

Find the words.

Keep your focus.

12 situations. 3 styles. A practical starting point for everyday co-parenting messages.

Choose a situation

Start with the practical detail you need to address: a plan, a request, an update, or a boundary.

Replace the brackets

Add only the facts you want to communicate. Select the style that fits. Edit anything that does not sound like you.

Check before sending

Check dates, times, and commitments. Follow existing agreements. You decide whether a message is suitable and whether to send it.

Scope

For routine arrangements only. Not legal, medical, or mental-health advice. These templates do not assess safety and are not designed for threats, abuse, emergencies, or custody decisions. A clearer reply cannot guarantee how another person responds.

Confirm a plan

Confirm a pickup, drop-off, or other practical arrangement.

YOUR DETAIL

The arrangement: [detail]

Example: Pickup on Friday at 5 pm at the usual spot

BRIEF

Confirming: [detail].

NEUTRAL

Just confirming the plan: [detail]. Please let me know if I have any details wrong.

FIRM

The plan I have is: [detail]. Please confirm any proposed changes in writing.

Before sending: replace every bracket, check the facts, and adjust the wording to your circumstances.

Suggest a change

Propose an alternative without presenting it as an agreed change.

YOUR DETAIL

Your proposed alternative: [detail]

Example: Pickup on Saturday at 10 am instead of Friday evening

BRIEF

Would this work instead: [detail]?

NEUTRAL

I would like to propose a change: [detail]. Would that work for you?

FIRM

My proposed alternative is: [detail]. Please confirm whether you agree before we change the current plan.

Before sending: replace every bracket, check the facts, and adjust the wording to your circumstances.

Decline a request

Say what is possible without adding a long explanation.

YOUR DETAIL

What you can offer instead: [detail]

Example: The original pickup time still works for me

BRIEF

I cannot make that change. [detail].

NEUTRAL

That change does not work for me. [detail]. Let me know whether that works for you.

FIRM

I am not available for the requested change. [detail].

Before sending: replace every bracket, check the facts, and adjust the wording to your circumstances.

Return to logistics

Bring the conversation back to one practical question.

YOUR DETAIL

The question you need answered: [detail]

Example: Can you confirm pickup at 5 pm on Friday?

BRIEF

To keep this focused on the plan: [detail]

NEUTRAL

I would like to keep this conversation focused on the arrangements. [detail]

FIRM

I am focusing on the practical arrangements in this conversation. [detail]

Before sending: replace every bracket, check the facts, and adjust the wording to your circumstances.

Ask for details

Ask for the missing information before making a decision.

YOUR DETAIL

The details you need: [detail]

Example: The proposed date, time, and pickup location

BRIEF

Please send [detail] so I can respond.

NEUTRAL

Could you send [detail]? I need those details before I can confirm.

FIRM

I cannot confirm this yet. Please provide [detail] so I can consider the request.

Before sending: replace every bracket, check the facts, and adjust the wording to your circumstances.

Give a response time

Set a realistic time to answer a non-urgent request.

YOUR DETAIL

When you will respond: [detail]

Example: Tomorrow by 6 pm

BRIEF

I need to check before I answer. I will get back to you [detail].

NEUTRAL

I have seen your message and need time to check the details. I will respond [detail].

FIRM

I am not ready to confirm this yet. I will send my response [detail].

Before sending: replace every bracket, check the facts, and adjust the wording to your circumstances.

Arrange belongings

Make a specific request about items needed for the next handover.

YOUR DETAIL

The items and handover: [detail]

Example: The school bag and jacket at Friday's pickup

BRIEF

Please bring [detail].

NEUTRAL

Could you please bring [detail]? Thank you.

FIRM

Please make sure to bring [detail]. Let me know if that is not possible.

Before sending: replace every bracket, check the facts, and adjust the wording to your circumstances.

Recap an agreement

Summarize what you understand was agreed, leaving room for correction.

YOUR DETAIL

Your understanding of the agreement: [detail]

Example: We will meet at the library at 4 pm on Thursday

BRIEF

My understanding is: [detail]. Is that correct?

NEUTRAL

To make sure we have the same information, my understanding is: [detail].
Please let me know if I missed anything.

FIRM

Please confirm my understanding of our agreement: [detail].

Before sending: replace every bracket, check the facts, and adjust the wording to your circumstances.

Share an update

Share a factual, everyday update without adding assumptions.

YOUR DETAIL

The factual update: [detail]

Example: The school concert starts at 6 pm on Tuesday

BRIEF

A quick update: [detail].

NEUTRAL

Sharing this so we both have the information: [detail].

FIRM

For our planning: [detail]. Please let me know if you need a practical detail clarified.

Before sending: replace every bracket, check the facts, and adjust the wording to your circumstances.

Choose a channel

Suggest where routine arrangements should be discussed.

YOUR DETAIL

Your proposed channel and purpose: [detail]

Example: Email for non-urgent schedule changes

BRIEF

Could we use [detail]?

NEUTRAL

To help keep our arrangements in one place, could we use [detail]?

FIRM

I would like to use [detail]. Please let me know whether that works for you.

Before sending: replace every bracket, check the facts, and adjust the wording to your circumstances.

Share a delay

Give a revised arrival time without an unnecessary explanation.

YOUR DETAIL

Your updated arrival information: [detail]

Example: I expect to arrive at 5:15 pm

BRIEF

I am running late. [detail].

NEUTRAL

A quick update: I am running late. [detail]. I am sorry for the inconvenience.

FIRM

Updating the arrival time: [detail]. I will let you know if that changes.

Before sending: replace every bracket, check the facts, and adjust the wording to your circumstances.

Offer two options

Make the next decision easier by offering two concrete choices.

YOUR DETAIL

The two options: [detail]

Example: Tuesday at 5 pm or Wednesday at 4 pm

BRIEF

Would either of these work: [detail]?

NEUTRAL

I can offer two options: [detail]. Which works better for you?

FIRM

The options I can offer are: [detail]. Please let me know which, if either, works for you.

Before sending: replace every bracket, check the facts, and adjust the wording to your circumstances.

Keep what is useful.

One purpose

What practical question or arrangement does this reply address?

Only the facts

Have I checked the dates, times, items, and commitments?

My own words

Does this sound like something I would choose to say?

The right tool

Does this need more than a writing template? If it involves safety, threats, abuse, an emergency, or legal decisions, this tool cannot assess it.

No automatic sending

Read the complete message once more before deciding what to send.