

BIFF COMMUNICATION

Check first whether you actually need to respond to the other parent. If you have received a message that has no clear request or piece of information then it can be appropriate to not reply at all. The other parent may then resend their message with a clear request, direction or item of information.

B Brief

Brief – practice keeping your written communication to about 3 sentences. The other person may have written a very long text or email with a lot of unnecessary information, admonishments, advice or apologies (see previous handout on the Three A's).

Your goal is not to give a lengthy reply but to stay brief.

I Informative

Informative – provide information, that's it. No analysis, opinions, explanations or references to the past or future.

F Friendly

Friendly – and polite. Friendly does not mean overly friendly such as with a close friend or family member. It simply means polite. As if you were speaking to someone in authority or someone you feel neutral about.

Communication can begin with "Thanks for your message." "How are you?" and end with "Hope you have a nice day/weekend".

Those short comments are enough to convey polite but neutral friendliness without going overboard.

F Firm

Firm – if you have followed the above 3 steps then your message will probably end here. Depending on the subject, you may offer a choice of 2-3 options and ask the other person to respond by a specific time. If not, then the tone of the message needs to be that you have no more to say on the topic.

This information is adapted from:

Eddy, B., Burns, A., Chafin, K. (2020) BIFF for coparent communication; Unhooked Books an imprint of High Conflict Institute Press