Guidelines for Divorce Clients
Co-Parenting Effectively Serves Best Interests of Children

How Do I Make Smart Decisions About Co-Parenting?
How Does Effective Co-Parenting Help Me Obtain Custody?

√ 1. Time with the other parent is usually best for your children. If you believe time with the other parent should be restricted, discuss the reasons with your lawyer.

√ 2. Take steps to ensure that time spent with the other parent is successful. When appropriate, prepare a medication schedule, send homework to be completed and so on.

√ 3. Don't engage in conduct that could alienate your children from the other parent or ask them to choose sides. Put your ill-will aside.

√ 4. Speak positively of the other parent in front of the children.

√ 5. Don't speak poorly about the other parent's family in front of the children.

√ 6. If extra time with the other parent is requested and if your children want the extra time, give serious consideration to allowing it.

√ 7. Don't move out of the family home if you want to have custody.

√ 8. If feasible or if required by the custody order, jointly parent by keeping the other parent informed and in the loop. Email is an effective means of communication.

√ 9. Establish a relationship with a family counsellor or an individual counsellor.

√ 10. Give consideration to allowing your children to spend time with the other parent's extended family.

√ 11. Be open to making schedule changes if special events crop up. Don't set rigid schedules.

√ 12. If speaking to your lawyer by phone, be sure the children are not within earshot. Don't bring the children to consultations with your lawyer.

√   **13.**   **Don't discuss your case with the children or ask them to spy on the other parent.**

√   **14.**   **Your efforts in co-parenting will leave a favorable impression with the Judge, mediator and opposing counsel that you are the parent best suited to have primary or full custody. If you believe that co-parenting will not work, discus your concerns with your lawyer.**