

Outstanding Long Distance Parenting

10 Activities for a Closer Family Connection

Activity Five: Connect With Your Partner

“Closer Together While Living Apart”

Dos and Don'ts for the Visiting Parent

You are an important and integral part of your family, no matter where you spend most of your time. If you want to contribute in a positive and meaningful way as a parent and as a partner to the at-home parent, you need to bear some important things in mind. Put aside your natural desire for control and focus on respecting your partner's situation.

Dos:

- Respect the job your partner is doing and recognize their challenges and excellent work.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate: how you feel, what you want and need, how they feel, what they want and need.
- Make your children want you to come home more than they want you to leave again.
- Fall into line with the family's existing structures, schedules and routines.
- Support your partner to take meaningful time off from the house and the children while you are home.
- Keep each and every promise you make to your partner and children (be very careful what you promise!).
- Remember you are part of a team again and must ensure your actions fit in with the group's needs.
- Be a calm, soothing, comfortable presence to both partner and children by accepting and working into existing routines, habits and lifestyles.
- Remember that your first priority at home is to your children and your partner. Be a parent.

Don'ts

- Make changes to routines or schedules of any kind without prior consultation and agreement with your partner.
- Contradict or overturn your partner's authority in front of the children.
- Assume you know what is best or how your children will react in any given situation.
- Criticise or judge your children's behaviours, friends, school work or activities without prior consultation and agreement with your partner.
- Start a project you cannot finish easily within your time at home.
- Make plans or arrangements with third parties which affect the family without prior consultation and agreement with your partner (even if it is only a dentist appointment for you, make sure your partner is able to provide you with the car at that time, or isn't relying on you to babysit, etc).
- Be a disturbing and disruptive influence on the family.



*If you would like to know more about the 10 Activities for a Closer Family Connection, visit www.emilymmorgan.com and look under the **Books** page for Outstanding Long Distance Parenting.*

*Visit the **Parents** Page for more great resources.*

