



Tips for parents with shared custody of their children

When exchanging children after a visitation, return all toys and clothes that were originally sent on the visit. If the visiting parent purchases any toys, keep them with the visiting parent for future visits. Only one birthday or one Christmas gift can be sent home with the children.

Each parent has their own parenting style. There is no perfect way to parent. Each parent can support the children in different ways. Very often, just spending time and giving attention to the children is the most important form of support. Always buying things for children is not the way to win them over; spending quality time with them is much more valuable.

Always listen to the children rather than lecturing them. They will ask questions when they want to know something.

Never discuss adult themes or talk about the other parent to children. Don't ever ask children about the other parent's activities. This confuses them as they love both parents and can't be asked to take sides or choose between two parents who may not be getting along.

Stepparents can play an important role. The stepparent is not a parent, they should never scold or punish the children of their partner. A stepparent can be a friend and mentor to children and that can be a positive experience for the children.

Children are not adults, even when they think they are. Children need structure, support, and guidance from a parent. A parent should never try to be their children's best friend; the role of a parent is to provide guidance, support, and structure.

Constantly asking children what they want to do, eat, or where to go is not appropriate. A parent should have a plan and be firm about it, but always open to improvising if the children don't seem to be benefiting after a while.

Parenting is difficult. There is always room for parents to grow and learn about their role. Keep an open mind and always work to improve your skills as a parent.