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Cooperative Coparenting	Parallel Coparenting
Child focused (Empathy).	Adult focused (Sympathy).
Parents communicate regularly.	Parents communicate over emergencies.
Parents communicate in person or over the phone.	Parents use email, OFW, third party, or a parenting notebook to communicate.
Major decisions about the child is jointly discussed.	Major decisions are communicated rather than discussed.
Parents work together as needed to resolve issues related to the child.	Households are separate. Each parent makes decisions independently during their parenting time.
Parents work together in the best interests of their children.	Parents work separately for the best interests of their children.
Allows smooth transitions from one home to the other.	Exchanges occur at school, business, day care, or extracurricular activities to minimize contact between the parents.
Allows for schedule change – can be flexible and negotiable.	Written parenting plan or court decree followed exactly. Parents need an external authority.
Parents may be able to discuss issues between other parent and their children, and have joint meeting with the child.	Each parent is responsible for own relationship with their children. "You must talk to your mom/dad about that."
Parents actively engage one another as co-parents, emphasis is on cooperation.	Parents are disengaged from one another; emphasis is on supportive statements to the child and non-interference in the other home.
Meetings are informal and held when necessary.	Meetings are formal, preplanned, and often conducted with a 3rd party.
Calls, internet access, or texts to child occurs within reasonable hours at a reasonable amount per day.	Calls, internet access, or texts to child limited to a specific time.
Agreements may be informal, hand-shake arrangements.	Agreements are documented in writing to avoid misunderstandings.
Parents share school information.	Parents are responsible for getting school information independently.
Function as one large family.	Function as maternal/paternal families.
Sit next to each other at events.	Sit on opposite sides of the bleachers or fields, or may not attend events together.
May attend professional appointments together.	Report back information about appointments, each parent has their own communications with the professional.
Boundaries between the homes are flexible.	Boundaries between homes are fixed and relatively impermeable.

## Parallel Coparenting Suggestions

1. Say positive things about your co-parent to your child regularly and remain neutral on differences with statements such as, “It’s okay that your other parent has a different opinion than I do”.
2. Maintain an attitude of non-interference and disengagement with the other parent and your child’s time in their other home.
3. Stay oriented to the task at hand.
4. Remember the goal is to keep conflict to a minimum.
5. Stay focused on the present and remain solution focused.
6. Maintain business like communication; follow the guidelines for e-mail communication.
7. If you communicate verbally, follow up in writing all agreements and discussions regarding your child.
8. If communication breaks down, use a neutral third party to assist you.
9. Follow the rules for co-parenting.
10. The difference between cooperative coparenting and parallel parenting is not rigid, it is a spectrum. You may be able to cooperatively parent in some areas and parallel parent in others. Keep an open mind, it’s never too late to fully co- parent when possible.
11. Remember, your child is worth it.