

## **Email Instructions for Parenting Coordination Cases**

Please note that ignoring or failing to respond to emails, or acknowledging an email from the other parent is not an option. Where parents do not communicate in some other manner, email communication is the preferred method of communication, and these instructions should be followed so that everyone is communicating effectively.

**SPECIFY AN EMAIL ADDRESS.** One email address should be specified for use between the parents. It does not have to be an office email account but may be a separate email such as Yahoo or Gmail which is set up specifically for communication about the children. You must, however, check the specified email account at least once every day. Once an email is specified for this purpose, the other parent should not continue to send emails to a different email address.

**BRIEF AND SPECIFIC EMAILS.** Keep the email short. If you have more than one issue to cover, number the issues you are covering, and then the answering email should refer to each item by number. Above all, BE BRIEF and limit the emails to ONE OR TWO PER DAY, unless there is a dire emergency about something.

**SUBJECT LINES.** Use **Specific Subject Lines on all emails.** Ex: "John's football practice; Melissa's dance; John's Dr. Appointment on January 30; John's football practice—Dad's response on August 18". This is very important. The parents and the PC may end up with hundreds of emails in a file, and a specific subject line will help everyone locate the relevant emails quickly.

**FUTURE-ORIENTED ONLY.** All emails relate to future activities, a request for future action, OR provide specific information. Emails do not re-hash past incidents.

**RESPECTFULNESS.** NO name-calling, NO nick-names, and NO abusive language should be used. All language should be respectful. Write each email as if third parties are reading it (because they are).

**COPIES TO PC.** The PC should be copied on all correspondence, including all emails.

**RESPONSES.** Emails that require a response should be responded to within 48 hours of receipt. The same email rules apply to all responsive emails.

**NEW SPOUSES.** New spouses (or significant others) should not be involved in emails at all. They should not send emails, and they should not be copied on emails which are sent to the other parent. If you want to blind-copy your significant other with emails, that is your business, but the new spouse's name/ email should not appear in the email itself.

**FINANCIAL ISSUES.** Do not address financial issues in emails which involve child-related issues. The PC cannot deal with financial issues, so the financial issues should be handled separately. Talk with your attorney about the best method to use for communicating regarding financial issues. Your attorney may suggest that emails not be used at all for financial issues (such as medical reimbursement requests) and that those be handled only by regular mail.

**TEXT MESSAGING.** Text messaging is not an approved form of communication. Text messaging will not be used to give notice of anything important other than the fact that someone is running late.

-----Annette T. Burns, 2011-----