

SECOND CHANCES

A Guidebook for Parents
Wishing to Reunite with their Children



Presented by Multnomah County
Family Court Services

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SECOND CHANCES:

A HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS WISHING TO RECONNECT WITH THEIR CHILDREN

In the years following a separation and/or divorce, **33-40%** of children lose contact with a biological parent. Loss of contact with a parent can deeply impact the child emotionally, developmentally, socially, and academically throughout the course of their lifetime. At the very least, children abandoned by a parent can be haunted by a lifelong feeling of emptiness and may experience any of the following:

- Feelings of shame, guilt, rejection, anger, sadness and confusion
- A belief that they are somehow not worthy of the absent parent's love and presence
- Increased risk of being involved in a teen pregnancy
- Increased risk of being involved with juvenile justice
- Poor school performance including higher drop-out rates and lower grade completion
- Difficulty forming intimate relationships
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs
- More aggressive, acting out behaviors
- A need to develop a story that explains the parent's absence from their life
- A burning desire to know they are missed and thought about by the absent parent



WHY DO PARENTS DROP OUT?

Loss of parent-child contact can occur for any

number of reasons:

- Ongoing conflict between the parents over parenting and custody issues
- The inability to provide good caretaking due to mental illness, alcohol and/or drug abuse
- The child's and/or parent's difficulty adjusting to the separation or divorce
- Incarceration
- Relocation of a parent more than 60 miles from the child
- Safety issues such as domestic violence and/or child abuse
- Alienating behaviors by the other parent
- Lack of knowledge by father that a biological child exists
- The choice of the parent to not be involved due to immaturity or concerns about child support obligations



As the issues leading to loss of contact are resolved, a parent often wishes to reestablish, or perhaps establish for the first time, a relationship with their child/ren.

This handbook is designed to help you as a parent think about what steps are critical to developing a successful plan for reunification.



“There are no guarantees that your plan will be successful, but what is certain is that if no effort is made, the chance of realizing any improvement is remote”

-Reena Sommer, PhD.

DO'S FOR THE REUNITING PARENT



BE PREPARED TO GO SLOW!

It is common for a parent to want to jump in with 110% enthusiasm and pick up from where they left off, or start a relationship if they recently learned a child existed.

The reuniting parent is understandably anxious to make up for lost time and “catch up” with their child’s life. However, a plan for reunification **must** be built around a child-focused timeline. This typically means that time with the child will not usually start at the level the reuniting parent would like.

The reuniting parent must be willing to commit to a plan that gradually increases the amount of parenting time as the child is able to manage more time. Contact might begin with phone calls, cards, emails or letters. The length of this process depends on many factors discussed later in this handbook. Remember that you are laying the foundation for what will hopefully be a lifetime of involvement with your child.



“Your children will grow to love you again in their own time and in their own way. It may take a while for them to know you well enough to like you. Do not expect to be treated like a returning hero. Let them tell you about themselves. Show interest in what they do, whether it be their favorite TV shows, pets, music, hobbies, friends, whatever. **LISTEN** to them. You will come to cherish this role. Let them tell you what they will, and let them decide how

much to tell you and when to tell it to you.” -Mark Bryan, author, [The Prodigal Father: Reuniting Fathers and Their Children](#)

COMMIT TO THE LONG ROAD AHEAD

Carrying out a successful plan for reunification can take months to years. If you are the reuniting parent you must be honest with yourself about your ability to

keep up the effort it will require. It is critical that the reuniting parent provide consistency and predictability with visits.

If you are the reuniting parent, remember that your child has probably spent many days waiting and wondering if you would show up. So has the child's custodial parent. While in your heart and head you may be committed to being a part of your child's life, your child and the other parent don't know this. **Earning both your child's and the other parent's trust back will depend on being true to your word and keeping your promises.** *This takes time and lots of it!* This means that even when there are barriers you make your child the top priority and show up. Don't leave any opportunity for the other parent and your child to say "here we go again" because you cancel plans for a visit.

Be patient! It may take a year or more to get things on track but the benefits could last a lifetime.



UNDERSTAND THE ABSENCE FROM YOUR CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW



Children experience feelings of sadness, anger, confusion, guilt and/or shame when a parent disconnects from their life.

Even though your decision to end contact may have been based on what you believed was in your child's best interest, this is rarely understood by the child. A child tells themselves "***If only I was _____ (loveable, good, smart, talented, cute) enough you would have stayed.***"

Children often blame themselves and feel rejected and abandoned. As children try to make sense of why a parent doesn't come around, the easiest explanation for them to wrap their arms around is themselves.

Children may lash out at the absent parent in anger, "***You left the family,***" convinced their life would be whole if you hadn't left. On the other hand, some children will form an idealized image of the absent parent and have unrealistic fantasies about the day you will be reunited.

DEMONSTRATE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PAST BEHAVIORS

Beginning at birth, most children form secure attachments with one, or sometimes more, caregivers. They trust those caregivers with their emotional, physical and mental safety. This bond is the foundation for their future development.



This sense of safety may have been damaged by the loss of the absent parent. Part of the healing process for children is learning that the absent parent has taken responsibility for their absence, made a genuine apology and is prepared to show them they will make it right. The child must see you as trustworthy and dependable.

Even if you believe you were the victim of alienating behaviors by the custodial parent, your child does not want excuses that blame the other parent. Educating children as to **“the truth”** about what really happened is not helpful. Be able to answer your child's question about why you left without pointing the finger at the other parent or making the child feel as though they must take sides.

BE PREPARED TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS FROM THE CUSTODIAL PARENT

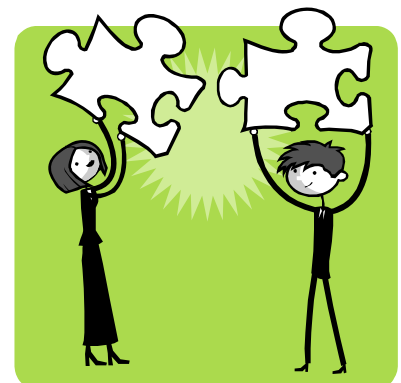
As a reuniting parent you should expect to face some level of resistance from the parent who remained and has been taking care of the children.

been taking care of the children.

The remaining parent has had to deal with the child's feelings about your absence. They might have had the difficult task of making excuses or try to explain your absence. The custodial parent and child quite possibly have developed a new life that includes a stable routine, new partners or spouses, predictability, rituals, etc. The fact that you are suddenly knocking on the door of your child's life may not be a happy event for the custodial parent. This is not to say that the door has to remain closed but you should try to be understanding about the custodial parent's concerns.

- ***The custodial parent may need to know that:***

You are committed to sustaining a consistent relationship if you re-enter the child's life. This requires more than words and can only be established by consistently showing up for parenting time and meeting other obligations. Part of the risk for a custodial parent cooperating with reunification is that you may disappear again and they will be left to pick up the pieces of their child's life.



- ***The custodial parent will want to see that:***

You have the parenting skills to provide age appropriate care. Be willing to take a parenting skills class if requested by the other parent.

- ***They need to know that:***

You have changed any unsafe behaviors in your life. If alcohol and/or drug issues played a role in your absence what evidence of sustained sobriety can you show the other parent? What are your plans for relapse prevention? If domestic violence is in your history have you completed an anger management class? Do you have ways to express your anger that do not involve harm to self or others?

- ***You will need to prove that:***

You're not just here for the good times. After "going it alone" the custodial parent may harbor feelings of resentment and believe you now want to come in and be the "hero". Be prepared to answer "why now?" Be willing to take on some of the less-than-fun parenting responsibilities such as homework, driving to and from activities, parent-teacher conferences, etc.

- ***It is critical that you build trust by showing that:***

You're willing to provide economic support for the child. If you have been negligent or inconsistent in providing financial support for your child, begin now with whatever you can.



Divorce and separation are the leading causes of poverty that affect children in our country. You are part of the solution to that problem.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING YOUR PLAN

LENGTH OF ABSENCE

How old was your child when you last had an active role in their life and how old are they now?

If you left when your child was under the age of 3 they may not have much memory of you or your relationship. Are you just now introducing yourself to a child you did not know existed? If so, what knowledge do they have of you? Some experts advise that any separation over 3 months will require long-term therapeutic work when looking at reunification.



REASON FOR THE SEPARATION

What were the circumstances that lead to the loss of contact with your child and what memory does the child have of those events?

Children who witnessed domestic violence or abuse may become very frightened and anxious at the idea of reunification. They may need extra time and very likely therapeutic support to deal with their concerns for safety. If mental health, domestic violence or substance abuse issues resulted in your child being exposed to frightening behaviors they will need help with their fears as a part of the reunification.



A key factor in reunification being successful is whether or not safety factors have been considered. It is recommended that supervised visits between a previously unsafe parent and child occur before graduating to unsupervised parenting time.

UNRESOLVED FEELINGS ABOUT THE INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP

It is not unusual for a parent's unresolved feelings about the break-up with their formerly intimate partner to be the cause for their absence.

If this is your circumstance you need to examine your motivations for wanting to re-connect with your child and be absolutely certain that it is not based on hopes of re-establishing an intimate relationship with the other parent. Your child will need to know you are doing this for them.



CHILD'S HISTORY OF LOSS AND TRAUMA

It will be important to assess the number and types of losses your child has experienced as well as any events

that have caused them trauma, such as parental conflict. Together these factors may impact the length of time it will take your child to manage the reunification process.

Children can be traumatized by abandonment, abuse, and neglect and witnessing verbal or physical conflict between their parents.

When children lose contact with a parent they can experience a range of emotions as part of their grief including confusion, anger, sadness, anxiety, anticipation, shame, guilt, etc. It can easily take two years for children to resolve their grief. If children suffer multiple losses, like losing significant caregivers or friends through change of school or home that often accompany divorce, their losses add up. The more losses a child sustains, the more difficult it becomes for them to bounce back from other experiences.

When a child's history includes both prior trauma and a high degree of conflict between the parents, supervised visits with the reuniting parent may be needed for several months.

LEVEL OF COOPERATION/CONFLICT BETWEEN PARENTS

The amount of access between a child and the absent parent is often influenced by the quality of the relationship you have with the other parent.



Exposure to parental conflict is the number one risk factor for children of separated parents. While you don't have to sign up to be best friends with your child's other parent, you will need to establish a way you can cooperate or at least share information without fighting in front of your child. Cooperative parents might be able to call or email each other regularly.



Be willing to look in the mirror and ask yourself how you have contributed to the conflict of the past and what you could have done differently. What are the trigger points that push your coping skills to the limit and result in words and behaviors you later regret? More importantly how will you keep your child away from parental conflict now? If you insist on being "right" in every disagreement you should walk away from the table right now.

It is best to approach your relationship with the other parent from a business standpoint – co-parents with a "company" goal of raising healthy, happy, thriving children. This includes keeping clear lines of communication, respecting each other's privacy, and agreeing to disagree at times.

AGE APPROPRIATE CONSIDERATIONS

INFANTS AGES 0-3

Keep in mind that this is a physically demanding time of caretaking for the custodial parent. Consider a structure that allows you to participate in the many levels of care including feeding, bathing, soothing, settling to sleep, etc. If you lack skills in these areas ask for help from the custodial parent, a family member or friend, read books or take a parenting skills class.

For infants, multiple, short visits during the week are best. Babies up until the age of three can have difficulty being away from their primary caretaker for long periods of time.

Infants are like sponges absorbing everything in their environment. Thus it is critical that parents provide a soothing, safe, loving, responsive atmosphere. If

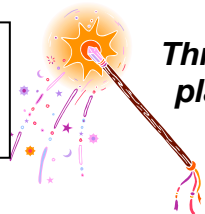
conflict and tension exist your child will feel that tension inside of themselves.

Pay attention to signs that your infant is experiencing distress, including whining, clinginess, and fussiness that doesn't go away with soothing, as well as changes in eating and sleeping habits. Your chances for a successful visit increase if you can keep your child's eating and sleeping schedules close to what they are in the other parent's home.

Understand that beginning around the age of 6 months children naturally experience anxiety when leaving their primary caretaker. So if initial visits have your infant clinging onto the other parent's leg for dear life, don't assume they don't want to have anything to do with you.

What should you do if your infant throws a fit when leaving the other parent? Get tips from their custodial parent about what helps calm them down when they are stressed. Consider having a transitional object, like a blanket or favorite stuffed toy, which goes back and forth with the child. Are you in shape for a marathon? Around 18 months of age healthy children naturally seek independence. They explore their world by getting into everything and will need a lot of supervision during this time. Keeping up with a curious toddler can be exhausting!

PRESCHOOLERS AGES 3-5



Through the eyes of a preschooler the world is a magical place where wishing for something can make it come true.

Preschoolers live in an imaginary world in which they often make up stories to make sense of their experiences. This can include stories about their family. They also have developed the beginning of concrete, black-and-white thinking that makes them more likely to blame themselves for your departure. Preschoolers are eager to have two parents and will fantasize about their parents being together. It is not uncommon for children this age to "shop" for a replacement for the absent parent.

Try to provide an environment that is intimate and familiar to your child. Display your child's artwork, photos, etc. to create a sense that they have a space in your home and in your heart when they are not with you.

At this stage children have an increased capacity to worry and can become anxious. Help your child to develop words for expressing their feelings in a more concrete way. Typically children this age fear abandonment. Provide your child with constant reminders that you are not going anywhere and will be there when they expect you to be – for example when they visit or get out of school or daycare. Show your child they can count on you to do what you say you will.

Watch for signs that your toddler is experiencing anger through behaviors such as biting, hitting, being irritable and withdrawing. Other signs that your child is under stress and that you may need to slow down the reunification process include nightmares, baby talking, wishing to sleep with parents, stuttering, or other behaviors that weren't happening before.

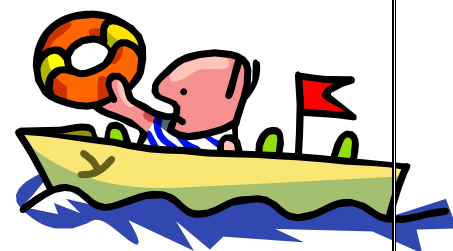


This begins the age of empathy and moral understanding. It is also a stage where sadness prevails in situations of loss.

As children this age continue to try and make sense of their world they do so through the eyes of compassion and empathy. These children deeply grieve the loss of a parent and miss them terribly. Developmentally children this age work hard to please their parents and would rather put themselves in the middle of a conflict than take a side.

When exposed to conflict, these children understand the basic content of arguments – which are almost always about money or the kids. Given their age, these children will blame themselves for the argument. They might think, ***“If it wasn't for me my parents wouldn't be getting a divorce/separation.”*** When children watch the two people they trust to make their life safe fight, it's as if they are at sea without a life vest.

Signs of distress in children this age are often physical– headaches, tummy aches, etc. Some children might go back to bedwetting. If you see any of these signs consider slowing down the pace of reunification, or getting help from a professional counselor, family member, or child development specialist.



PRE-TEENS

Older children may very likely express a lot of anger at the absent parent. Developmentally they are learning to make decisions and do so by categorizing everything into two distinct buckets – good or bad, it “sucks” or it’s “the bomb,” it’s “lame” or “tight.” Parents get put into these buckets too! You may have to put up with weeks or even months of testy, sassy kids while they check you out and make sure you are safe to let back in again.

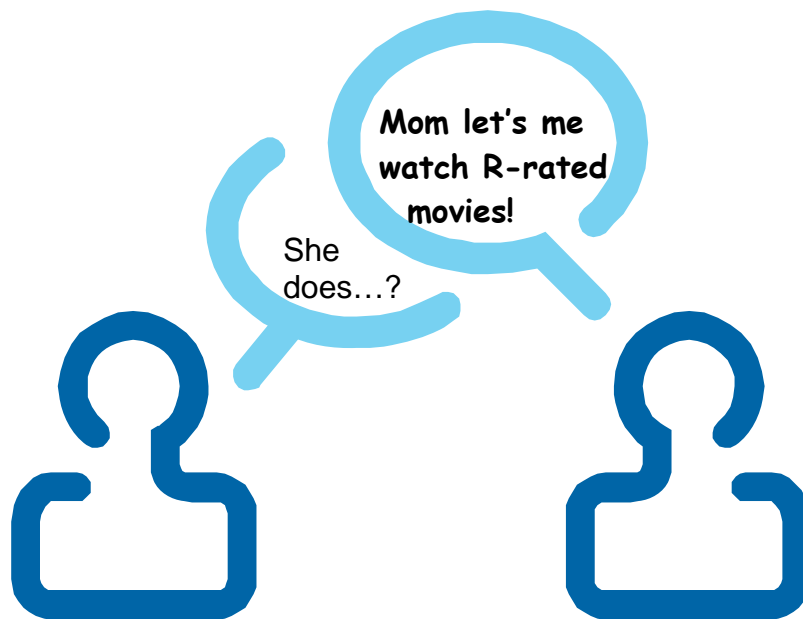
In many ways pre-teens are like two-year-olds. They are curious about new things and are trying to become more independent. When they don't get their way they act out by being sassy or defiant. A pre-teen will tell their parent they don't know anything and that they are “embarrassing!” However, they are comforted by



knowing that you're not too far away. Pre-teens will approach when they need you and the next minute will push you away. Sometimes nothing you say, do, wear, or think will be right – at least they won't acknowledge this to your face.

Parenting a child this age is a challenge that requires lots of patience. Anticipate that their new “I know everything” attitude and sharp tongue will have you feeling like throwing in the towel. **Do not give in to these feelings!** This is the time when staying in the game is critical to proving that you are there for the long haul. The key to keeping your sanity is not to engage in a power struggle with pre-teens. You can acknowledge their position, “I hear that you think curfews are stupid,” without agreeing with them, “However, you're still expected home by 10:00 pm.”

Be prepared to have your child play you against the other parent – especially if they sense a high degree of conflict or you don't talk to the other parent. The more they know you won't check things out with the other parent the more wiggle room they have to experiment with their freedom.



The **good news** is that parents who can hang in there with children this age will reap the benefits of the fun parts of spending time with a pre-teen. Children this age are able to think and talk about more interesting subjects. They are full of ideas and creativity, and they can be really perceptive about other people and wickedly funny. If their interest and curiosity are sparked this is a great time to develop talents and interests that will stay with them into their adult years.

TEENS

At this age if an absent parent hasn't sought out their child, the child may be seeking them. They are able to move from the fantasy of a reunion that they carried as a child to the idea that they can search out the missing parent themselves.



For children with absent fathers the risks of not having a “father figure” in their lives can lead to increased sexual activity for girls who crave male attention and leave boys floundering when it comes to forming intimate relationships. Poor school performance, truancy, and increased involvement with juvenile justice are also possible outcomes.

If you have not been active in your child’s life for several years don’t expect to have an authoritative or disciplinarian role. Be the role model for how they should live and provide support for the boundaries established by the custodial parent on such issues as drinking, drugs, school, dating, sex and curfews.

Be on the watch for signs that your teen is having difficulty coping. Young men will tend to appear angry when they are depressed and become more hostile and non-cooperative. Young women are more likely to show classic signs of depression and when unable to process their pain can develop eating disorders and self-harming behaviors.

ADULTS

Often forgotten in the discussion of children and divorce are the adult children. It is presumed that once children reach adulthood they have resolved their issues around the loss of their intact family. This may not be true.

Well known divorce author, speaker and psychotherapist Gary Neuman explains that “feelings don’t go away just because we’re older. Adult children will continue to experience the same feelings from childhood.”

Oftentimes adults who were abandoned by a parent as a child will be challenged by trust issues in their personal relationships. They can continue to hold the belief that they are “not good enough” to be loved by someone. The desire to know that we are wanted and loved can follow us to the grave. **Tips for reconnecting with your adult children:**

- Don’t continue to make excuses for not contacting your children.
- Consider sending your child a letter that lets them know you would like to have contact. Let them know how often you have thought about them over the years. Provide a way for your child to contact you and let them know you will be patient about when and if they decide to get in touch.
- Suggest a phone call or casual meeting for a first visit.
- If you do end up meeting, let your child know you will try and answer any of their questions but let them decide how deeply they want to delve into past history.
- Be prepared to deal with their pain and apologize for having left.
- Keep your focus on establishing a friendship.

BUILDING YOUR REUNIFICATION PLAN

BE OPEN TO SHORT-TERM AGREEMENTS

Anticipate that you will need to develop a plan that starts with short, brief amounts of time and builds up as trust is established between the absent parent and both the child and custodial parent. As each phase of a plan unfolds it will be necessary to evaluate if the pace is too fast (or slow) for the child to manage and make adjustments.

When you spend time with your child your focus should be on getting to know who they are rather than trying to catch them up on your life since you've been gone.

- **Do** have activities planned that engage them both mentally and physically. In doing things side-by-side with your child, you will develop a stronger connection.



- **Don't** use electronics to baby-sit your kids. Sometimes parents who are at a loss for what to do with kids use the TV, video games or other electronic media to entertain the child. This robs both of you of learning about each other's interests.
- **Don't** try to "buy" your way back into their child's life by lavishing them with gifts. The **only** gift they truly need and want is your attention.
- **Do** introduce them to new experiences or teach them a new skill.
- **Do** encourage them to share their artwork, school work, hobbies, sporting events, etc, with you.

Below is a sample parenting agreement and reunification schedule. Work with your mediator and/or counselor to tailor a plan that best reflects your child's needs.

Sample Agreement for Reunification from Building a Parenting Agreement that Works, by Mimi Lyster/Nolo Press.

_____ [parent] has been absent from our children's life for _____ [period of time], and now wishes to become reinvolved. To make this transition easier for all of us, we agree as follows [choose all that apply]:

- _____ We will both seek counseling.
- _____ Our children will receive counseling.
- _____ We will focus our attention and conversations on our children.
- _____ We will build up the amount of time _____ [parent] spends with our children as follows: _____

_____ [parent] will retain the support systems and schedules he/she established while _____ [parent] was absent, as follows:

_____ To make sure that _____'s [parent] reentry into our children's lives is for the long term, we will make necessary modifications to this agreement on or before _____ [specify date].

_____ We further agree that [specify]: _____

Sample Steps in a Reunification Process

Stage 1: Get support. Each parent and child should have a way to get support during the process. This could include a counselor, mediator or a trusted friend or family member.

Stage 2: Initial communication. Reuniting parent writes letter to child. Child and his/her other parent or support person read and discuss the letter together.

Stage 3: Initial parenting time. Brief encounters between the child and reuniting parent in a safe, supportive setting. This might include a counselor's office, the custodial parent's home or a public place such as a park or the zoo with supervision by a familiar person.

Stage 4: Introduction of child to the reuniting parent's home environment if appropriate.

Stage 5: Regular parenting time. Once a week visits graduating to overnights.

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR THE CUSTODIAL PARENT

BE SUPPORTIVE OF YOUR CHILD'S DESIRE FOR REUNIFICATION

Children will have conflicting feelings when they think about reuniting with their absent parent. They may worry that they are being disloyal to the parent who has been there all this time.

By showing your child that you support their need for a relationship with their other parent you can let them off the hook of a loyalty conflict.



- Don't use visitation time with the other parent as an opportunity to pick an argument.
- Don't make visitation difficult by not being home when the other parent comes or otherwise make access difficult. If a child learns that you interfered with the absent parent maintaining contact they may later have problems with their relationship with you.
- Do be aware of any feelings of hostility you may still have towards the other parent. Do you need to do to resolve them so you can be more supporting of your child's need for reunification?
- Don't assume your child doesn't need their other parent because you've re-partnered or remarried. No matter how wonderful your new spouse or partner is to your child, they will always carry a need to resolve the relationship with their absent parent.

REASONS REUNIFICATION PLANS FAIL

When plans for reunification fail it is oftentimes because:

- **The reuniting parent rushed the process and the child was not ready**
- **Each parent gave the child different messages**
- **The parents were continually changing the parenting plan at the first hiccup**
- **Parents didn't get the expert help they needed at different points in the process**



INCREASING THE ODDS FOR SUCCESS

First and foremost the reuniting parent needs to put their ego aside and focus on building relationships – both with the child and the custodial parent. The ultimate question a reuniting parent must ask themselves is “do I want to win, or do I want a relationship?”

- **Put your ego aside and focus on the child first. Get to know them and understand their world before rushing in to tell them all about yourself.**
- **Take care of any unfinished business. Whether unresolved feelings for the other parent or unsafe behaviors, be sure you are in a good place to be a safe and capable parent.**
- **Respect the concerns and needs of the custodial parent.**
- **Commit to the long haul the process will require.**
- **Be reliable and consistent and above all keep your promises.**
- **Focus on the present and future relationship with your child and avoid the temptation to dwell on the past.**
- **Let your child know you missed and thought about them often.**

ARE YOU READY FOR REUNIFICATION?

Parent/Child reunification requires hard work and perseverance. Donald Topor, L.C.S.W. writing for divorceinteractive.com offers, ***“The complexity, intense feelings, and what’s at stake can lead to significant emotional upset as the process unfolds. Reunification, if done ethically and safely, with the best interests of the child in mind, can yield positive results, a better adjusted child and the ability for the child to have the gift of two parents (with all of their strengths and weaknesses) to learn from and love.”***

Answer the following questions as honestly as you can in assessing your level of preparedness for the journey ahead.

	Confident I have this skill	Still developing this skill	Don't have this skill	Open to help
I have the patience to start slowly and build increased parenting time as my child is able	-----	-----		Y/N
I can commit to consistency in parenting time	-----	-----		Y/N
I will not abandon my parenting time plan at the first sign it isn't working	-----	-----		Y/N
I can protect my child from conflict between myself and the other parent	-----	-----		Y/N
I will not ask my child to take sides	-----	-----		Y/N
I am prepared to explain my absence to my child and their other parent without blaming	-----	-----		Y/N
I am willing to participate in counseling either individually or with my child to facilitate reunification	-----	-----		Y/N
I have remedied past unsafe behaviors	-----	-----		Y/N
I can set aside my personal feelings for my child's other parent	-----	-----		Y/N

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.” Ambrose Redmoon



RESOURCES

BOOKS

Bryan, Mark (1997) *The Prodigal Father: Reuniting Fathers and Their Children*

Condrell, Kenneth and Small Linda (1998) *Be a Great Divorced Dad*

McClure, Daniel and Saffer, Jerry (2009) *Wednesday Evenings and Every Other Weekend: From Divorced Dad to Competent Co-Parent*

Neuman, Gary (1999) *Helping Kids Cope with Divorce the Sandcastles Way*

Knox, David and Leggett, Kermit (2000) *The Divorced Dad's Survival Guide*

Lyster, Mimi (2005) *Building a Parenting Agreement that Works*

Wallerstein, Judith and Blakesee, Sandra (2003) *What About the Kids? Raising Your Children Before, During & After Divorce*

WEBSITES

Up To Parents www.uptoparents.org

Model Parenting Time Plans for Parent/Child Access. A guide from the state of Arizona.
http://www.supreme.state.az.us/dr/pdf/parenting_time_plan_final.pdf

Oregon Division of Child Support (Child Support Calculator)
<http://www.dcs.state.or.us/calculator/default.htm>

Oregon Judicial Department Family Law Website
<http://courts.oregon.gov/OJD/OSCA/cpsd/courtimprovement/familylaw/parentingplan.page?>

Planning for Shared Parenting: A Guide For Parents Living Apart.
<http://www.mass.gov/courts/courtsandjudges/courts/probateandfamilycourt/afccsharedparenting.pdf>

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Multnomah County Family Court Services (503) 988-3189. *Family Court Services provides mediation services regarding custody and parenting time, custody evaluations, parent education and brief conciliation counseling. Mediation and conciliation services are free of charge to Multnomah County residents.*

SUPERVISED VISIT SERVICES

Contact Multnomah County Family Court Services (503) 988-3189

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Freeman, R., Abel, D., Cowper-Smith, M. and Stein, L. (2004) *Reconnecting Children with Absent Parents: A Model for Intervention*. Family Court Review Volume 42 No. 3, July 2004 439-459.

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Multnomah County Family Court Services Staff

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Sommer, Reena, PhD. *Parent-Child Reunification and Reintegration into a Stronger Family Unit*.
<http://www.childhoodaffirmations.com/general/family/reunification.html>



Multnomah County Family Court Services

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www.co.multnomah.or.us/dcj/fcourt.html