

SUPPORTING PERIODS OF PHYSICAL PLACEMENT

1. Support a good deal of contact, both in person and by phone, between your child and their other parent - enough to build and maintain meaningful relationships. (The law now requires the court to consider “whether each party can support the other party’s relationship with the child, including encouraging and facilitating frequent and continuing contact with the child, or whether one party is likely to unreasonably interfere with the child’s continuing relationship with the other party.” Sec.767.41(5)11.)
2. Don’t mistake your child’s upset or problematic behavior before or after visitation as a signal that their time together is harmful.
3. Encourage the other parent to contribute as a full-fledged parent in your child’s life. Give notice to the other parent about school/extra-curricular/church events that the child is involved in.
4. Respect the other parent’s right to develop his or her own relationship with your child and to parent them. Do not interfere when it is their time together.
5. Never use visits as rewards or punishments and do not cancel visits because of missed child support.
6. Do not ask your child to report back to you about the other parent - this puts them in the middle. Instead, ask them about their time: Was it fun? What did they do?
7. Safety comes first. Do NOT let your child go to the other parent if the child’s health or safety is in danger. For example, do not release a child to a parent under the influence of drugs or alcohol. But be careful! If your denial of a visit is in violation of the court order, you should file a motion in court to revise the order as soon as possible after the incident occurs, unless it is a one time occurrence and not likely to happen again. If you suspect abuse, call the Department of Human Services before you deny periods of placement to the other parent, and file a motion to revise the placement schedule as well.
8. Keep your child **out** of any conflict you have with the other parent:
 - A. Don’t raise issues that could start an argument when the child is being picked up or dropped off. If the other parent raises issues at these times, politely cut off the conversation and discuss it later.
 - B. When you want to get complaints about the other parent off your chest, talk to a friend, relative or counselor - NOT the child.
 - C. If your child is angry with the other parent, let him talk but don’t add fuel to the fire.
 - D. Avoid bad-mouthing the other parent in front of your children.
 - E. If the other parent is bad-mouthing you, don’t get caught up in the game. Calmly correct any lies and explain that people often say things they don’t mean when they are upset.
 - F. Realize that your child needs to be able to love BOTH parents. Don’t interpret their love for the other parent as a threat to you.
 - G. Try as best you can to resolve your conflict with the other parent and achieve some level of mutual respect. Your child instinctively knows that he is part of each of you, and will love himself better if his “two halves” are not in conflict.

Most pro-se forms can be obtained from the Clerk of Court Office (Room 105), the Family Court Commissioner Office (Room 309) or on the internet at www.Manitowocountywi.gov. Click on “departments,” then “Family Court Commissioner,” then “forms and links.”