Wendy Liverseed
NEUTRAL FAMILY SERVICES

THE CHILD COMES FIRST

Child-Focused Co-Parenting Checkup

10 Questions to Ask Yourself When Conflict Is Taking Over

You divorced each other, not your children. Separation and parenting disagreements can be difficult. When conflict takes center stage, children's needs can get lost in the conversation. This checkup is an invitation to notice patterns and choose one practical next step, not a test of whether you are a good parent.

How to use it: For each question, check the response that best reflects your usual experience. There is no score, pass, or fail. Focus on what is within your control.

1. Am I focusing on my child's needs or my feelings about the other parent?

When disagreements arise, can I separate my frustration with the other parent from the parenting decision that actually needs attention?

☐ Usually ☐ Sometimes ☐ Not yet

2. Does my child feel free to love both parents?

Do my words and reactions communicate that my child does not have to choose sides, manage my feelings, or feel guilty about loving the other parent?

☐ Usually ☐ Sometimes ☐ Not yet

3. Am I keeping adult disagreements between adults?

Do I avoid asking my child to carry messages, report on the other household, keep secrets about adult conflict, or serve as a go-between?

☐ Usually ☐ Sometimes ☐ Not yet

4. How do I respond when the other parent upsets me?

Do I give myself time to respond thoughtfully rather than sending an angry message or continuing an argument that is no longer productive?

☐ Usually ☐ Sometimes ☐ Not yet

5. Am I listening to my child without putting them in the middle?

Can I acknowledge my child's experiences without pressuring them to explain, defend, or take responsibility for adult decisions?

☐ Usually ☐ Sometimes ☐ Not yet

PART ONE / CONTINUED

Keep the child in focus

Notice what you can influence, even when the other parent does not cooperate.

6. Am I distinguishing facts from assumptions?

Before reacting, do I consider what I actually know, what I may be assuming, and what information still needs clarification?

☐ Usually ☐ Sometimes ☐ Not yet

7. Am I looking for workable solutions rather than trying to win?

Do I consider my child's routines, developmental needs, school, relationships, and everyday realities instead of focusing on proving a point?

☐ Usually ☐ Sometimes ☐ Not yet

8. Am I being flexible where flexibility is appropriate?

Can I recognize opportunities for reasonable compromise while maintaining important boundaries, safety, and my child's well-being?

☐ Usually ☐ Sometimes ☐ Not yet

9. Am I helping my child experience stability and predictability?

Do I make reasonable efforts to support consistent routines, reliable transitions, clear expectations, and age-appropriate communication?

☐ Usually ☐ Sometimes ☐ Not yet

10. If my child could describe how our parenting conflict affects them, what might they say?

Am I considering what my child may be experiencing rather than assuming they are unaffected because they do not openly complain?

☐ Usually ☐ Sometimes ☐ Not yet

Remember: Setting appropriate boundaries is not the same as creating conflict. This tool does not assume equal responsibility for a harmful or unsafe situation.

PART TWO / FROM REFLECTION TO ACTION

Choose one workable next step

You do not need the other parent's agreement to make a positive change in your own responses.

Something I am already doing well for my child:

One pattern I would like to change:

PART THREE / USE CLEAR

C Clarify the Conflict. What specific issue needs attention? Separate facts from feelings and assumptions.

L Look at What Matters. What does my child need? What is within my control?

E Explore the Options. What are two reasonable ways to respond without drawing my child into the conflict?

A Arrive at Workable Decisions. What can I change independently? What requires agreement or qualified assistance?

R Roadmap the Way Forward. What will I do, when, and how will I know whether it helps?

MY ONE-WEEK COMMITMENT

This week, I will:

I will revisit my progress on: _____

What would tell me this change is helping my child?

Safety first. If threats, abuse, coercive control, intimidation, or child-safety concerns are present, prioritize safety and qualified individual support rather than joint problem-solving. You are not responsible for changing another person's harmful conduct.

About this resource. Educational self-reflection only. Not a custody assessment, parenting-fitness test, legal or medical advice, or a change to any court order. For the companion CLEAR Parenting Decision Worksheet, visit www.WendyLiverseed.com and open Resources & Insights.