

Connecting as a Noncustodial Parent

NONCUSTODIAL PARENTING

Being a noncustodial parent has many challenges for both the parent and their children. Noncustodial parents have limited time with their children and sometimes less than perfect relationships with the child's other parent. No matter, being a single parent is hard. It is ultimately up to the noncustodial parent to forge and nurture a meaningful relationship with their children.

COOPERATIVE RELATIONS WITH YOUR CHILD'S PARENT

Your life will be easier if your child's other parent knows you are on the same page regarding raising your child. It is in both parents best interest to cooperatively parent together because your child depends on you both. The key to developing a positive parenting relationship is by being supportive and maintaining civil relations with your child's other parent. Parenting responsibilities do not



end when the adult relationship or marriage do. The parenting responsibilities and the business of parenting continue. To be on the same page with the other parent, make yourself available to the other parent to help out as the other parent needs assistance or even a babysitter. This will

enable you to form a new supportive parenting relationship with the other parent and enable you additional time with your child.

COMMIT TO CONTACT

Making daily contact with your child is very important to you and your child. Make time for daily warm calls to catch up with your child. This helps your child to know you are there and care. Schedule a daily time to call younger children. For older kids connect with them through calls, emails, and social media. You can use the mail to send postcards, packages, or photos of you and your child and your shared experiences. It does not matter how you maintain regular contact but that you do. When you contact your child stay focused on the everyday stuff. Ask about the details of their day. Showing interest sets a foundation for future relations between you and your child.

WHEN YOU ARE TOGETHER

When you spend time with your child make sure it is quality time with age appropriate activities. You can plan trips to the park, local events, or even have a great meal that you cook together. Make sure your time is not just in front of the tv or video game. Avoid extravagant expensive outings or purchase every time your child visits. Remember it's



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about your time together, not the money you spend or the stuff you bought.

MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE AND ROUTINES

Think about the bigger picture. Your child may transition to two homes but they should live one life and schedule between the two homes. Work with your child's other parent to establish basic rules that are consistently applied in both parents' homes. Establish regular routines that include bedtime at both homes. It is important that both parents are on the same page regarding rules and routines



because children function better when they have easy transitions from each home. Avoid being the fun-loving parent who looks the

other way when your child gets in trouble in the other parents home.

STAY INVOLVED

Your child needs you daily and there are many ways you can stay connected. Attend your child's events. Visit with your child at their daily activities or practices. When possible visit your child's school. Have lunch with your child.

Attend school events, including parent teacher conferences, open houses and award events. Staying connected to your child daily and being involved in their life is the most important job you have. Be respectful to your child's other parent and build a positive parenting relationship with them for the benefit of your child.



APEC IS HERE TO HELP

APEC provides free training, information, and consultation to parents. Visit our training calendar for more information about learning opportunities at www.alabamaparentcenter.com or call our center.

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