

Co-Parenting Styles

Cooperative vs. Parallel Parenting

© Jane Appell, Ph.D.

Healthy co-parenting enables children to disentangle themselves from their parents' conflicts and fosters positive adjustment for all family members. While cooperative co-parenting is widely advocated, it is unrealistic for many ex-spouses with large interpersonal differences, raw feelings, and/or a high level of conflict. Parallel parenting is another paradigm for post-separation parenting that has been embraced by divorce educators as a viable model. Collaborative and parallel parenting fall on a continuum, and most parents find their parenting style somewhere between the two ends of the continuum. With assistance, ex-spouses can determine the degree of collaboration and distance that is right for them and establish the "rules" for their ongoing relationship as co-parents.

