Establish clear and consistent rules and standards for the children.
- Look at things from a child-focused approach.
- Understand the fears, needs, and wishes of their children.
- Let go of angry feelings and resentments towards each other.
- Make sure their children feel loved and wanted in each home.



Stable and supportive coparenting relationships are important for the well-being of children and their families.

1. Children who are exposed to coparenting relationships characterized by conflict and a lack of cooperation may feel depressed, anxious, or abandoned.
2. Coparents who have unhealthy coparenting relationships may experience more depressive symptoms and more parenting stress.
3. Cooperative coparenting relationships can enhance fathers' positive involvement with their children.

REFERENCES

- *The association between coparenting and child adjustment* (Teubert & Pinguart, 2010).
<http://bit.ly/2Ng5WEC>
- *Coparenting and children's school readiness* (Cabrera et al, 2012)
<http://bit.ly/3a3cT5R>
- *When people parent together: Let's talk about coparenting*
<http://bit.ly/2R0nqpy> (McHale et al, 2007)

WHAT YOU CAN DO

TIPS FOR ALL COPARENTS:



- **Focus on communication.** Good communication is key to all relationships.
- **Compromise.** Parents who are more flexible are able to coparent more effectively than those who are more rigid.
- **Work as a team.** Be consistent, share decision making, never undermine or criticize your coparent. Don't let the children play you off against each other!
- **Create a parenting plan.** Clearly establish schedules, rules, and expectations.

TIPS FOR COPARENTS WHO LIVE IN SEPARATE HOUSEHOLDS:



- **Focus on your children, not on conflicts or disagreements with your coparent.** Make your children's feelings and your relationship with them your top priority.
- **Stay calm.** Children need to be excluded from their parents' stress and drama as much as possible.
- **Be aware of your own behavior.** Children learn from their parent's actions.
- **Listen to your coparent.** Try to understand their point of view. Listen without being defensive. Try to avoid arguing.
- **Give compliments.** Problems often arise when people feel unappreciated. Make a habit of thanking your coparent for what they do for your child.
- **Be consistent.** Try to maintain somewhat similar rules, boundaries, and schedules across households.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

NRFC RESOURCES

- The importance of coparenting and relationship skills: Helping fathers help their children (Webinar, 2019)
<http://bit.ly/2FG6qzu>
- Promoting positive coparenting relationships (Information brief, 2019)
<http://bit.ly/2NbQnO8>

OTHER RESOURCES

- Coparenting toolkit and Mom's house, dad's house (Isolina Ricci)
<https://thecoparentingtoolkit.com>
- Parenting apart (Child Find of America)
<http://bit.ly/2sfb3h5>
- Ten tips for successful coparenting (Michigan State University Extension)
<http://bit.ly/2QHkoaD>

