

# 5 Tips for Healthier Co-Parenting Conversations

## TIP SHEET

Relationships Australia WA has developed a range of tips to help support you during difficult times. This is a guide for separated parents who want less conflict and more calm in their lives.

Even after separation, parenting continues; how you communicate with your co-parent shapes your child's sense of security. Here are five simple strategies you can start using today.

### 5 Tips for Healthier Co-Parenting Conversations

#### 1. Keep Your Child in the Centre, Not in the Middle

Before speaking, ask yourself: "*Is what I'm about to say in the best interests of my child?*" This shift moves the focus from '*me vs. you*' to '*what's best for our child*'.

#### 2. Watch Your Tone

It's not just the words you use, but *how* you say them. A calm, respectful tone reduces defensiveness and makes problem-solving easier. Aim to be clear, short, and kind.

#### 3. Notice Your Triggers

If your heart is racing, your voice rising, or you feel the urge to snap back, you might be "flooded". That's your nervous system in overdrive. It's okay to pause and state, "I need a break; let's come back to this later."

#### 4. Use Neutral Communication Channels

Sometimes text or face-to-face talks fuel tension. Co-parenting apps, emails, or shared calendars can help keep communication clear and less emotional.

#### 5. Focus on One Step at a Time

You don't have to solve every disagreement at once. Start with one small shift, such as setting a routine, using "I" statements, or agreeing to respond within 24 hours instead of immediately.

#### Want more tools and support?

Join our upcoming **Communicating as Co-Parents Workshop** where you'll learn practical strategies to reduce conflict, set healthy boundaries, and create a calmer, more consistent environment for your child. Relationships Australia WA also offers a variety of relationship workshops, courses and support services to help you navigate life's challenges. For more information please visit our website or call us on 6164 0200.

**References:**

Eddy, B., Burns, A. T., Chafin, K. (2020). *BIFF for Co-Parent Communication*. Unhooked Books.

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McIntosh, J. E. & Olsson, C. (2014). *Let's Talk About Conflict*. Centre for Social and Early Emotional Development (SEED), Deakin University.