

DRAMA-FREE DROP-OFFS

AVOID TEARS AND YELLING WHEN DROPPING OFF
YOUR KIDS... HOW TO CREATE CHILD EXCHANGES
THAT ARE FULL OF COMFORT AND CONFIDENCE



THOM TESSANDORI

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Defining A Drama-Free Drop-Off

The biggest complaint that I hear CoParents talk about is the division of time that children share between households.

If I had to synthesize the biggest challenge for new CoParents, it would be the dreaded child drop-off. This goes hand-in-hand with what you've chosen as your time with your kids. It seems that the child exchange is the most emotional part of CoParenting because it represents so much: A failed romantic relationship, losing the support of a partner and the possibility of a frightened child.

And yes, you're going to see that "mistake" you made in your life every time you drop your child off.

However the reality is that it doesn't need to be this way. In fact it doesn't need to be painful and challenging at all.

At first it seems like no one is happy with CoParenting drop-offs, either your previous partner because of some sort of unnamed expectations or your child, who just desperately wants routine and stability in their life.

And who can blame them? For each of them, including yourself, this can be a very confusing time, especially when you are creating the routine.

If it was your CoParent who was making all the rules, wouldn't you want to have a say in the times and locations of your child exchange? And if you were your child you'd probably want to know where you were going, how long you were going to be there and whom else was going to be there.

Look, the reality is that your life got disrupted. It doesn't matter if it was a divorce or a break up - you've now got to figure this out, hopefully without having to hire an expensive attorney or go through a time-consuming court system. You've

already been through enough and had to go through something that I never would wish on my worst enemy.

But there is good news because your situation is temporary. I went through it and did it, and now have a happy and successful CoParenting relationship and kids that are stable and loving. That's what I want to create with you, and having drama-free drop-offs is the first step in the right direction.

It wasn't easy to do, in fact I would say that it was one of the most difficult things I've ever done. And the child exchange (or drop-off) was one of the most difficult to master. But when we got it under control, almost everything else seems to fall into place naturally.

So, take my suggestions to create a drama-free drop-off as "the new norm"... where there is no question as to where your child is going, what they are going to be doing and who they are going to be doing it with.

These are the things that helped me go from a timid, scared father to a confident CoParent who not only tells his ex-Partner what is going on, but is fully self-expressed and knows what his children are doing at their Mother's house.

So, let's define what a drama free drop off actually looks like. A perfect scenario might go something like this:

It's 2:20 on a Sunday afternoon and your CoParent has said that they are going to pick up your child at 2:30 that day. Your daughter has her school clothes in her homework in her bag that is resting by the door. It's a sunny day, and you both had a refreshing glass of lemonade as you talk about the forth coming week. You talk about the spelling test that is gonna happen on Thursday and how many days she's going to buy lunch at school. There is a knock on the door. It's her mother, and she is smiling from ear to ear because she knows she's going to get some great one on one time with her daughter. You exchange a few words about logistics and both mother and daughter are off for the rest of the weekend.

Obviously for you, this is going to look different. Plus, what I just described is sorta the ultimate scenario. At best, it's likely going to look like this... at least this is how it looked for me:

You look up the the clock and notice that it's 2:20. You double check the text on your phone and realize that her Mom is going to be here in 10 minutes. You race up the stairs and ask your daughter to find her homework and put it into her bag as you start to pack some clothes. You then realize that you left her favorite shirt in the dryer so you run downstairs, grab it and start to fold it as you take double-steps to get back to your daughters room. You then hear a knock on the door and realize that your CoParent is 8 minutes early. You want to have it look like you've got your act together so you casually walk down the stairs hoping that she doesn't notice the sweat on your forehead.

But for the sake of argument, let's say that that is something we all want: A peaceful, tear-free transition without a lot of added junk that makes life difficult. Even if there is a frantic push at the end, at least it's not charged with negative emotion(s) and frustration.

The following perspectives allows you to have Persistent Parenting, Conscious Children and CoParent Contentment. Let's please take a look at some of these and let's just say that these are the foundation to creating a child exchange that is without challenge.

It's not just that we want to "get along". We've got no choice, so let's **CHOOSE** to be happy together, even if a child is the only thing we share in common.



Three Perspectives to Use (The Foundation of a Drama-Free Drop-Off)

Use these three different perspectives to really take-on creating a drama-free drop-off with your CoParent. Here's the first one:

Persistent Parenting - Over Communicate (at first)

It's okay to over communicate, even if it feels like you are being annoying. Any new habit, routine or ritual takes time to remember and if you happen to give a few reminders along the way it's not a bad thing.

Like I talk about in the "Custody Without Courts" book, I advocate for speaking to the listening of your CoParent. What this means is using the style of communication that works best for them. So, for example, if they use Text messaging exclusively, use that. Keep in mind that if you want to be the one to create the schedule you will need to be flexible (more on that in a moment).

While I wouldn't advocate giving your CoParent a *literal* play-by-play of what block you're on and what the GPS says it's going to be our arrival time, rather I would give a general sense or notion that you were going to stick with your agreement and that you're going to be on time. Having integrity run time is very important, especially when dealing with your children. Your kids are in demand, and you're the one in control.

Realize that you are making a difference in your child's life. Just your presence is a type of peace for them, in a chaotic world that often doesn't make sense.



Your Conscious Children - Tell The Truth To Everyone

When it comes to your kids, I advocate for being honest and transparent with them. If they are old enough to “get it”, I highly recommend being direct and forthright with them. This means letting them know the expectations of the drop-off: what time they are being dropped off, what day and time they are being picked up and what needs to happen when they are at your CoParents house, like homework or softball practice.

If your kids are very young, both you and your CoParent need to speak clearly and lovingly to your child. This is going to include all the stuff that you already know, like getting down on one knee to their level, looking them in the eye in being very honest with them. It may look something like this: “OK, I’m going to drop you off. You’re going to have a great time with her. And when you’re over here, I’m going to be thinking about you and how much I love you. I can’t wait till you’re going to be back with me but for now you need to be with mom.”

And, let’s face it, when I talk about being direct I mean you should tell them what is so. This means not injecting your opinion or emotion or meaning into a story, but rather sticking with the actual facts. What I mean by this is perhaps something like this: “Your mother asked me to have you at her place at 6 o’clock tonight. Please have your homework ready to go by 5 o’clock so that we can be on time.”

When it comes to your CoParent, I would never tell you to lie to them. In fact, one of the biggest “sins” of CoParenting is withholding. While I’m not advocating *over-sharing*, be honest with your CoParent. I would even go so far as to say engage “find my friends” with your Ex on your phone, or something similar. It’s not creepy, it’s important to know where your child is above all else.

CoParent Contentment - How To Be Flexible and Fair

It's important to be flexible, and what I mean by that is that you give yourself time on either end of a drop-off. So, for example, try to have a neighbor on call in the event a CoParent needs to change a drop-off or pickup time.

This is going to look different for everyone, however it ever hurts to line something up in advance. Set up things so that, if necessary, in an emergency, that you've got a backup. For me, it was a neighbor I had two doors down. She had a boy the same age as my daughter and we've had each other's backs several times.

I strongly suggest that you set this up with someone you know and trust, someone who is going to be consistently available and is able to care for your child.

If you can, try to start off as equal drop off and pickup times with your CoParent. I have found that starting off this way is the best way to begin because everyone feels like it's fair. To do a really in-depth, deep dive into creating the custody agreement that works best for your family you should really check out my book called *Custody Without Courts*. It's literally a step by step blueprint that shows you exactly how to make a custody agreement outside of the court system. One of the aspects of this is going to be the division of time that you and your CoParent have your child. Because this is one of the most challenging factors, I've gone ahead and written this specific report.

So, what does A Drama-Free Drop Off Actually Look Like?

I've gone through many iterations throughout the years. Often for us, it revolved around my CoParent's work schedule as she worked Service jobs. Service jobs typically don't have static schedules, and are very laborious and usually you feel very tired at the end of the work day. Because I worked in IT, I was able to do most of my work remotely. This meant that for all intent and purpose, I worked from home. The fact that she worked in Service made it especially difficult to start, but later on it opened more communication, out of necessity.

So, the exchange happens on Saturday's between 2:00 and 3:00, with my CoParent picking up my kids at my place. Pickup was after school on a Tuesday, so 3:00 at the school they attended. This gave my CoParent a little bit of weekend time and a morning and pick up from school.

Was this totally fair on Time? Nope, but we constructed it that way.

Then, when my CoParent went back to school we modified it such that I picked up the kids from school on Monday and they were picked up by my CoParent at 5:00 that evening. Sometimes this one made me feel like I was just a chaperone or Uber driver, but they were my kids too. And I gotta say, seeing them on days I typically didn't was a nice chance to check in with them.

During school breaks this changed, often coinciding with both of them (Elementary school for the kids and College for the CoParent). In other words, for a few years this change was relatively predictable even to the point that I made vacation plans for my family based on the small window of school breaks.

As you can see, this evolved over the years into a manageable, yet flexible way of being for both my CoParent and children.



More Than Just a Progenitor

Keep in mind, just the fact that we're having this conversation means that your CoParent wants to step up to the plate and take responsibility. If they didn't, they wouldn't even be in the picture anymore. Sometimes it may feel forced, other times it may feel inauthentic, but just the fact that you are reading this right now means that they want to make a difference.

And who can blame them? I know that if I was wearing their shoes, I would.



After all, it's their child as well. In turn, it means it's their family too. And sometimes it's difficult to remember that they have the same fears, frustrations and challenges that you do as well.

This is exactly why I wrote my book "Custody Without Courts" in the first place.

The reality is that everyone wants a smooth transition. No one wants conflict or dysfunction.

Use this book, along with the Custody Without Courts book, to create the smoothest transition as possible, creating Drama-free drop-offs until your kids can drive themselves to your CoParent's house.

Your CoParent is more than a Previous Partner, they are a Parent. And even if you're not together with them anymore in a romantic capacity, or in any other capacity for that matter, there's a really good chance they want what's best for your child as well. Just the fact they they stuck around means that they care and want to continue to be a part of your child's life.

In fact, I highly suggest that you share this supplemental material with them. Once you get on the same page, life will begin to look a lot easier than it did just a couple weeks ago. So, if you've purchased my book "Custody Without Courts", please go ahead and send a copy of this report to your CoParent. It's that important to me, that you get this handled.

If you don't have my book "Custody Without Courts" yet, you should get it here:

<https://CustodyWithoutCourts.com/book.html>

I want you to have a life you want, and having Drama-Free Drop-offs is a step in the right direction.



- Thom

Contact Me:

Website: <https://CustodyWithoutCourts.com/>

Email: Thom@CustodyWithoutCourts.com/

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CustodyWithoutCourts/>
