

A GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL VISITATION EXCHANGE

Parents who no longer live together generally have a schedule that permits each one to be with their children, whether a few hours, a number of days each week, on vacation or for the summer. If the parents do not agree upon a visitation schedule, either parent may obtain an order from the court establishing a visitation schedule. Often, exchange of the child between the parents based on the visitation schedule will occur at the respective residence of each parent. For a number of reasons, visitation exchange often occurs at different locations agreed upon by the parents.

Civil, respectful conduct by the parents and/or other adults at the visitation exchange is absolutely crucial. The parent/adult who brings the child to the exchange site and the parent/ adult who is taking the child must be civil to one another at all times in front of the child.

Ensuring that the child is kept away from and out of adult conflict during the visitation exchange increases the well being of the child. The more adult conflict the child experiences at the visitation exchange, the greater the child's anxiety and fears.

It is in the best interests of the children that each parent/adult at the visitation exchange appear happy, calm and collected. The visitation exchange does not require that the parents and/or other adults engage in verbal communication with each other. It is best not to do so at all if the communications between them will be negative.

Each adult involved in a visitation exchange must help create the environment for the child to feel safe and happy at each visitation exchange. A parent or other adult bringing the children or the parent or adult who will be taking the children shall NOT speak in a negative, derogatory manner to each other or about each other in front of the children.

At each visitation exchange, remain neutral toward the other parent or other adults who are present. No parent or other adults present at the visitation exchange should contribute to or permit adult anger and unkind remarks to occur while at the visitation exchange.

Contributing to the well being of children by creating an environment where relationships between parents and children are nurtured, even amidst major changes and adult conflicts, is part of the job of every parent and/or adults involved with visitation exchanges.

Making every visitation exchange a positive experience for your child will also be enormously rewarding for you!