Co-Parenting Guidelines

I. What we know:

A. Children need to feel safe and loved.
B. Children are products of and identify with both parents.
C. Children are harmed by ongoing, unresolved conflict between their parents.
D. Children have enough love for everybody.

II. What we can do:

A. Separate adult relationship issues from parenting issues; create a business-like relationship with the other parent and/or other important people in your child’s life, in order to work together.

B. Make a commitment to separate your emotional needs from the child’s needs, truly looking out for the child’s best interest.

C. Continue to reassure the child of your love and your intention to be a constant presence in their life in the role of parent; make it clear to your child that you will listen to their feelings and needs, but it is your job as a parent to make the decisions.

Co-Parenting Meetings

1. Make appointments to talk to each other; establish agreed upon times for beginning and ending.
2. Be prepared to communicate with the other parent.
3. Use the Sustainable Knowledge Mediation model:
   a. define the issues
   b. brainstorm possibilities
   c. establish criteria to evaluate options
   d. eliminate unworkable solutions
   e. reach agreement and understanding
4. Decide on the easy issues first where there is already considerable agreement.
5. Take turns discussing your thoughts and stay on one topic at a time; look at and stay open to all options.
6. Keep past issues out of parental business talks; agree to alert one another when these issues begin to come up or when anger is interfering.
7. Attack the problem, not each other.

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