



Child Contact Guidance During COVID-19 Pandemic

The government has provided clarity around movement, continuing co-parental relationships and child contact following separation/divorce. It was acknowledged that there is a need for parents to continue to invest time and effort in supporting contact. Both parents should try to continue to adopt a consistent, authoritative approach, as well as providing a consistent message around Coronavirus which will prove less confusing for the child /children.

Government suggest movement between homes is facilitated where possible by car instead of public transport. Both parents should observe rules around social distancing, hand washing and other government guidelines. The child's needs should always be put first and this should continue to be the case in these circumstances.

Parenting NI would encourage parents to consider the following in general and throughout this difficult time for everyone:

- Both parents continue to be important in the child's life.
- Parents can provide a feeling of safety at this time of uncertainty.
- Parents are encouraged to agree how they will handle the child's movement between homes.
- Parents should respect that sometimes plans will have to be reconsidered as the situation progresses.
- A consistent message on the current situation by both parents is less confusing for the child.
- Parents should agree how they will answer any questions their child may want to ask.
- This is not a time to point score. This is about keeping our children safe and with the least anxiety as possible.

