

Lesson # 15: Tips for Improving Communication with Family Law Professionals

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

Tips for Improving Communication with Family Law Professionals (and the Other Parent)*

1. Show up for appointments on time and pay attention. Listen intently and, as appropriate, repeat back in your own words what you heard the other party say. Remember to ask if what you heard is what the speaker wanted to communicate.
2. Make eye contact and show you're listening. Be sure your body language is non-aggressive.
3. Put yourself in the position of the other person and try to see the situation from their point of view.
4. Use "I" statements to explain what is important to you and avoid blaming the other party. For example, "I'd like to spend more time with the children. I feel it's important to them. I also think when both parents have equal time with the children; there will be less reason for conflict."
5. Talk things over with another father-preferably someone who is himself engaged in co-parenting-before speaking with counselors, judges, or the other parent. Ask the other father if you sounded angry or blaming. Practice until you can communicate in an assertive, yet non-threatening manner.
6. Say only what is necessary. Too much input can confuse the issue.
7. Maintain self-control. Sharing the children with someone who wants no part of you, or who you want no contact with, requires self-discipline. The better you can communicate, the easier it will be for all those involved.

*From "Fathers Are Forever" by Steven Ashley, 2006

Contact DFN by: phone: 831-335-5855

www.DivorcedFathers.org

Email:steve@divorcedfathers.org