

10 Calm Message Starters

Short, neutral templates for the situations that most often turn into arguments. Copy, fill in the brackets, read it once more, then send.

1. Asking to swap a day

"Hi, would you be open to swapping [day] for [day] this week? I have [brief reason]. If that doesn't work, no problem, I'll keep the current schedule."

2. Running late

"I'm running about [X] minutes late for the [time] pickup. I'll be there by [time]. Sorry for the change."

3. Changing a pickup spot

"For [date], could we do the exchange at [place] instead of [place]? Same time. Let me know if that works."

4. Sharing an expense

"[Child]'s [item/activity] cost \$[amount] (receipt attached). Per our agreement, your share is \$[amount]. Could you send it by [date]?"

5. School update

"FYI: [child]'s [event/conference] is on [date] at [time], at [place]. Sharing so you can attend if you'd like."

6. Doctor visit update

"[Child] saw Dr. [name] today for [reason]. Next steps: [instructions]. Next appointment: [date]."

7. Proposing an activity

"[Child] is interested in [activity]. It's [day/time], costs \$[amount]. Are you OK with signing up? Happy to talk through it."

8. Confirming the holiday plan

"Confirming [holiday]: [child] is with me from [date/time] to [date/time], then with you. Exchange at [place]. Does that match your calendar?"

9. Replying to a heated message

"Thanks for letting me know. On the schedule question: [short factual answer]. I'm happy to discuss anything else about [child] by message."

10. Putting an agreement in writing

"Just confirming what we agreed today: [agreement]. Let me know if I've missed anything."

The 4-question check before you hit send**Is it...**

- **Brief?** One topic, a few sentences.
- **Factual?** Dates, times, amounts, not opinions.
- **Friendly?** A neutral greeting and thanks go a long way.
- **Clear?** One question or request, with a date if needed.

Leave out...

- Old arguments and "you always / you never"
- Comments about their parenting, partner or character
- Messages passed through the kids
- Sarcasm, ALL CAPS and late-night replies

Safety first: these templates are for everyday logistics. If you or your children are in danger, call 911. The National Domestic Violence Hotline is 1-800-799-7233. For custody or support questions, talk to a family-law attorney; your parenting plan or court order always comes first.

Next step

Get the full Message Template Library and the Shared Parenting Organizer at buaflow.com/coparent-pro.