

## JUDICIAL CODE OF PROPER CONDUCT FOR SEPARATING OR DIVORCING PARENTS

This Judicial Order is directed equally to both the Petitioner, \_\_\_\_\_, and the 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) 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.
- (2) For the children, living in two, separate parental homes can be a confusing, frustrating experience over which they have no control. Help them with their fears by assuring them that they will be taken care of in both homes. Give your children unconditional love – they need it at this time more than any other. Remember: they are a child only once and for a relatively short period of time.
- (3) Your children's sense of whom they are comes from both parents. A child can love both parents more if they do not pressure him or her to love one parent less. A child will generally not feel very close to one parent who continually puts down the other and will be quick to go for guidance to the parent who has a positive attitude towards life.
- (4) Your children will be burdened if they are told of the other parent's shortcomings. Do not accuse or blame the other parent for things that have happened in the past. Do not criticize or berate the other parent, members of the other parent's family or friends. Don't make disparaging remarks about the religion of the children or the other parent.
- (5) Use the same degree of consideration, respect, and kindness toward the other parent that you expect in return. You must respect the fact that the opposing party is your children's Mom or Dad and treat him or her accordingly.
- (6) Do your mourning/complaining with your adult friends and family rather than using your children as your therapist. Do not burden your children with the worries and troubles of adults – they are only a child once.
- (7) Children will tend to blame themselves for any conflict. You must constantly reassure your children that they are not to blame; that having parents who are not married to each other happens to all kinds of children; and, that they are not alone.
- (8) Research is now suggesting the conflict that a child has to live with can result in maladjustment in the child. Spare your children the painful experience of seeing their parents fighting by never quarreling in their presence. This only adds to the feeling that the conflict is over them.

- (9) Do not use your custodial periods to continue an argument with the other parent. You should not use the children as a messenger to communicate with the other parent. Children should not be made to feel like they need to choose sides when their parents are at odds.
- (10) Keep your custodial periods as pleasant as possible for your children by NOT questioning him or her regarding the activities of the other parent. Do not discuss with your children the details of any pending litigation matters.
- (11) Each parent must prepare the children both physically and mentally for the upcoming custodial period with the other parent. The children and necessities for their care should be made available to the other parent at the time mutually agreed upon or the time set by the Court. This includes clothing and medication. All items furnished by the one parent must be returned with the children at the next exchange time.
- (12) Always notify the other parent as soon as possible if you are unable to keep your scheduled custodial period. 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 custodial exchanges be timely. A 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.
- (13) 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, including, without limitation, the following:
  - a. Schedule regular dental and medical examinations at times when both parents can attend.
  - b. When driving, secure your child in seat belts or a child restraint seat.
  - c. Never expose your children to excessive alcohol consumption or illegal drug use, nor any dangerous, immoral or illegal situation or circumstances.
  - d. Do not expose your children to inappropriate sexual behavior with any person.
  - e. Do not visit or transport the children if you have been drinking alcoholic beverages.
  - f. Do not attempt to visit or telephone your children at unreasonable hours.
- (14) It shall be the duty of both parents: (a) to inform the other parent and provide copies to the other parent of all written schedules and notices of any school, church or extracurricular activities or functions pertaining to your children that that parent receives; including, but not limited to, teacher conferences, open house, awards banquets, sporting events, school plays, report cards, test results, school photographs and similar items, as soon as same is made available to that parent; and, (b) to take the necessary action with the school authorities to provide the school with the other parent's name, address and phone numbers as a person to be contacted in case of an emergency.
- (15) It shall be the duty of the parents to facilitate your children's continued participation in your children's school activities, extracurricular activities, sporting activities or church activities during custodial periods.

- (16) 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, (i.e. receipts, canceled checks, etc.) and be in a position to prove the payment.
- (17) The parent who has the responsibility of providing major medical and/or dental insurance, or any type of insurance for the 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 benefits, any and all pre-admittance notices required of the company, 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.
- (18) The issues of custody 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 custody. Denial of custody is not a ground the Court is to consider in contempt hearings for nonpayment of child support.
- (19) All parties are advised that it is improper and unethical to discuss any pending matter with the Court, unless both parties and their attorneys are present.

**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.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

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**H O N O R A B L E**

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**Special District Court Judge**

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, **Petitioner**

\_\_\_\_\_, **Respondent**

\_\_\_\_\_  
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