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eNewsletter

Can't We Just Get Along?

Divorce is a difficult and trying time for a family. A divorce also presents an opportunity for a family to learn a new and hopefully successful way to interact. If a divorcing couple has no children, then they will not need to have very much post divorce interaction. But most of our clients have children and will need to deal with one another for years to come. Even after the children are grown they will have graduations, their own weddings, birthday parties for the grandchildren and other events where the parents will be together. The parenting plan created by the divorce process, while it addresses many issues, cannot predict every possible challenge that a family will face. The few tips below help some families make an easier adjustment to post divorce life.

Coordinating schedules

Often the children's school and extracurricular activities create challenges to the schedule worked out by the parents. If extracurricular activities will require that the child participate during both parents' parenting time, the parents should coordinate enrolling the child in the activity. This joint planning will insure that both parents are committed and that the child will be able to fully participate.

Changing plans

The demands of parents' work schedules may also pose challenges. If work demands will interfere with parenting time, then the parent who will be unable to care for the children should consider the challenge their problem to solve. Hopefully, reaching out for help from the other parent can be one of the first options. However, there should not be an expectation that the other parent will automatically cover. The other parent may have plans that prevent them from helping out. With as much advance notice as possible and an approach consistent with 'asking for a favor', many problems can be avoided.

Communicating clearly

Regardless of the reasons parents adjust and change their schedules, clear communication is key. A telephone call or message is not adequate. Changes should be done in writing by email to insure that communication is clear. There are also some Web based calendar programs that allow families to keep their personal calendars electronically. Such calendars would be available to the entire family to coordinate schedules.

Setting expectations

Divorce does not radically change people. Realistic expectations will help both parties to parent post divorce. It is very unlikely that both parents will have the same parenting style. If one does not expect the other parent to do things exactly as they would,



Establishing boundaries

New boundaries must be established post divorce. Parents should balance between a spirit of cooperation and not allowing themselves to be taken advantage of by the other parent. A conciliatory parent may need to say no as appropriate very early on in the process to avoid setting the tone for being taken advantage of. This will send the message that you are willing to work together but not to be taken advantage of in the relationship.

Working with a third party

Most of the time an ex-spouse will enter into another love relationship. This is the time to be particularly flexible. A historically open relationship between ex-spouses can be threatening to a new love interest. To manage the new relationship, the formerly friendly co-parents may not be able to be as accessible. If this happens, adjust expectations and attempt to make the best of the new arrangements.

If both parents make a concerted effort to cooperate with one another post divorce, then ideally they will not need to retain lawyers in the future to enforce and modify their Decree. As importantly, their children will not dread having the parents together for family events. Parents who genuinely collaborate are the true successes in our practice.

Noelke English Maples St. Leger Rated as a Tier 1 Firm

U.S. News Media Group and Best Lawyers Release 2010 Best Law Firms Rankings

U.S. News Media Group and Best Lawyers have released the 2010 Best Law Firms rankings, marking the inaugural publication of this annual analysis. Noelke English Maples St. Leger is pleased to be rated as a tier 1 (top tier) firm among only five family law firms in Austin. Click [here](#) to view our profile listing.

These overall inaugural law firm rankings are available on-line at <http://noelkeenglishmaplesstlegerllp.cmail1.com/t/r//etydry/tltrultld/t> and provide a comprehensive view of the U.S. legal profession that is unprecedented both in the range of firms represented and in the range of qualitative and quantitative data used to develop the rankings.



The mission of Best Law Firms from the start has been to help guide referring lawyers and clients. The October issue of *U.S. News & World Report* will feature these first tier rankings. "U.S. News is the world's leading publisher of institutional rankings based on both objective data and peer evaluations," says Steven Naifeh, President of Best Lawyers. "We are combining this expertise with Best Lawyers' experience of providing rankings of individual lawyers based on peer reviews for almost three decades. By combining hard data with peer reviews, and client assessments, we believe that we are providing users with the most thorough, accurate, and helpful rankings of law firms ever developed."

Achieving a high ranking is a special distinction that signals a unique combination of excellence and breadth of expertise. At Noelke English Maples St. Leger we are honored to be recognized as such.

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