

Co-Parenting Checklist:

Tips for Success After Divorce or Separation

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This checklist is designed to help parents in Washington state create a positive co-parenting environment. It's not legal advice. Consult an attorney for your specific situation. Focus on your child's best interests as outlined in [RCW 26.09.002](#).

1. Communication Basics

- Use a neutral tool like [Our Family Wizard](#) or email for all co-parenting discussions (avoids emotional texts/calls).
- Set ground rules: Keep messages child-focused, polite, and factual. Avoid blame or past conflicts.
- Schedule regular check-ins (e.g., weekly calls) to discuss schedules, school, and health without the child present.
- Document everything: Save emails and notes for potential court use.

2. Parenting Plan Adherence

- Review your parenting plan weekly to ensure compliance with residential time, holidays, and decision-making.
- Create a shared calendar (Google Calendar or app) for pickups, drop-offs, school events, and medical appointments.
- Plan for flexibility: Discuss changes in advance, and get written agreement for major adjustments.
- If modifications are needed (e.g., due to job change), consult an attorney early. See [RCW 26.09.260](#) for requirements.

3. Child-Centered Focus

- Maintain consistent routines between homes (bedtimes, homework, meals) to provide stability.
- Encourage positive relationships: Never speak negatively about the other parent in front of the child.
- Involve the child appropriately: Listen to their feelings without pressuring them to choose sides.
- Prioritize education and activities: Coordinate school involvement and extracurriculars in Olympia districts like North Thurston.

4. Handling Conflicts

- Attend co-parenting classes if recommended (available through [Thurston County Dispute Resolution Center](#)).
- Use mediation for disputes before the court. It's often faster and less stressful.
- Address emergencies promptly: Follow your plan's protocol for health or safety issues.
- Seek professional help: Consider family counseling through local resources like the [Thurston County Family Support Center](#).

5. Financial and Legal Responsibilities

- Track child support payments accurately (use WA's schedule under [Chapter 26.19 RCW](#)).
- Share expenses fairly: Agree on splitting costs for extras like sports or medical not covered in support.
- Update important documents: Notify schools, doctors, and insurers of both parents' contact info.
- Review annually: Assess if the plan still works as your child grows.

Additional Resources

- Washington State Courts Parenting Plan Forms: courts.wa.gov/forms
- Pierce County Superior Court: piercecountywa.gov/122/Superior-Court
- For modifications or disputes, [contact Morgan Hill PC for a consultation](#).

Thank you for prioritizing your child's well-being. Download and print this checklist for easy reference.

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