

Best Practice: Tools and Tips for Divorced Parents and Divorce Professionals

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Managing contacts in school and medical settings

It is important for parents to be fully informed and involved in children's education and medical care. When parents manage their tensions well and collaborate effectively, joint meetings with medical professionals and school faculty are an efficient way to gather information and make decisions. But when tensions run high and parents have a pattern of arguing and disagreeing rather than collaborating, joint meetings can trigger rancor rather than cooperative effort. In these instances, the following guidelines can help keep conflict to a minimum while still insuring each parent's involvement:

- Each parent should independently gather information from the school about their children's academic progress rather than relying upon one another to pass along report cards and homework assignments.
- Parents should pass along medical information to one another by fax, email, or mail. The children should not be asked to convey information. The parents may use a notebook that accompanies the child from one home to another to convey homework assignments or medical prescriptions or instructions.
- Each parent should meet separately with teachers for parent-teacher conferences.
- Except in the event of medical emergencies, parents should meet separately with medical professionals rather than conjointly.
- Each parent should only attend school events (e.g., presentations, assemblies) during their designated parenting time.

