

THE COPARENTING APPROACH

IN FAMILY SERVICES

Promoting coparenting and adopting a coparenting approach is beneficial for all: families, organizations, and society.



COPARENTS: Adults recognized as a child's parents who act and communicate for the child's well-being, regardless of their parenting situation.

What is a coparenting approach?

The coparenting approach entails taking each coparent into account and encouraging them to work together better, rather than focusing only on the mother or the father.

For practice settings that provide family services, the position is: "Through my interventions/services, how can I help parents work better as a team?"

! Taking this approach does not mean that all family members must be physically present. The coparent can be taken into account by mentioning their presence in meetings and activities. The important thing here is that the intervention stimulates reflection, exchanges, and dialogue with the coparent, and promotes communication between them, to get them to work better together.

The coparenting approach can yield the most effective fundamental changes by building on collaboration and a better understanding of the respective realities of each parent. This approach benefits each member of the family ecosystem.

SOURCES:
Dubeau, D. (2018) *Intégrer la coparentalité dans ma pratique... de beaux défis à relever!* [Presentation – Workshop given at CISSS Laurentides on October 24, 2018]; Regroupement pour la Valorisation de la Paternité (2020). *Guide d'adaptation des pratiques aux réalités paternelles.*

Why support coparenting?

Benefits for organizations

Adopting a coparenting approach benefits family service organizations in many ways.

- It provides a better understanding of family dynamics and offers several avenues to support families.
- It contributes to a better balance of the parenting team and the family, with positive impacts on both children and coparents.
- It makes interventions more productive given the deeper, longer-term effects of involving the entire family team.
- It helps to better connect with fathers and coparents, to encourage their participation and involvement in organizations.

Benefits for families

A cooperative coparenting relationship benefits the child, each parent, and their relationships.

- It gives the child points of reference and a sense of security.
- It promotes greater self-esteem and better academic performance in children.
- It reduces the risk of the child developing behavioural problems and adjustment difficulties in the event of separation.
- It reduces stress for parents and supports their mental health.
- It promotes self-esteem and a sense of competence in parents.
- It encourages the father's involvement with his child, as well as his availability for and sensitivity toward the child.
- It contributes to the quality of the interactions and attachment relationship between mother and child.
- It promotes marital happiness for parents in a relationship.
- It promotes work/family balance.

Coparenting: Greater consideration of everyone's needs

The child needs certain things from each parent:

- Basic care
- Safety and security
- Love and affection
- Stimulation
- Guidance
- Stability

But the child also has specific needs in terms of the relationship between their parents.

A good understanding of these needs can motivate parents, instilling in them the desire to work together better as a team.

Each parent also needs certain things from their coparent. Supporting coparenting also means helping parents take these needs into account and better meet them.

What the child needs

- Consistent messages from each parent
- Material and emotional stability
- The freedom to love and be loved by each parent without conflict of loyalty
- To feel secure with each parent
- To feel a certain level of harmony in the relationship between their parents



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARENTS



What each parent needs

- To assume their position and feel respected
- To feel validated, recognized in their role
- To be able to embrace their differences
- Fairness
- Shared tasks and responsibilities
- To communicate and be heard
- To negotiate grey areas
- To feel in harmony
- Space for a little break and time for themselves



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