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## Team approach to parenting following divorce best for all

Parenting can be a challenging job that comes with many peaks and valleys. Keeping up with the latest trends in health and education, arriving at extracurricular commitments on time, planning family vacations around everyone's jam-packed schedule and making tough decisions regarding their kid's well-being can be very challenging for even the most organized couple.

Co-parenting with an ex-spouse presents a different set of challenges that can impact the family dynamic.

Divorcing parents endure a lot of pain and emotion during, and after, their divorce. Not only do they have to make tough decisions, such as who gets the house and the family dog, but they must also worry about their child's psychological and physical well-being during the divorce.

In the past, divorce was stigmatized as a family tragedy. After all, the children have separate holiday celebrations, float between two homes, take separate vacations with each parent and potentially endure an awkward introduction to a parent's new significant other.

However, the modern idea of co-parenting or "conscious co-parenting," as practiced by Gwyneth

Paltrow, gives a whole new picture of what proper co-parenting should look like in 2019.

### What co-parenting looks like in 2019

In recent years, co-parenting has improved dramatically due to new approaches to this traditionally difficult concept. Instead of dividing the family, some divorcing couples are trying to create a "new normal" by taking vacations together, spending important holiday celebrations together and keeping the family together, even though they are divorcing.

Some modern couples are taking a team approach to co-parenting, which obviously involves more understanding and flexibility. Although these efforts do not go without a struggle, the payoff is enormous for everyone involved.

Keeping the family unit as intact as possible provides the kids with a sense of stability and safety. This is essential for a child's appropriate adjustment during and after a divorce. Conscious co-parenting can also set a good example and demonstrate strength and effective problem-solving for children when life gets tough for them.

Celebrity couples like Gwyneth Paltrow and Coldplay lead singer

Chris Martin are leading the way in the conscious co-parenting era. They vacation together and stay under the same roof for holiday celebrations. Martin, with the couple's two children, even joined Paltrow's honeymoon with her new husband, director Brad Falchuk. (That's right, her honeymoon!)

This couple is not only setting an example for their children, but are also using their platform to set an example for all divorcing couples. While not everyone would feel comfortable attending their ex-spouse's honeymoon, divorcing families are implementing various methods to ensure the family unit stays intact.

### Nesting

Keeping the divorce amicable and minimizing conflict is tough, however, some couples achieve this by nesting. Also called bird nesting, it is a concept that involves a type of co-parenting arrangement where both parents keep the marital home and the children reside there 100 percent of the time.

Families nest in a variety of ways. The methods vary in where each parent lives during their nonparenting time.

One option is for one parent to have a second residence when they are

where they are comfortable.

Nesting demonstrates how dedicated some families are to ensuring a stable environment for their children. Although nesting may work the best in the short term for couples in low-conflict situations, it is just one of the many options couples can commit to "conscious co-parenting." Rarely can a couple sustain this as a long-term option.

### Choosing what's right for your family

The ultimate goal of conscious co-parenting is creating a "new normal," or modern family that provides a stable and happy life for the children.

To ensure these goals are met, parents must decide together what method of co-parenting works best for their situation. For lower conflict divorces, maybe nesting is involved. For higher conflict divorces, conscious co-parenting may simply consist of improved communication and spending a few special occasions together during the year.

Each divorcing parent must consciously decide how they will follow in the footsteps of so many others who are rejecting stereotypes and creating a "new normal" for their kids.



### COLLABORATIVE CONCEPTS

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not with the kids, while the other parent must stay with friends and family during their time away from the children. Both parents might share a single residence outside the family home and take turns moving in and out to stay with the kids.

Lastly, each parent could have their own separate residence for nonparenting time. Obviously, financial ability must be considered in any of these options.

This often allows the children to stay in the house they grew up in and are familiar with. No shuffling between homes, no new school and this process allows for the children to come to terms with the divorce while in an environment