

High-Conflict Co-Parenting Message Templates

Calm, BIFF-style templates (Brief, Informative, Friendly, Firm). Replace the [brackets], read your message once more before sending, and assume a judge may read it someday.

Before you send. One topic per message. No sarcasm, no history lessons, no ALL CAPS. Answer the question that needs an answer and leave the bait alone.

SCHEDULE CHANGE REQUEST — "Hi [name]. [Child] has [event] on [date]. Would you be willing to swap [your day] for [my day]? Please let me know by [day/time] so I can plan. Thanks."

ANSWERING A CHANGE REQUEST — "Thanks for asking. That works for me: [details]. I'll plan on [exchange time/place]." / "I can't make that change this time because [brief reason]. Our regular schedule stays in place."

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

MISSED EXCHANGE — "[Child] and I were at [place] at [time] for the scheduled exchange. Please let me know if you'd like to reschedule."

MEDICAL UPDATE — "[Child] saw Dr. [name] today for [reason]. Next steps: [medicine/appointment]. The follow-up is [date]; let me know if you'd like to attend."

SCHOOL INFORMATION — "Could you forward the [school notice/report card]? I'd like to stay up to date. Thank you."

DECLINING AN ARGUMENT — "I'm going to keep our messages about [child]'s schedule and needs. I'm happy to talk about [the practical issue]."

RESPONDING TO AN ACCUSATION — "I don't agree with that description. For [child]'s sake, let's focus on [the next practical step]."

ASKING FOR WRITTEN COMMUNICATION — "To keep things clear, please send schedule questions by text or email so we both have the details."

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT — "Attached is the receipt for [expense] on [date], \$[amount]. Per our order, your share is \$[amount]. Please send it by [date]."

HOLIDAY CONFIRMATION — "Confirming [holiday]: [child] is with [parent] from [day/time] to [day/time], exchange at [place]."

RETURNING BELONGINGS — "[Child]'s [item] stayed at your home. Could you send it with them on [date]? Thanks."