

Keep in contact with your ex about the children

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By Douglas C, McKee Updated: February 04, 2015

Categories: Child Custody, Divorce and Annulment, Fathers and Divorce, Men and Divorce

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In order for you to be considered for custody or even joint custody you need to show that you are willing to put aside your differences with your ex when it comes to your children. You must be willing to work together with regard to the children. No matter what it takes and no matter how many times you fail, you must continue to try to work together.

Even if you are the only one that is willing to put your differences aside you must continue to work together at all costs. A judge will see your willingness to cooperate with your ex when it comes to the children. If your ex refuses to cooperate with you this will only work against her. Remember that your main concern is for the children, so lose your pride and put your children first. The two of you need to meet in the middle for the sake of the children.

You need to speak with your ex often about the children. You need information on their behavior when they are with her. This information is important to you because you need to make sure that their behavior guidance is consistent between the two of you. You also need to coordinate your discipline with your ex to ensure that you are both enforcing the same rules. This will not only make the visitations easier for the both of you but it will eliminate any confusion on your children's part as to how they are supposed to behave. This ensures further stability for the children.

As long as the children see that their parents are working together on their behalf and that the both of you hold similar standards for them, they will feel more at ease with the new arrangement. Above everything else, your children's stability is your main concern and solid communication between the two of you is imperative to limit the confusion that they are most likely feeling.

Keeping a log of every single payment or support effort is vital to your case. Keep receipts of groceries that you may purchase, receipts from the utility companies, daycare centers, etc. Write down the date, the form of relief and the amount in the log. Never, ever give cash. Cash payments can easily be denied because they leave no trail. If you do not have a checking account, then get cashiers check from a bank, supermarket or Post Office money order, keeping the receipt portion for your records. If you are using a personal check, make a notation on the check in the "memo" section that says "Child support January" or "Children/electric bill January" or something similar so that you can prove that a check was issued for a specific purpose. When your ex cashes or deposits the check the cancelled check becomes your receipt. If you are consistent with your relief, your log, receipts and cancelled checks will prove it. And

rather than being ridiculed by your ex's attorney for financially abandoning your children the judge will see you as a concerned and honorable father. This voluntary support impresses judges because many fathers fail to pay anything until it is ordered.

The log is a must. I was fortunate enough to keep a log of my own. My big mistake was that sometimes I gave my ex cash. When we went to court for the emergency hearing, my ex's attorney questioned her on the stand and she stated that I had given her very little in the way of financial support since the day I had left the house. Her attorney used the phrase that "support payments had been very small and inconsistent at best". During his cross examination, my attorney was able to enter into evidence my log which showed every single cash payment and every single check that I had issued her for the past year. The log, coupled with her bank statements that showed deposits of checks and cash deposits that coincided within a day or two of my entries in the log, provided proof that I had, in fact, paid support since day one. Despite the fact that the first judge allowed her to relocate to the East Coast, she did make a point of commending me for making these voluntary payments when so many fathers fail to do so.

The bottom line here is: pay the support for your children because they deserve it and keep a log of it to use in court because you will need it.

This excerpt from "A Father's Journey To Custody" by Douglas C. McKee is re-printed in DivorceMag.com with permission. Douglas C. McKee, a father of five beautiful children; two of whom he was awarded primary physical custody from a previous marriage, knows first hand, the heartache of a divorce that involves children and the benefits of maintaining ongoing contact with them during this rough time. The book is available at the author's website, www.fathersseekingcustody.com

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