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Tips for Navigating the School Year With Your Ex Spouse

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Navigating the school year is tough enough, but when you are divorced and trying to co-parent with an uncooperative ex spouse, your job as the primary parent gets even more difficult and stressful. Here are some tips to lessen the stress of dealing with your ex:

1. Make sure the school has your ex's email and mailing address so that they can mail things directly to him. This takes you out of the picture.
2. Any school papers that need to be given to your ex should be scanned and emailed or mailed. Don't get the children involved by making them the messengers. Provide the teachers and coaches your ex's email so they can email him/her directly whenever possible.
3. Make sure the child has a set of uniform clothes at your ex's house. Even if you have to buy it. That way that set becomes his/her responsibility and one less thing for you to worry about.
4. Money is always an issue with exes. If you are dealing with an ex that feels since he/she pays you child support, you should cover ALL costs right down to

book fair money, accept it and move on. Don't make the child feel uncomfortable because he/she has to ask for book fair money. If the child will be staying with your ex on the night before the book fair, make sure they have money before they leave.

5. Set up a calendar with your ex that clearly outlines days the children will be with him/her and times of pick up and drop off. This avoids any daily confusion. It's best to have a calendar set for at least three to four months.

6. Have a set of books and school supplies at your ex's, even if you have to buy them. This way your child doesn't have to worry about remembering where a certain book is, or lug things back and forth.

7. Try to plan school projects ahead so that they are at one parent's home and you're not realizing the night before it's due that your child will be with your ex.

8. Take the emotion out of any emails or texts or phone conversations. Don't get caught up in what is "right" or "fair." The goal here is that your child is not worried or stressed and that the school year runs smoothly for you. It's the daily drips and drabs that can unravel us as primary parents. With a little planning and acceptance of the way things are, it will be a better school year for you and your child.

9. Talk with your ex regarding the consistency of staying in one home during exam weeks.

On a final note, remember that each school year is important for your child, and your goal here is to streamline it as much as possible. Even though at times you might think what your ex is doing is unfair, keep your focus on what this is really about, which is your child.

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