

Teamwork Makes the Dream Work: Co-Parenting in Real Life

Raising a child together – whether with a partner, family member, or another caregiver – is a big job. Co-parenting isn't about doing everything the same way. It's about being on the same team, so your child feels safe, loved, and supported.



Talk to Each Other (Not at Each Other!)



Daily Check-Ins

A quick five-minute chat after bedtime or a shared calendar helps everyone stay on the same page.



Say What You Need

Instead of blaming, try: "I'm really wiped out – can we figure out a better bedtime routine together?"



Be Clear About Roles

Instead of assuming, ask! "Would you rather do bath time or pack tomorrow's lunches?" Clear responsibilities feel more balanced.

Keep Parenting Flexible (Because Plans Will Change!)



Play to Each Other's Strengths

Maybe one of you is great at morning routines, the other at bedtime wind-down – but switch it up sometimes to stay confident in all aspects.



Fair vs. Equal

Instead of splitting things 50/50, aim for what works best for your family. One parent working late may mean the other covers more evening tasks.



Expect the Unexpected

Work meetings run late. Kids get sick. Life happens. Approach these moments as a team instead of keeping score.

Support Each Other (Even When You Disagree!)



Different Isn't Wrong

One of you might love schedules, the other is go-with-the-flow. Both can work! Kids thrive when they feel loved and understood.



United Front

Avoid correcting each other in front of your child. Talk privately – kids feel more secure when caregivers present a united front.



Small Appreciation, Big Impact

"Thanks for making dinner" or "I love how patient you were at bedtime" helps both of you feel seen and valued.

Focus on Connection, Not Perfection



Own Your Mistakes

If you lose your cool, apologize and try again. Kids don't need perfect parents – they need parents who repair and reconnect.



Find Joy in Little Moments

Shared laughter during a bedtime story or singing in the car can be just as meaningful as big parenting decisions.



Make Time for Each Other

Even just five minutes catching up after the kids are asleep keeps your co-parenting partnership strong and running smoothly.

Respect Each Other's Parenting Styles

Trust Your Co-Parent's Way

It's easy to fall into "gatekeeping" – the *I'll just do it myself* trap – but letting go of control helps both caregivers feel more confident and involved.

Be Open to Learning

No one has all the answers! Share articles, talk about what's working, and be open to adjusting as your child grows and changes.

Keep Conflicts Small (and Laughter Big!)

Not Every Disagreement Needs a Debate

Before arguing, ask yourself: Will this really matter in a month? Big impact vs. little impact? These questions may help you let some things go.

Take a Break When Needed

If a conversation gets heated, agree to hit pause and revisit it when emotions are calmer. Coming back refreshed leads to better solutions.

Use Humor When Possible

Parenting is exhausting, but laughter can turn a stressful moment into a shared memory. Don't forget to enjoy the ride together.

📌 **The Big Takeaway:** Kids don't need perfect parents – they need *connected* parents. When caregivers work together with respect, warmth, and flexibility, children feel more secure and loved. And at the end of the day, that's what matters most.

References

- References: American Psychological Association (APA), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Zero to Three, HealthySteps.