

## **Parental Conflict: How it can be harmful for children**

The wish of basically all children of separation or divorce is that their parents do not argue or fight with each other and that they can, in some way, work out difficulties in a mature fashion without resorting to hurtful comments and harmful behaviors.

This basic wish of children has a strong basis in reality as research has shown that ongoing, unresolved, chronic conflict between separated parents has an extremely negative impact on the current and future mental health of their children.

It is common and normal for two parents to have different ideas, opinions, values, and priorities. Part of being successful in a post separation relationship with another person is being able to use appropriate communication skills so that ideas and opinions can be expressed and received with respect and differences of opinion can be worked out using healthy conflict resolution strategies.

If parents do not communicate respectfully with each other and do not have a good strategy for resolving conflicts, the result is chronic, unresolved conflict between the parents. There is an ongoing hostile emotional tone between the parents that continues to erupt over time and in the same patterns. Conflict never seems to get resolved. The same patterns of angry confrontations are repeated over and over again with only temporary or often no resolution or changes taking place between the parents.

Chronic parental conflict is most common in families where parents have separated or divorced, or have never been married or lived together. This harmful conflict can range from yelling, criticizing, blaming, put-downs, mocking, sarcasm and ignoring to more serious acts such as interfering with child's access to another parent, intimidation and threats of harm, actual physical violence such as throwing or destroying things, or grabbing, shoving, slapping, hitting, kicking, or any other form of physical assault.

## **Your children are depending on YOU, their parents!**

**Hostile Parenting is far more disadvantageous to the formation of a child's relationship with family and friends and the child's social behaviour than any other aspect of the family's background\*\***

\*\* Findings by Statistic's Canada' longitudinal study on children and published in their report called "Growing up in Canada"



**Don't let your children be damaged for their lives because of parental conflict**

For information about this program contact the facilitator or agency listed below:

**Family Justice Review  
Committee Family Services  
(416) 410-4115**

Email: [info@familyconflictservices.com](mailto:info@familyconflictservices.com)  
Support and Advocacy Services for children and families

*Because your children are depending on YOU!*

# **Cooperative Parenting Program**

**For separated or divorced parents**

*A voluntary program of interest to parents of separation or divorce and members of their extended families who are experiencing post separation stress or high conflict*

---

## The FACTS about Separation and Divorce

---

Thousands of family members lose their homes, their children, their life savings, their jobs, their future income, and their DIGNITY as a result of family conflicts during times of separation and divorce involving the family court.

As a result of this conflict the family is often devastated and the children end up with a lifetime hurt, pain and anger. The financial and emotional cost as a result of the conflict has far reaching impact on society as a whole.

Post-divorce or separation conflict between parents and members of extended families can have life-long negative impact on your children. Most research shows that of all factors which cause harm to children, parental conflict is the most damaging with significant long term effects.

After separation and/or divorce emotions often run high and a number of difficult issues ranging from child access, domestic violence, parental alienation, parental estrangement, allegations of sexual abuse and mental illness, new partners, etc.

It is vitally important that parents learn about the causes of their conflict and to learn what they must do to effectively eliminate conflict with their former spouse. The information taught during the Cooperative Parenting Program will help them achieve this.

### About the Program

Our post separation cooperative parenting program designed specifically for parents involved with high conflict in matters relating to their separation and/or divorce. Our program helps separated parents who are engaged in conflict to learn how parental conflict affects children and how to focus on the needs of the

children. The program is aimed at both parents individually and is helpful even if only one parent attends.

After signing up parents will receive a proof of enrollment letter that can be sent to their lawyer, child protection worker or any other person who may be involved. When parents complete the program they are given a certificate of completion.

The program is convenient and allows parents to work from the convenience of their home over video conferencing with the program instructor(s). Parents must have access to a computer, cell phone and internet connection to participate in the program.



**Participating in the program from home**

The program normally takes about four (4) on line sessions lasting about one hour each with a course instructor. Sessions are given once per week during the day or evening depending on which time is most convenient for the attendees and court instructor. At each session, parents are given study materials which are reviewed at the next course session.

Other professionals such as lawyers, registered social workers or police officers could, upon request, be invited to join in during the session to assist in answering specific legal or criminal law related questions which the participants may have.

Should any children involved be of an age and maturity to participate in resolving any conflict between their parents which affect them, then the children will be invited to participate in separate sessions specifically designed to deal with issues affecting the children.

---

## What are the objectives of the Cooperative Parenting Program?

---

**At the conclusion of the Cooperative Parenting Program, participants should be able to understand:**

- The underlining causes of family conflict and what to do to reduce or eliminate it.
- The effects of parental conflict on children
- What is the best interest of their child and what are their child's rights, freedoms and responsibilities.
- The various legal and moral issues involved with separation and divorce that could affect them and their child.
- The various factors and criteria relating to the emotional and physical wellbeing of the child.
- The various types of parenting arrangements and placement schedules.
- How to write an effective and comprehensive parenting plan which best promotes the best interest of the child.
- How to exchange their child without incident.
- How to arrange fair and conflict free schedules for summer, holidays and other special events.
- How to effectively communicate with the other parent.
- How to reduce the reliance on the police, child protection workers and the family court system.
- How to have their child's age appropriate wishes and preferences effectively listened to and respected.