

Lesson #4: MAINTAINING COOPERATION WHEN CO-PARENTING

**Divorced Fathers Network
Advocates Of Shared Parenting
'Because Children Love Both Their Parents'**

With a conscience effort a father can sustain cooperation with his children's mother and in turn guarantee stability for his children.

How to maintain one's shared parenting relationship:

- **Make cooperation the first priority!**

1. Do not allow work to replace line parenting time. When a fathers says," I can not take care of the kids today because I have to work." that father is telling everyone what he considers most important. Mothers who see fathers placing time with their children before work see fathers who are committed to their children's emotional needs. Children need time with fathers.
2. When fathers choose earning money over time with their children, the send the message to mothers that earning money is more important. In turn mothers begin to focus on the money the father is earning instead of the time the father is spending with his kids. Many mothers will into turn request more money from the father instead of suggesting he watch the kids more.
3. It is often difficult to place work first. Expect a little resistance from those you work for. Still fathers who place time with their children before time at work will be respected more than fathers who simply work.

- **When fathers begin dating they sometimes make their children's mother feel insecure or jealous.**

1. Keep the dating to a minimum and do not share that information with the mother or the children. Always remind the mother that she will always be the first priority and the most important relationship. Show your commitment to shared parenting by your actions and words. Remember, as far as the children are concerned, no one can take the biological mother or father's place. Read the information in Fathers Are Forever about dating.

- **Use the support of peers to lean the skills needed to grow in skills as the children grow into adults.**

1. As the years pass new shared parenting skills are needed. Those who conscientiously invest in shared parenting by learning the new skills to prepare themselves for upcoming parenting challenges will seceded. Maintaining shared parenting requires fathers to look to the future. The best way to learn what to expect is to remain in contact with fathers who have more experience. They can share with you what will be coming your way.

2. The best place to maintain one's shared parenting is at the Divorced Fathers Network weekly meetings. Expect to find a group of dedicated, friendly, and informed fathers.

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