

FACT SHEET

# Co-Parenting During a Crisis

Presented By:  
Fathers Incorporated



## FACT SHEET

# Co-Parenting During a Crisis



**Fathers and mothers who interact positively with each other contribute to every stage of their child's development, including emotional, social, and behavioral outcomes.**

Whether parents are romantic partners or working together apart to raise their child, the way they co-parent is a critical part of their relationship.

Co-parenting is broadly defined as the level of conflict, cooperation, and support of each other's needs as parents regardless of the romantic status of the relationship (McHale et al, 2002).

Even under normal circumstances, co-parenting can be difficult. When families are in crisis, rules, expectations, and agreements can become strained by the emotional and environmental factors and demands created by the crisis.



**COVID-19 has impacted the lives of everyone; we have all had to adjust quickly as no one saw it coming, and we were not fully prepared for its effects.**

## STRATEGIES AND TIPS

**Given the importance of successful co-parenting—parents' alliance, cooperation, and level of interdependence—for family and child well-being, Fathers Incorporated suggests the following strategies and tips for effective co-parenting during a crisis:**

### **LISTEN OBJECTIVELY:**

- Make yourself available to listen and to talk to your co-parent. And make time to talk to and listen to your child.
  - Be sure children know they can come to either of you when they have questions.
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### **COMMUNICATE WITH EMPATHY:**

- Communicate with the co-parent if you suspect you have been exposed to the virus. Protect your child from exposure and agree on steps that each will take during a period of quarantine (Fatherly.com).
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### **BE COMPASSIONATE:**

- Provide reassurance and flexibility. Successfully navigating a crisis only happens when parents are flexible and children feel happy, safe, and secure.
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### **COMPLY WITH CUSTODY AGREEMENTS AND COURT ORDERS:**

- In certain jurisdictions, there are orders mandating that if schools are closed, custody agreements should remain in place as though school is still in session (Fatherly.com).
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### **WORK TOGETHER:**

- Be understanding that the pandemic will create an economic hardship leading to lost earnings for many parents, especially those paying and receiving child support.
  - Those parents paying child support, try to pay something even if it's not full payment (Fatherly.com).
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## IF YOU'RE EXPERIENCING CONFLICT WITH THE OTHER PARENT:



### Things to Do:

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#### FACE THE MUSIC:

- » Address the issue(s) head on that are causing conflict and tension. You may not be able to come to agree with each other, but at least both of you can share your feelings and then you can move forward.

#### ADMIT TO LACK OF COMMUNICATION:

- » If there has been a lack of communication, address this problem and agree that the past does not have to predict the future. Put a strategy in place for moving forward.

#### DON'T TRIANGULATE:

- » Don't put your child in the middle by telling him or her things that you should be communicating directly with your co-parent or disparaging your co-parent to your child. This is very damaging to children in general, and during a time of crisis, can exacerbate the amount of stress your child is experiencing.



### Things to Stop:

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#### STOP ARGUING AND PETTY DISAGREEMENTS:

- » There are bigger issues at play now, and those behaviors can seriously compromise your child's well-being—even under the best of circumstances.

#### STOP DISTRUST OF EACH OTHER:

- » Trust needs to be built. Take advantage of the pandemic to do what you say you're going to do and engage in trustworthy, responsible behaviors. Forging trust with each parent puts the best interest of your child at the forefront and will forge a clear path during crucial times.

#### STOP MAKING DECISIONS INDEPENDENTLY OF THE OTHER PARENT:

- » Include each other in any major decisions that have anything to do with your child(ren).

#### STOP INVOLVING FAMILY AND FRIENDS IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP:

- » While it can be our natural inclination to vent to friends and family about your co-parent, this can seriously undermine the quality of your relationship. Well-meaning friends and family can jade your thoughts and opinions of your co-parent at a time when you need to stay positive and thinking the best of him or her.
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For more detailed help with coparenting under crisis, watch our 3-part video series at [www.gentlewarriorsacademy.com](http://www.gentlewarriorsacademy.com)

### Part I

#### EFFECTIVE CO-PARENTING COMMUNICATION DURING CRISIS:

Under normal circumstances, co-parenting can be difficult. When families are in crisis; rules, expectations and agreements can become strained by the emotional factors created by the crisis. COVID-19 has taken over our lives in a way that we ALL have to adjust. No one saw it coming and we were not fully prepared for its impact. Our very lives have been impacted and along with it the way we co-relate with each other.

### Part II

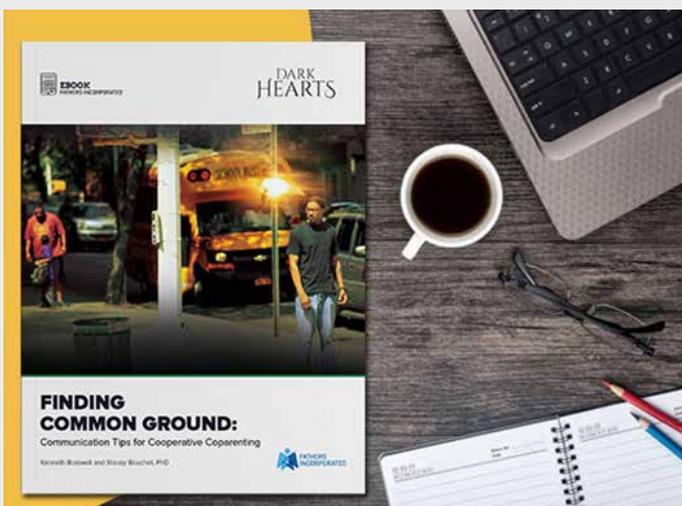
#### EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING IN CO-PARENTING:

One decision can be the difference between your parenting success or failure. In the area of parenting, making decisions are critical, especially when dad and mom are not on the best terms. The most effective parenting and marital relationships rely on the ability to make sound and logical decisions. Children deserve and demand that we provide an opportunity for the best decisions to be made on their behalf.

### Part III

#### PLANNING TO WIN IN CO-PARENTING:

Everybody wants to win. We want to win in life, win in competition; win, win, win. Certainly for the sake of our children we want to win in parenting. The critical challenge is, how do we all win? The goal in parenting is to ensure that neither parent or the children ends up on the losing end of child well-being outcomes. Mutual understanding of parenting goals provides the best scenario for healthy and desirable family outcomes.



**ALSO DOWNLOAD  
OUR COPARENTING E-BOOK**

#### **FINDING COMMON GROUND:**

Communication Tips for Cooperative Coparenting  
by Kenneth Braswell and Stacey Bouchet, PhD.



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**TO CHECK OUT MORE RESOURCES ON CO-PARENTING  
DURING A CRISIS, PLEASE VISIT**

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**[WWW.GENTLEWARRIORSACADEMY.COM](http://WWW.GENTLEWARRIORSACADEMY.COM)**

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