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## Co-Parenting During the COVID-19 Crisis

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Co-parenting can be a challenge in the best of times, let alone in extremely stressful situations such as what we are experiencing during this COVID-19 pandemic.

The important thing for parents to remember is that more than ever, this is a time to communicate in the spirit of cooperation for the sake of the child. There is much uncertainty and, in addition to all the other stresses that a child has when his/her parents are separated, the last thing he/she needs is the added stress of parents fighting or acting irrationally because of the extra stressful circumstances.

Instead of arguing with your ex, ask how you can be of help? Be “better” while being apart than you are under normal circumstances. Acknowledge that your child may be “extra scared” and let your child see a united front by his parents.

All you have to do is “care.” Show your child that you and the other parent have a united front, all for the best interests of him or her.

Of course, there will be practical concerns. Where is the other parent taking the child? Is he/she exposing the child to people that might have been exposed to the virus? Is the other parent a healthcare worker and maybe bringing something home to the child? These are all very legitimate concerns.

In that regard, just “care.” It is fine to ask the other parent where the child has been, where the child has been taken, or where the child will be going. Be honest and thoughtful about the interactions of the child and potential exposure and disclose it to the noncustodial parent, especially when transitioning custody.

If it is more dangerous for one of the parents to have the child, for example if they are a healthcare worker and possibly bringing germs home, make the sacrifice. Allow the child to stay with the parent that has the “safer environment” until this pandemic passes.

Avoid making it personal. Rather, focus and think about making decisions together.

In this time of uncertainty, more than ever, use social media. Have scheduled “check-ins.” Use these check-ins to talk about the child’s concerns or the concerns of either parent. Let the non-custodial parent “check in” while the child is attending school online or doing homework. Include the parent that is making the sacrifices in the life of the child until things can return to normal.

More than ever, remember this is about your child ... not about you. Always behave in a manner that is in the best interest of your child and leave your personal feelings aside.



Effie G. Alexander  
412-392-5492  
[ealexander@dmclaw.com](mailto:ealexander@dmclaw.com)

*Effie G. Alexander is a shareholder of Dickie, McCamey & Chilcote, P.C. and serves as Chair of the firm's Family Law Group. She concentrates her practice in the areas of collaborative family law, divorce and custody, and domestic relations, with a particular emphasis in family law.*