

Relating to Other Family Members

Skill # 1

FOCUS ON YOUR CHILD'S WELL-BEING IN SHARED PARENTING

A child thrives when both parents are involved in a positive way. Help your youngster have the best relationship possible with your former partner. Suggest activities to your child's other parent in which he or she could take a part. Share the agreed-upon list with your child.

Put the well-being of your son or daughter first. Show your child how much you love her by keeping her out of adult arguments. Control the urge to verbally "trash" the other parent. Work out any problems related to your child in private.

Visiting in another household can be a challenge for your child. Be understanding and do what you can to smooth the way.

Skill # 2

SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S AFFECTION FOR THE OTHER PARENT

A child naturally feels love toward both parents, even if one is absent from the family. Show your children how much you love them by allowing them to express their natural affection toward their other parent.

Don't tell your child how he should feel. Set aside your own negative feelings for the sake of your child. Respect and accept his feelings, and let him form his own opinions.

Free yourself from bitterness by forgiving your former partner. If you are having trouble forgiving, don't be afraid to get help from a counselor. When you can do so sincerely, say nice things about your child's other parent. Look for ways to strengthen the parent-child bond. Everyone will benefit.

Skill # 3

BE KIND AND HONEST

The way you treat your former partner and his family will help or hurt your child's development. Try to balance kindness and honesty. Don't speak bitterly about the other parent, but don't sugar-coat unacceptable behavior, either.

Never make up lies about your child's other parent. Don't bring up her faults in front of your child. If your child asks you about it, be honest, but do your best to paint the other parent in a positive light.

Set a good example for your children when it comes to interacting with their other parent and his family. Children watch everything you do. Be a positive model. Go out of your way to express kindness and love. As we increasingly treat others with kindness, unexpected blessings come to us.

ACTION PLAN

Focus on one of the above skills. How could you apply this skill in your life? Choose one small but important change you really want to make in the next few days. Think positive. See yourself carrying out your goal. **Write your action plan in the space below:**



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE: University of Kentucky & Kentucky State University

Community Connections for Children—Bluegrass Area Development District