



THE LAW OFFICE OF
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Back to School - Already?!

The kids are heading back to grade school, high school and college and most parents are trying to settle into the hectic fall routine of work, homework, and extracurricular activities--at the same time trying to manage the costs of school registration and perhaps college tuition. For divorced parents and for families who have separated during the summer, trying to get life running smoothly may be difficult. The Law Office of Brigid A. Duffield, P.C. offers the following suggestions to Parents to successfully get through the start of a new school year.

1. Set Up a Google or Yahoo Calendar or Other Common Calendar

For families in transition, less is more! Less communication may reduce conflict and produce better results, especially when school information may not be readily available to both parents. Sharing a common calendar, on a neutral internet site, establishes communication and transmits information without the physical action of sending a phone number, text or email and the physical body scrunch when it is received. If set up with detail, parents can know where their children will be, when. The schedule of time between households, including the start and end times of things such as parent teacher conferences, band concerts, extracurricular activities - all can be put on the common calendar. For children who are computer savvy, with parents' permission, they can add things to the calendar as well. All it requires is one parent to set it up and share a password and information is available to everyone...and

many programs are free!

There are a number of calendars to use with and without a fee...here are a few that are worth taking a look into (click the name of each site to be routed directly there!):

A. Google Calendar	\$0/year
B. Our Family Wizard	\$99.00/year, per parent
C. OPTIMAL by ParentingTime.net	\$149/year; per account with 10 guest accounts included
D. JointParents.com	\$9.95/month, per parent
E. FamilyCrossings.com	\$39.00/year, per account
F. CustodyToolbox.com	\$50.00 per software download
G. TalkingParents.com	\$0/year

2. Talk to your Children about the New Routine

Going back to school can be a big transition for your child, especially if it is a new school with new friends. To make the transition as smooth as possible, talk to your child about their changing routine. Parents who are able to anticipate where and when children may struggle, and talk with them about how he or she can succeed, give their children the confidence to manage new situations. When the specifics of pick up times, meals, after school activities, have been communicated to the other parent, both parents can support their child and increase the child's ability to successfully get through the new situations. Sharing information with your child in simple ways help. Children are children...don't expect that they (or your partners) will process or act in the way an adult would.

3. Send the School, Teachers, Coaches an Email

Providing your children's teachers with both parents' current contact information and address is a good start. This can be done by email. Let teachers know both parents want to be involved and informed. Request that the school any important documents, one for each parent at their address.

4. Allow your Child to Express Themselves-- if not to you, then to a safe third party

The effects of divorce and separation on children make it tough to start a new school for a transitioning family. Give your child a safe haven where he or she can safely express their emotions. Be open to the possibility that the child may need to talk to someone other than you,

like the school counselor or a mental health professional; even another friend's parent or an extended family member, such as the child's aunt or uncle. When needed, set time aside for your child to meet with a counselor, social worker, or other trusted adult in a neutral environment. This will help your children know that other people are there to help support them. It often does take a village, in both negative and positive circumstances, to raise a child.

5. *Stay Proactive*

An essential part of keeping it together for the children through this transition is picking the battles that need to be fought and putting aside the ones that don't. Be proactive in getting the information that you need. Some parents complain that the other parent is not providing information and yet if they were to make a call to the school, the teacher, the doctor, the information is often easy to get. Don't be dependent on anyone, especially a former partner, to meet your needs, especially if the needs are easily met if you are proactive. By being proactive, supportive and enthusiastic about school, your child recognizes the importance and value of their education.

*"The single biggest problem in communication,
is the illusion that it takes place"*
- George Bernard Shaw

Best wishes for a safe and conflict-free school year!

Brigid A. Duffield

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<u>Sunday,</u> <u>August 28, 2016</u>	<u>Wednesday,</u> <u>August 31, 2016</u>	<u>Friday,</u> <u>March 17, 2017</u>
<i>Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans Golf Outing and Texas BBQ</i>	<i>DuPage County Bar Association's Golf Outing</i>	<i>DuPage County Bar Association's St. Patrick's Day Luncheon</i>
Klein Creek Golf Club 1N333 Pleasant Hill Road Winfield, IL 60190 Starts at 1:00 PM	Cantigny Golf Club 27W270 Mack Road Wheaton, IL 60189 Registration at 12:00 PM	Save the 2017 Date! More information to come as we get closer to the event, but it is never too

Contact Lynn Rowe at
(630) 871-8387 to
sponsor a hole or for
more information!

Contact Cindy at (630)
653-7779 for more
information!

early to put it on your
calendar!

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