Co-Parenting Text Message Examples

Short, calm example texts for everyday co-parenting, grouped by situation. They are wording ideas only. Replace the [brackets], keep one topic per message, and read it once more before you send.

If a protective or no-contact order is in place. These examples don't apply. Follow the order exactly and don't contact the other parent in any way it doesn't allow, even to be polite. In danger? Call 911. National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788 (thehotline.org).

1. Schedule change or swap request

"Hi [name]. [Child] has [event] on [date]. Would you be open to swapping [your day] for [my day]? Please let me know by [day] so we can both plan. Thanks."

"That swap works for me. So [child] is with me [day/time] and with you [day/time]. Thanks for asking ahead."

2. Running late

"I'm running about [15] minutes late for the [time] exchange. I'll be there by [time]. Sorry for the change."

"Checking in about the [time] exchange at [place]. Are you still on your way? Please let me know your timing."

3. Pickup and drop-off logistics

"Confirming pickup on [day] at [time] at [place]. [Child]'s [backpack/medicine] will be in the bag."

"Could we move this Sunday's drop-off to [place]? [Brief reason]. If not, I'll plan on the usual spot."

4. Child sick or medical appointment

"[Child] has a fever this morning and is staying home from school. The doctor can see [him/her/them] at [time]. I'll text you after the visit."

"[Child] saw Dr. [name] today for [reason]. Next steps: [medicine/care]. The follow-up is [date] at [time]. Sharing so you have the details."

"[Child] is taking [medicine], [dose] at [times], through [date]. It's in the front pocket of [his/her/their] bag."

5. School event or report card

"[Child]'s [school event] is on [date] at [time] at [place]. Sharing so you have it."

"Report cards came home today. I'll send you a photo tonight. [Teacher] has conference times on [dates] if you'd like to book one."

6. Holiday or vacation swap

"I'd like to take [child] to [place] from [date] to [date], during my regular time. I can be reached at [phone] while we're away. Let me know if you have questions."

"For [holiday] this year, would you consider [proposal]? I'm open to [other option] too. Could you let me know by [date]?"

7. Shared expense or reimbursement

"Here's the receipt for [child]'s [expense] on [date]: $[total]. Your share is $[amount]. Could you send it by [date] through [method]? Thanks."

"Got your payment of $[amount] for [expense]. Thank you."

8. Confirming an agreement in writing

"Just confirming what we agreed on the phone: [summary]. Let me know if I got anything wrong."

"To confirm: this weekend's exchange moves to [day/time] at [place], this one time only. Our regular schedule continues after that."

9. Declining a request politely

"Thanks for asking. I can't make that change this time because [brief reason]. The regular schedule stays as is."

"I'm not able to do [request], but I could do [alternative] if that helps."

10. Replying to a hostile message (brief, informative, friendly, firm)

"I read your message. About pickup: I'll be at [place] at [time] as scheduled."

"I see it differently. I'd like to keep our messages about [child]. On [practical issue]: [answer]."

"I'll answer the question about [topic]: [answer]. I won't be replying to the rest."

How to use it

- One topic per message, with the who, what, when and where up front.
- If you need an answer, say by when.
- Leave out history, sarcasm, labels and ALL CAPS.
- If a message upsets you, wait before replying. Answer only the part that needs an answer.
- If your parenting plan names an app or channel for messages, use that one.
- Write as if someone else may read it later: a mediator, another professional, or your child one day. Keep a copy of important messages.

General template for organizing your own information. It is not legal advice and not a court-approved form. Court rules and required forms vary by state and county, so check your court's local rules and self-help center. Doing this by hand takes hours: Custody Commander organizes evidence, builds your timeline and exports court-ready PDFs. Free plan with no card, or try Full Suite free for 7 days, at custodycommander.com.