BECKY TAYLOR FAMILY MEDIATION

FREE GUIDE · CO-PARENTING

Co-Parenting Communication Templates

Ready-to-use scripts for difficult conversations and everyday updates.

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Why Communication Matters

Co-parenting after separation is rarely easy. Even when both parents love their children and want the best for them, emotions, old patterns, and misunderstandings can make simple conversations feel overwhelming.

Good communication is not about being friends with your ex — it is about being effective co-parents. Clear, respectful communication reduces conflict, protects your children from stress, and helps you both stay focused on what matters: your children's wellbeing.

> "When parents communicate well, children feel safer, more secure, and less caught in the middle."

The golden rules of co-parenting communication

- **Keep it about the children.** Avoid revisiting old arguments or personal grievances.
- **Stay calm and factual.** Stick to the facts — times, dates, needs — not feelings or blame.
- **Use neutral language.** Replace "you always" or "you never" with "I noticed" or "can we discuss".
- **Be brief.** Long messages invite misunderstanding. Keep it short and clear.
- **Use written communication wisely.** Text and email create a record, but tone is easily misread. When in doubt, keep it polite and professional.
- **Choose your battles.** Not every disagreement needs a response. Let small things go.

How to use these templates

The templates on the following pages give you practical, ready-to-use scripts for common co-parenting situations. Adapt them to suit your family, but keep the core principles: clear, calm, child-focused.

Template 1: Scheduling and Handover Requests

Use this template when you need to request a change to the schedule, confirm arrangements, or discuss handover logistics.

Requesting a Schedule Change

"Hi [Name], I need to request a change to this weekend's schedule. I have [reason — work commitment / family event] on [date/time]. Would you be able to have [child's name] from [time] to [time] instead? I can swap and have them the following weekend if that helps. Let me know what works for you. Thanks."

Confirming Handover Details

"Hi [Name], just confirming handover for Friday. I'll drop [child's name] at [location] at [time]. Let me know if that still works or if you need to adjust. Thanks."

Responding to a Schedule Request

"Hi [Name], thanks for letting me know. [Yes, that works fine / I can't do [date] but I can do [alternative]]. Let's confirm the details so we're both clear."

Top tips

- Give as much **notice** as possible when requesting changes.
- Offer an **alternative or trade** if asking for flexibility.
- **Confirm details in writing** to avoid confusion.
- Keep the focus on **what works for your child**, not what is convenient for you.

Template 2: Responding to Conflict Calmly

When your co-parent sends a message that feels accusatory, inflammatory, or unfair, your instinct may be to defend yourself or respond emotionally. These templates help you stay calm and professional.

When You Disagree

"I understand your perspective, but I see things differently. I think it would help if we could discuss this calmly — perhaps through mediation or a scheduled call. Let me know if you're open to that."

When You Feel Attacked

"I can see you're frustrated, and I want to work together to resolve this. I'd like to keep our communication focused on [child's name]'s needs. Can we discuss this at a better time?"

When You Need Space

"I've received your message and I need some time to think about it before responding. I'll get back to you by [date/time]. In the meantime, [child's name] is doing well and looking forward to [activity]."

Setting a Boundary

"I'm happy to discuss [child-related topic], but I won't engage with conversations about [personal topic]. Let's keep our communication focused on co-parenting. Thanks for understanding."

Remember

- You do not have to respond immediately. **Take time to cool down.**
- **Do not mirror hostility.** Stay calm even when they do not.
- You cannot control their behaviour — **only your response**.
- If communication breaks down repeatedly, consider using a **co-parenting app** or communicating only through a mediator or solicitor.

Template 3: Sharing Important Updates

Keeping each other informed about your child's health, school, and wellbeing builds trust and ensures continuity of care. Use these templates for regular updates.

Health Updates

"Hi [Name], just letting you know [child's name] has been unwell today with [symptoms]. I've given [medicine/care], and they seem to be improving. If it continues, I'll take them to the GP. Thought you should know."

School News

"Hi [Name], [child's name] has a parents' evening coming up on [date] at [time]. The school has offered slots at [times]. Are you able to attend? We can go together or book separate appointments — let me know what you prefer."

Positive Updates

"Hi [Name], thought you'd like to know [child's name] did really well at [activity/school] today. They were so proud! Just wanted to share the good news."

Behavioural Concerns

"Hi [Name], I've noticed [child's name] has been [behaviour] recently. I wanted to let you know in case you've noticed the same. It might be worth us having a chat about how we can support them together. Let me know if you'd like to discuss."

Why regular updates matter

- They keep **both parents informed and involved**.
- They show **respect** for the other parent's role.
- They help your child feel **both parents are on the same page**.
- They reduce the chance of **misunderstandings or surprises**.

Template 4: Difficult Conversations

Some conversations are harder than others — introducing new partners, raising concerns, or discussing changes. These templates help you approach sensitive topics with care.

Introducing a New Partner

"Hi [Name], I wanted to let you know I've started seeing someone. I won't be introducing them to [child's name] for some time, but I wanted you to hear it from me first. If you have any concerns or want to discuss how we handle this, I'm happy to talk."

Raising a Concern

"Hi [Name], I need to raise something that's been on my mind. [Child's name] mentioned [concern] and I wanted to check in with you about it. I'm not making accusations — I just think we should talk about it to make sure [child's name] is okay. Can we arrange a call?"

Discussing a Change in Circumstances

"Hi [Name], I wanted to let you know that [circumstance — new job / relocation / change in hours]. This may affect our current arrangements. I'd like to discuss how we can adjust things so it works for everyone, especially [child's name]. Are you free to talk this week?"

Requesting Mediation

"Hi [Name], I think we're struggling to communicate effectively about [issue], and I don't want [child's name] to be affected by it. I'd like to suggest we try mediation to work through this with the help of a neutral professional. Would you be open to that?"

Approaching difficult topics

- **Give advance notice** if possible. Springing difficult topics on someone rarely goes well.
- **Use "I" statements.** Say "I'm concerned about..." not "You did..."
- **Acknowledge their feelings.** "I know this may be hard to hear" shows empathy.
- **Focus on solutions, not blame.** "How can we work together on this?"
- If the conversation escalates, **pause and return to it later** or with a mediator.

Keeping Communication Child-Focused

The goal of co-parenting communication is not to maintain a friendship or win arguments — it is to create a safe, stable environment for your children. Here are some final reminders to help you stay on track.

Do

- Keep messages factual, brief, and focused on your child's needs
- Respond within a reasonable timeframe (24–48 hours for non-urgent matters)
- Use a respectful, professional tone — even when it's hard
- Celebrate your child's achievements together
- Assume good intentions unless proven otherwise
- Use co-parenting apps (e.g., OurFamilyWizard, Coparently) if direct communication is difficult

Don't

- Use your child as a messenger between parents
- Criticise the other parent in front of your child
- Bring up past relationship issues or grievances
- Send long, emotional messages late at night
- Copy your child into communications or let them read them
- Argue via text — if things escalate, pause and suggest a call or mediation

"Your children won't remember whether you split everything 50/50 or who said what. They will remember whether they felt caught in the middle — or whether their parents worked together to put them first."

Need help with co-parenting communication?

If communication has broken down and you need support, mediation can help. A trained mediator creates a safe space for difficult conversations and helps you find solutions that work for your family.

BOOK A FREE 30-MINUTE CALL

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