

Sharing Information About Your Child

- Exchange a journal with updates, appointments, and other information when your child moves between homes. This may be especially appropriate for very young children to provide a similar environment between the two homes.
- The information card can be used to help childcare providers, schools, and others know who should have information regarding your child. The information should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- Try using a 'transfer message' to communicate peacefully. Write a short email or leave a voice mail message. Try an email fill-in form that lists:
 - Homework assignments due or in process,
 - School events the other parent needs to know about,
 - Two good things that happened (the little, everyday things you'd like to know if it happened while the child was away from you),
 - Two things the child struggles with, or
 - Any questions for the other parent.



The *Using Email to Help Separated Parents Communicate* offers additional information about the benefits of email to communicate with the other parent.

- Build your own relationships with the people (teachers, parents of friends, youth leaders, etc.) in your child's life. Doing this shouldn't undermine the other parent or put others in the middle of potential conflicts, but be used to create a direct way to stay involved in your child's life. Taking matters into your own hands rather than waiting for information to come to you frees you from possible resentment and disappointment.



- Establish a Dutch door between households. Think of the boundary between ex-spouses, especially after remarriage, like a Dutch door with a top and a bottom half. The top half needs to stay open, allowing communication to flow about the child so that all the adults can form a 'parenting team' about child issues. The bottom half of the door needs to close, drawing a firmer boundary between ex-spouses concerning more personal adult issues.

References:

Parenow, Patricia. (2005). *Co-Parenting with an Ex: A Dozen and a Half Suggestions for Keeping the Peace and Protecting Children* [workshop handout]. Hudson, MA.

University of Minnesota. (2004). *We Agree: Creating a Parenting Plan*. St. Paul, MN: College of Human Ecology, University of Minnesota Extension Service.