



## Cooperative Co-Parenting for Secure Kids: The Attachment Theory Guide to Raising Kids in Two Homes

**Aurisha Smolarski**

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*Modeling ways to put children first after separation or divorce, Cooperative Co-Parenting for Secure Kids is an empathetic family guidebook.*

Marriage and family therapist Aurisha Smolarski's *Cooperative Co-Parenting for Secure Kids* is a constructive manual for raising a child caught between two homes.

With advice for avoiding the typical arguments that follow a divorce and hurt children's emotional development, the book covers major attachment styles (avoidance, ambivalent, and secure) before suggesting ways that parents can ensure that their children's transitions to new living arrangements are smooth. Its work is firm but empathetic, noting that parents "don't have to like each other—although if you do, that helps ... [r]ather, you have to understand your parental relationship and learn how to navigate each other within the new dynamic of co-parenting." It introduces a Co-Parenting Triangle model in which children sit at the top and their parents are at an equal level below, encouraging parents to be selfless instead of selfish.

Each chapter is devoted to dissecting a particular harmful behavioral reaction, suggesting ways for parents to avoid it. To further emphasize what to do and what not to do, the chapters introduce opposing scenarios—first showing how divorced couples might handle difficult situations in a destructive manner, as with blame, before modeling resolutions that are empathetic. This comparative approach demystifies variable relationships; it is bolstered by detailed analyses after the side-by-side scenarios, showing how rewiring behavior leads to more positive behaviors. "Now What?" sections conclude this work; they are designed to help parents apply what they've learned and answer any lingering questions, such as what they can do to raise children to obtain a secure attachment—even if they themselves were not raised with secure attachments.

Interactivity is ensured via recommendations for a wide variety of activities geared toward inculcating mindfulness and emotional intelligence in families. These include methods for identifying one's attachment style, as well as a "game" related to the five senses. Not all are for the whole family; exercises like "Say Yes" are for adults specifically and include questions like "Do you say yes to never threatening the relationship between your child and their other parent?" Also useful is the parents-only "Say Goodbye, So You Can Say Hello" exercise, which focuses on building a good foundation during the difficult transition from marriage to separation; it guides parents to put away their hurt feelings in order to focus on appreciating their ex-partner's positive coparenting qualities and make their children's lives more comfortable.

The sympathetic post-divorce parenting guide *Cooperative Co-Parenting for Secure Kids* proffers guidance for family realignments with children's best interests in mind.

STEPHANIE MARRIE (January 8, 2024)

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