

A NEWSLETTER FROM

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Family Matters

Tips for Successful Co-Parenting

Setting aside your personal issues and developing an amicable co-parenting relationship is possible and highly desirable for your children. They want and need to keep both of you in their lives.

#1 Stick with the Schedule

Seeing the kids whenever you feel like it or whenever you have the time is not going to work. Children need structure to feel secure and develop normally. Simply showing up to see your kids at odd times causes stress on the children and their other parent. You must make time for your children based on what they need, not what you need.



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Stick with the parenting schedule as if it is the most important thing in your life. Your children are expecting you. Think about how they feel when they are all packed up and ready to go and you show up two hours late or not at all. What does that tell your children about how much they matter to you? Imagine how they are affected when you don't get them home until after midnight and they have to get up six hours later for school?

If you know you will be late, let your ex-spouse and children know immediately. Better yet, plan ahead, reschedule activities that interfere with your parenting

schedule, and don't be late.

#2 Try a Dual Calendar System

Get two calendars. Highlight dad's days of parenting in blue and mom's in pink, or let your children choose two different colors. Each parent should have an identical calendar showing parenting time to put up in his or her home where the children can see it. Even very young children will be able to see in advance when they will see dad or mom next. Like regular meals and regular bedtimes, the calendars add to the sense of structure children need to feel secure.

#3 Share School Notices and Schoolwork

Get a large manila envelope for each child. Write the

child's name on it. Put into the envelope copies of any notices you receive from your child's school or teacher that your ex should be aware of. Include some of the child's schoolwork and artwork so the other parent can keep up with the child's progress.

#4 Keep a Parent's Log

A parent's log is a record of the interaction between parents. It can be used to record when things work, when they don't, or even areas where improvement could be sought. Parent's logs serve several purposes. First, writing down what works will encourage you. When something goes wrong, by reading the log you can remind yourself of successes, and give yourself a pat on the back for everything you did well. Second, the log can provide you with an emotional release. You can dispel any anger you feel for your ex-spouse in a non-destructive manner. And finally, your log may serve as evidence. In a "he said, she said" arena, the parent who presents an organized and concise representation of





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events may prevail.

There is a line between bad parenting and criminal activity. Appropriately, courts rarely get involved in situations in which they are required to assess the difference between what is good parenting and what is bad. Courts only get involved when the actual physical welfare of your children is an issue. And those situations require evidence for the court to take action. One of the forms that evidence can take is your log.

What kind of things should you log that might be serious enough to seek court intervention? You'll need to use some common sense. A judge will probably not care that the kids had cold pizza for breakfast, stayed up a half-hour beyond their bed time, or went to school wearing mismatched socks.

But a judge probably will care if the children are never buckled into their car seats, or are left unsupervised, or if your ex smells of alcohol when dropping them off.

These situations endanger the children. Keep a record of them. The judge is also likely to care if your ex leaves the children in the care of another family member or babysitter for most of the time he or she is supposed to be spending with them. If your spouse isn't engaged in the lives of your children, the court may find any of his or her demands related to parenting without basis. 

Illustrations by Designs.ia



Tips for Mingling at a Party

Making Conversation

You don't need to stir up controversy or get deeply personal to have an interesting conversation at a party. You just have to be open to meeting new people. Here are some easy ways to get a conversation started:

Ask a question

- "How do you know the host?"
- "What brings you here tonight?"
- "Can you believe this crazy weather we're having?"

- "Did you see [the game last night] [that movie everyone is talking about]?"
- "Isn't this a lovely [home] [garden] [venue]?"
- "This is my first time [in the city]. Have you been here before?"

Pay a sincere compliment (then ask a question)

- "That is a beautiful necklace. Where did you get it?"

Be honest about your anxiety (then ask a question)

- If you are really nervous

about meeting new people, you could say something like, "Hi. I'm Jane. I always feel so awkward at events like this where I don't know anyone." Then, ask your question, e.g., "How are you doing tonight?" or "What brings you here tonight?" Almost everyone will relate to your anxiety on some level, and your vulnerability is likely to encourage conversation.

Once the ball is rolling, the key to being a good

conversationalist is being a good listener. Make eye contact; ask follow-up questions; offer your opinion and then ask, "What do you think?"

Mingling

Part of being a good party guest (and having fun at a party) is mingling with the other guests. To do that successfully, you need to know how to extricate yourself from one conversation, so you can move on to another. This doesn't have to be uncomfortable. All you have to do is assert yourself, politely and with a smile on your face. For example:

"It was really nice talking with you. If you'll excuse me now, I'm going to:

- Get something to drink/ freshen my drink
- Try the dessert
- Find the bathroom
- Find my spouse
- Call home to check on the kids
- See if the host needs any help.

One note of caution: Be authentic. Don't just excuse yourself from the conversation and then move three steps away and stare awkwardly into space. If you say you are going to try the dessert, go try the dessert.

When It's Time to Go

You talked, you mingled, you were a delightful guest, but now it's time to go. How do you make a graceful exit?

As a general rule, don't sneak out. Find your host and say thank you. If the party is a large event and you can't find the host or he is too busy to interrupt, send an email the next day. If the party was a more formal event, a handwritten thank you note will be much appreciated.

You do not have to go out of your way to say goodbye to other guests, unless you want to. For example, if your goal for the evening was to make one solid business connection, you might want to check in with that person one more time before you leave. "It was very nice meeting you tonight. I'm heading home, now, but would you mind if I [connect with you on LinkedIn] [follow up with you by email]?"

Conclusion

We'll leave you with one last tip: If all else fails, relax. Remember, it's just one party. There will be others and – here's the good news – the more you get out and party, the easier it gets. 📌

Illustration by Designs.ai





Why You Should Eat Healthier

There are many reasons that you should eat healthier. Some of the benefits are obvious, but others, you may not even realize. Work to fuel your body with foods that will keep you looking and feeling good, inside and out.

Eating Right Can Boost Your Brain Power

Blueberries are a brain super-food. They are loaded with B vitamins (B6, B9, B12), as well as vitamin C, fiber and potassium, all of which help protect your brain from “oxidative stress,” which is stress from fighting “free radicals” – nasty little

molecules that damage or destroy vital cell structures. A diet rich in blueberries may help to increase learning and memory capacity, and ward off Alzheimer’s and other forms of age-related dementia.

Other foods that boost your brain power include:

- Nuts and seeds (good

sources of Vitamin E, which helps to prevent age-related cognitive decline);

- Dark-colored grapes and red berries;
- Dark green, leafy vegetables;
- Tea (especially green tea);
- Whole grains (brown rice, whole wheat bread);
- Beans; and
- Fish.

Recipes:

Blueberries are good by the handful, but if you are looking for something a little more sophisticated, you can find links to a month's worth of blueberry recipes (including this blueberry crisp: <https://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/blueberry-crisp>) here:

<https://www.cookinglight.com/food/in-season/blueberry-recipes>).

Maintain a Strong First Line of Defense With Healthy Eating

Your skin is your body's first line of defense. A diet rich in the following nutrients will help to keep your skin healthy for life:



Vitamins A, C and E protect your skin from harmful UV

rays that cause sun damage and skin cancer. In addition, vitamin C is necessary for the production of collagen -- a protein that helps keep your skin strong and firm. Fruits and vegetables, especially sweet potatoes, carrots, red/yellow peppers, citrus fruits and leafy greens are loaded with these vitamins.



Healthy fats keep your skin moisturized from the inside out. Omega-3 fatty acids are an essential type of healthy fat; they help your body build cell walls and fight skin cancer. Fatty fish, like salmon and sardines, is an excellent source of omega-3s, as are flaxseed and avocados (also a good source of vitamins C and E).

Finally, protein and zinc are essential building blocks of

healthy skin. Lean meats, eggs and nuts are good sources of both protein and zinc. Other sources of zinc include black-eyed peas, lentils and other legumes, pumpkin seeds, and dark chocolate. (As an added bonus, dark chocolate -- 70% cacao or more -- also is high in antioxidants, which help to fight damage from UV rays and sunburn).

Recipes:

With these recipes, you get dinner and dessert -- both packed with nutrients for healthy skin:

Baked salmon: <https://somethingnewfordinner.com/recipe/salmon-baked-in-foil>

Chocolate-chocolate cookies: <https://www.bhg.com/recipe/cookies/double-dark-chocolate-cookies>

Black bean brownies: <https://chocolatecoveredkatie.com/2012/09/06/no-flour-black-bean-brownies> 

Illustration by Designs.ai

Blood Orange Margarita

Why do I love blood orange margaritas? Blood oranges are gorgeous. I love their red, orange and pink color. Blood oranges are tarter than regular orange juice, so they work to keep the margarita not too sweet, but still refreshing. Make these vibrant cocktails between December and May when blood oranges are in season.

Prep 5 mins | Total 5 mins | Yield 2 cocktails

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 T Trader Joe's Chile Lime seasoning
- 1 T brown sugar
- 6 ounces blood fresh orange juice
- 2 ounces fresh lime juice
- 4 ounces silver tequila
- 2 ounces St Germain liquor
- Sprig of fresh mint or thyme for garnish (optional)
- 2 slices blood orange for garnish (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

- On a small plate combine Trader Joe's Chile Lime seasoning and brown sugar. Moisten two glass rims with lime juice and dredge the edges of the glasses in the seasoning mixture. Fill both glasses with ice.
- Fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Add blood orange juice, lime juice, tequila and St. Germain. Cover and shake vigorously until the outside of the shaker is coated with condensation. Strain into the two rimmed glasses and garnish with a blood orange wheel and a sprig of fresh mint or lime.

