

REASONABLE COMMUNICATION WHEN BOTH PARTIES ARE BEING UNREASONABLE

Communication between separated or divorced parents can be very difficult. If divorced or separated parents were able to communicate they would not be divorced or separated. Depending on the age, health and circumstances of the child, these parents may find it necessary to communicate with each other anywhere from several times daily to at least weekly. Here is what you do when communicating can be painful or unbearable. Thanks to modern technology, email provides parents with a workable solution.

Email provides an alternative communication tool to help parents transmit messages. It allows for a cooling off period prior to replying and provides for a permanent record. The use of email keeps the communication away from the child and removes the emotional impact carried by voice. Because parents can respond back and forth, it also allows for dialogue and so reduces the risk of one parent just providing directives as per the communication book. The email trail can be reviewed if a parent has missed a point and serves as a clear reference if a parent forgets the content of an agreement. Either parent can, easily print the electronic record, or as such, both are more likely to remain on good behavior knowing the record can be used in court or be made public.

Next time separated parents in conflict need to talk and they are unable to, try email, but consider these guidelines:

1. Stick to the issues.
2. Keep the language clean and appropriate.
3. Prepare and save your message. Wait 1 - 24 hours to review and edit before sending.
4. Keep a record and back-up these files.
5. Password-protect these files to keep them out of view of your child.
6. Remember, these emails can be used in court. Do not act in a way that could be used against you.

As a communication, strategy email could make a poor situation better; it is suggested as a potential solution to keep a poor situation from getting worse. In the event that there is court ordered restrictions on face-to-face or voice contact, email may provide a reasonable solution for parents to still communicate.