

Guide for Parenting Agenda Phone Calls *

Scheduling the Call

- Treat the call like any scheduled business meeting
 - Prepare in advance.
 - Limit call initially to 15 minutes.
 - Be available at the agreed upon time. Allow 10 minutes leeway.
 - Reschedule if you can't make it. If one parent can't make the scheduled call then it is his/her responsibility to notify the other parent (preferably in advance) and find another mutually agreeable time to complete the call.
 - Be prepared to work and solve the problem at hand.

Good News

- Start on a positive note about your children's accomplishments. Convey all the information you would like to receive. Remember in this case more information is better than less.

Medical Information

- Discuss current illnesses, medication requirements, medical/dental appointments, and information about chronic conditions.

School-related issues

- Academic performance, homework, school behaviour, teacher comments, school events such as concerts, meetings, plays, athletics, performances.

Activities

- What activities are the children involved in this week. Who is driving whom, where and when?

Caretaking

- For infants/toddlers communicate information about diet, naptimes, toilet training etc.
- For preschoolers – bedtimes, peer relationships.
- For older children – decisions around TV, computer time, telephone time, curfews, driving privileges.

Behaviour

- Identify whether there have been any concerns/issues with your child's behaviour and how you have chosen to deal with these. Even though you may not have the same practices, it is important to communicate about behavioural issues in the home, outside the home and in school.

*- Adapted from *The Co-Parenting Survival Guide* by E. Thayer & J. Zimmerman, 2001.

Scheduling

- If you are in high conflict, the general advice is to rarely vary the schedule.
- Changes in the preplanned schedule should be treated as a request not a given – Remember if you were asking a business partner to change a scheduled meeting you would politely make the request and help to sort out any inconveniences.

Discipline

- Even though you may have different rules and expectations in each of your homes, it is important to keep each other informed of how you are handling the children's behaviour. You may save each other time and energy by sharing what works and what doesn't work when you are with the children.

New Business

- Reserve this for items that may come up on a periodic basis. Or for items that you wish to carry forward for future discussion.