

## Guidelines For Parents

*Taken from the Guidelines for Separated Parents prepared by the Dane County Family Court System, Madison, Wisconsin.*

1. Provide the child with an emotional environment in which he/she is free to continue to love the other parent and to spend time with him/her.
2. Encourage positive feelings from the child about the other parent and his or her extended family.
3. Encourage the child to remember the other parent on special occasions, permitting him/her to telephone the other parent on a reasonable basis.
4. Communicate openly with the other parent in order to avoid misunderstandings which are harmful to the child.
5. Plan activities involving the child between parents rather than through the child.
6. Plan and consult in advance with the other parent regarding time with the child.
7. Do not take sides or issue with decision or actions made by the other parent, especially in front of the child.
8. Present a united front on the handling of any problems associated with the child.
9. Refrain from fighting, arguing, or degrading the other parent in the presence of the child.
10. Refrain from withholding time with the other parent as punishment to the child or to the other parent.
11. Take a consistent and predictable role in the child's life, using time with the child to strengthen your relationship with the child.
12. Use discretion as to the time and frequency of telephone calls to the child.
13. Except for emergencies, make changes in plans by mutual agreement with reasonable advance notice to the other parent.
14. Be flexible in arranging dates and times with the child so these plans do not interfere with important family events or prior planned activities of the other parent.
15. Time schedules with the child should be observed strictly. If a parent is going to be late, a telephone call should be made to the other parent giving an explanation for the lateness and estimating the new arrival time.
16. Refrain from burdening the child with adult worries—for example—financial, career, and social items.
17. Treat the child as a unique person and be sensitive to his/her feelings and needs.
18. Your child is one half of you and one half of their other parent. Your child loves you both. Be sensitive to that.