



CAMAUR CRAMPTON

FAMILY LAW

CO-PARENTING AFTER DIVORCE

Most parents going through a divorce will agree that their children are the most important issue they face in the litigation. Children of all ages are thrust into the uncertainty and heartache of divorce. And, while living in separate households can actually be more beneficial to children than remaining in a house of constant turmoil and hostility, parents can do irreparable harm to their children by involving the children in the disagreements that arise in the divorce proceedings.

Parents going through divorce have a choice (in most circumstances):

1. Accept the marriage is over and attempt to co-parent the children; or
2. Maintain an adversary relationship with the other parent that spills over into parenting.

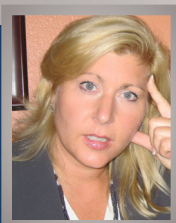
Children deserve the love, affection and respect of both parents. If the children are the true priority, in a perfect world, parents would be able to put their own anger aside to work together with the other parent to raise their children. After all, the parents will have a life long relationship of attending extracurricular activities, graduations, children's weddings and sharing grandchildren. Clearly, the children would be happier if these events didn't have the stress of the divorce hostility looming over them.

Unfortunately, a lot of divorced parents believe the other parent is completely unreasonable and they are unable to work anything out with them (hence the divorce). How do divorced parents co-parent in these situations?

A few tips:

1. Do not approach discussions with the other parent as "I am right...you are wrong." Try to be respectful and open-minded in your discussions.
2. Do not make negative comments about the other parent to the children (no matter how outrageous you believe the other parent is behaving). If you believe there is abuse or neglect by the other parent, consult immediately with a therapist and an attorney. If there is an emergency situation, the local child protective services and law enforcement should be contacted immediately.
3. Do not discuss the litigation with the children or allow them to review court documents. These are adult issues. You should approach the child custody issues as an opportunity to try to reach an agreement with the other parent. All attempts should be made to be a "united parenting force" for your children, if appropriate under the circumstances.
4. Do not discuss child support with the children.
5. Do not pass messages for the other parent through the children.
6. Do not undermine the other parent's authority. If the other parent imposes discipline (such as grounding or a time out), support the decision. Of course, this does not mean to support child abuse. But, assuming we have a non-abusive method of discipline, consult with the other parent before questioning the decision in the presence of the children.

There are many resources for co-parenting classes and therapy to help parents. After the divorce is final, the parents have the opportunity to focus on the parenting without the problems of the marriage. Clearly, the children would benefit. Children develop and grow very fast. You only have one opportunity to raise them. Don't waste it because you are angry over the divorce.



ELISABETH CAMAUR, ATTORNEY AT LAW

Certified Family Law Specialist by the California State Bar Board of Legal Specialization

CAMAUR CRAMPTON FAMILY LAW

19200 Von Karman Avenue, 6th Floor • Irvine, CA 92612 • (949)622-5530
EC@CamaurCrampton.com • www.CamaurCrampton.com