

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

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If there is bitterness between you, it should not be inflicted upon your child. 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. **Choosing One Parent Over the Other**. The separation is not the children's fault. It is not because of anything they did. For the children, it is a confusing and frustrating experience over which they have no control. The children should not be made to feel like they need to choose sides when their parents are at odds.
2. **Blame for Divorce**. The children will tend to blame themselves for the divorce, and you must constantly reassure them that they are not to blame; that it happens to all kinds of children, and that they are not alone. Help them with their fears by assuring them that they will be taken care of.
3. **Conflict After Divorce**. Research is now suggesting that it is not the separation itself that hurts the children, but rather the conflict they have to live with afterwards that results in maladjustment.
4. **Access to Both Parents**. It is important for the 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. Children can love both parents more if they are not pressured to love one parent less. They will generally not feel very close to one parent who continually puts down the other and is quick to go for guidance from the parent who has a positive attitude towards life.
5. **Arguments and Fighting**. Your children's sense of who they are 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 their parents fighting. This only adds to the pain of separation and the feeling that the conflict is over them.

6. **Mourning.** Do your mourning with your adult friends and family rather than using your children as your therapist.
7. **Children as Messengers.** Do not use your visitation to continue arguments with the other parent. Never quarrel in the presence of the children. You should not use the children as a messenger to communicate with the other parent.
8. **Questioning Children.** Keep your visitation as pleasant as possible for your children by NOT questioning them regarding 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. **Sexual Relations.** Do not expose your children to inappropriate sexual relations with any person.
10. **Drinking and Unreasonable Hours.** Do not visit or transport the children if you have been drinking excessively or are intoxicated. Do not attempt to visit or telephone your children at unreasonable hours.
11. **Keeping Scheduled Visitation.** 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 children that scheduled visitation be timely. A visiting parent waiting or no parent present at the time the children are returned is an aggravation leading to confrontations in the presence of the children.
12. **Frequent and Continuing Contact with Both Parents.** When in the best interests of the

children, it is the Court's policy to assure the minor children of frequent and continuing contact with both parents and encourage parents to share the rights and responsibilities of child rearing. To this end, when awarding custody, the Court considers which parent is more likely to allow the children frequent and continuing contact with the non-custodial parent.

13. **Schedules of School, Church, or Extracurricular Activities.** It shall be the duty of both parents to inform the other parent and provide copies of all written schedules and notices of any school, church, or extracurricular activities or functions pertaining to your children; including, but not limited to, teacher conferences, open house, awards banquets, sporting events, school plays, report cards, test results, school photographs, and similar items. It shall be the duty of both parents to inform and provide copies of such to the other parent as soon as the same is made available to him or her. It shall be the duty of both parents to take the necessary actions with the school authorities to list the other parent's address and phone numbers and list the other parent as a person to be contacted in case of an emergency.
14. **Participation in Children's School, Extracurricular, or Church Activities.** It shall be the duty of both parents to facilitate your children's continued participation in your children's school activities, extracurricular activities, sporting activities, or church activities during your visitation periods.
15. **Children's Clothing and Medications.** Both parents must prepare the children both physically and mentally for visitation. The children and necessities for their care should be available to the visiting parent at the time mutually agreed upon or the time set by the Court. This includes clothing and medications. All items furnished by either parent must be returned with the children.
16. **Address, Telephone Number, and Serious Illness or Injury.** 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 times. 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. **Child Support.** 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. **Children's Medical Attention.** Both parents shall promptly inform the other parent of any illness of the children which shall require medical attention.
19. **Medical and/or Dental Insurance.** The parent who has the responsibility of providing major medical, dental, vision, 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, provide benefit cards with dependent identification numbers, and any other information reasonably necessary to assure the children are covered and claims are properly presented to the insurance provider.
20. **Visitation and Child Support.** 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. **Raising Children in a Proper, Cooperative Way.** Each parent must realize that the most important job is to carry out the responsibility of raising the children in a proper and

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 safety chairs. Never expose your children to excessive alcohol consumption or inappropriate or illegal drug use, nor any dangerous, immoral, or illegal situations or circumstances.

22. **Contact With Court.** All parties are advised that it is improper and unethical to discuss any pending matter with the Court.
23. **Effect of Failure to Follow Court's Directions.** FAILURE to follow these directions may result in violation of the orders of this Court and may be punished by contempt of 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 interests 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.