

This document gives helpful insight as to appropriate conduct between divorced parents and their children. Parents may want or need to modify this order to address their specific needs. When used in a divorce case, this order requires the signature of both parents and the judge. It is then filed and made an order of the court.

**JUDICIAL ORDER FOR PROPER CONDUCT OF SEPARATED
OR DIVORCED PARENTS**

This Judicial Order is directed equally to both the Petitioner and Respondent herein.

If there is bitterness between you, it should not be inflicted upon your children. In every child's mind there should always be an image of **TWO GOOD PARENTS**. Your future with your children and with this Court will be enhanced if you will follow these guidelines.

(1) The divorce is not the children's fault. It is not because of anything they did. For the children, it is confusing, frustrating experience over which they have no control. Children should not be made to feel like they need to choose sides when their parents are at odds.

(2) Children will tend to blame themselves for the divorce and you must constantly reassure them that they are not to blame; that this happens to all kinds of children and that they are not alone. Help them with their fears by assuring them they will be taken care of.

(3) Research is now suggesting that it is not the divorce itself that hurts the children, but rather the conflict that they have to live with afterwards that results in maladjustment.

(4) It is important for children to have access to both parents for a balanced picture of male and female roles. They need your time and attention far more than presents. A child can love both parents more if he or she is not pressured to love one parent less. They will generally not feel very close to one parent who continually puts down the other and are quick to go to the parent who has a positive attitude towards life.

(5) Your child's sense of who he/she is comes from both parents. They will be burdened if they are told of their other parent's shortcomings. Spare your children the painful experience of seeing his/her parent's fighting. This only adds to the pain of divorce and the feeling that the conflict is over him/her.

(6) Do your mourning with your adult friends and family rather than using your children as your therapist.

(7) Do not use your visitation to continue an argument with the other parent. Never quarrel in the presence of the children. You should not use the children as messengers to communicate with the other parent.

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(8) Keep your visitation as pleasant as possible for your children by **NOT** questioning them regarding the activities of the other parent. Do not burden your children with the worries and troubles of adults. Do not discuss with them the details of any pending litigation matters.

(9) Do not expose your children to overnight visitation which includes any member of the opposite sex with whom you may be emotionally involved, except in a lawful marriage relationship.

(10) Do not visit or transport the children if you have been drinking. Do not attempt to visit or telephone your children at unreasonable hours.

(11) Always notify the other parent as soon as possible if you are unable to keep your scheduled visitation. It is unfair to your children to keep them waiting and even worse to disappoint them by not coming at all. It is in the best interest of the child(ren) that scheduled visitation be timely. A visiting parent waiting or no parent present at the time the child is returned in an aggravation leading to confrontations in the presence of the child(ren).

(12) When in the best interest of the children, it is the Court's policy to assure minor children of frequent and continuing contact with both parents and encourage parents to share the rights and responsibilities of childrearing. To this end, when awarding custody, the Court considers which parent is most likely to allow the children frequent and continuing contact with the non-custodial parent.

(13) It shall be the duty of the custodial parent to inform the non-custodial parent and provide copies to the non-custodial parent of all written schedules and notices of any school, church or extracurricular activities or functions pertaining to your child(ren); including, but not limited to, teacher conference, open house, awards banquets, sporting events, school plays, report cards, test results, school photographs and similar items. It shall be the duty of the custodial parent to inform and provide copies of such to the non-custodial parent as soon as same is made available to the custodial parent. It shall be the duty of the custodial parent to take the necessary action with the school authorities to list the non-custodial parent as a parent of the child(ren), provide the school with the non-custodial parent's address and phone numbers, and list the non-custodial parent as a person to be contacted in case of an emergency.

(14) It shall be the duty of the non-custodial parent to facilitate your child's continued participation in your child's school activities, extracurricular activities, sporting activities or church activities during your visitation periods.

(15) The custodial parent must prepare the children both physically and mentally for visitation. The children and necessities for their care should be available by the custodial parent to the non-custodial parent at the time mutually agreed upon or the time set by the Court. This includes clothing and medications. All items furnished by the custodial parent must be returned with the children.

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(16) You are required to keep the other parent informed of any change of address and change of telephone number of yourself and the children at all time. All such changes must be reported immediately. You are required to inform the other parent at once of serious illness or injury to the children.

(17) Be prompt in paying child support exactly as ordered. You will not be credited with presents, clothes, etc., as part of child support. The parent who has a duty of paying child support must always maintain proof of payment and be in a position to prove the payment (i.e. receipts, canceled checks, etc.).

(18) The custodial parent shall promptly inform the non-custodial parent of any illness of the child(ren) which shall require medical attention. The custodial parent is responsible to the provider for all medical and dental expenses of the child(ren) over and above what is covered by insurance. The custodial parent shall provide to the non-custodial parent documentation from the provider of the actual expenses, the amount paid by insurance and the balance owing. The non-custodial parent shall reimburse the custodial parent his/her percentage share as determined under child support guidelines within thirty (30) days of receipt of such documentation.

(19) The parent who has the responsibility of providing major medical and/or dental insurance, or any type of insurance for the minor children, or who has voluntarily provided insurance for the minor children, is required to keep the other parent informed of the proper name and address of the company, any changes in the benefits, any and all pre-admittance notices required of the company, benefit card with dependent identification numbers, and any other information reasonably necessary to assure the children covered and claims properly presented to the insurance provider.

(20) The issues of visitation and child support are separate and distinct. Neither is dependent upon the other and both are independently enforceable by Contempt. Nonpayment of child support is not a ground the Court is to consider in contempt hearings for denial of visitation. Denial of visitation is not a ground the Court is to consider in contempt hearings for nonpayment of child support.

(21) Each parent must realize that the most important job is to carry out the responsibility of raising children in a proper, cooperative way. Always work for the emotional well-being, health, happiness, and safety of your children. Use good judgment and your very best example to achieve these goals. Schedule regular dental and medical examinations. When driving, secure your children in seat belts or a safety chair. Never expose your children to alcohol consumption or drug use nor any dangerous, immoral or illegal situation or circumstances.

(22) All parties are advised that it is improper and unethical to discuss any pending matter with the Court.

FAILURE to follow these directions may result in violation of the orders of the Court and may be punished by contempt of the Court with a fine, imprisonment or both. Failure to follow these directions will be considered by the Court as a factor in determining the best

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interest of the children at any hearing before the Court. There may also be the additional expense of attorney fees and court costs, all of which can be better used for the benefit of your children.