THE #FKLM FAMILY BLUEPRINT

What Gets Shared, and How Often

Co-Parenting & Communication · Inside-Out Co-Parenting

Setting a predictable rhythm for updates so no adult feels shut out or overwhelmed.

IN THIS GUIDE

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- Drafting it together
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A free guide from My Fairy GodParents — for youth impacted by parental incarceration, justice-impacted youth, and the caregivers and families who support them.
myfairygodparents.org/resources/family-blueprint

Print, write on it, and share it with the people helping your family.

What Gets Shared, and How Often

> *Setting a predictable rhythm for updates so no adult feels shut out or overwhelmed.*

THE DIFFERENCE THIS MAKES

Every family in this situation ends up with an information-sharing agreement whether they build it on purpose or not. The unintentional version is made up of assumptions, guesses about what the other person would want to know, and whatever gets remembered in the moment. It tends to fail exactly when it matters most, because stress is when memory and good intentions are least reliable.

A written agreement is not a legal document and does not need to be formal. It is a plain reference both adults can point back to — 'this is what we said we'd do' — that survives an argument, a bad week, or a change in who's actually answering the phone. It turns a vague hope of good communication into something specific enough to actually follow.

This lesson walks through building that agreement as a short, concrete document, using the buckets and lanes from earlier lessons in this section, and gives you language to propose it to the other adult without it sounding like an accusation that they've been doing it wrong.

WHAT THE AGREEMENT SHOULD COVER

What counts as urgent for your family specifically — not a generic list, but the actual categories that come up for your child: a particular health condition, a school situation that's been rocky, a custody or living arrangement that could change.

How urgent information travels: which channel, whose job it is to send it, and roughly how fast. This should match what's actually available — some facilities allow email or a messaging app, others only calls and mail, and the agreement needs to work with the real constraints, not an ideal version.

How routine information travels and how often: a letter every two weeks, a call that includes five minutes of adult update time, whatever rhythm both people can actually sustain without it becoming a burden that quietly stops happening.

What is off-limits to route through the child, and what happens instead when something needs to be discussed privately between the two adults.

+ DRAFTING IT TOGETHER

Draft it as a conversation, not a document one person hands the other. If one adult writes the whole thing alone and presents it as final, it reads as a set of rules imposed rather than an agreement reached, and it is less likely to be honored under pressure.

Keep it short — a half page is usually enough. A long document nobody rereads is less useful than four or five plain sentences both people actually remember.

Write it down somewhere both people can access: a copy in a letter, a copy the caregiver keeps, maybe a copy with a trusted third person if the relationship is strained enough that a written record protects both sides.

+ HANDLING THE PARTS THAT WILL NOT GO AS PLANNED

Some urgent update will get delayed because the caregiver forgot, was overwhelmed, or genuinely couldn't reach the facility in time. Some routine update will get missed because the parent's phone privileges changed unexpectedly. Build in the expectation that the agreement will be imperfectly followed and decide in advance how much grace that gets — probably more than either of you would offer in the heat of the moment.

When it breaks down, the useful move is to go back to the agreement itself rather than relitigating the specific incident: 'we said urgent things get a message within two days — this took a week, what got in the way, and how do we prevent that next time' is a more productive conversation than a fight about the specific missed update.

+ REVISITING AND UPDATING

An agreement built when a child is four does not fit when the child is thirteen and has opinions about what gets shared about them. Revisit the agreement at natural checkpoints — a new school year, a change in custody or living situation, a change in the parent's release timeline — rather than letting it go stale.

If the relationship between the two adults changes significantly — improves, worsens, a new person becomes involved in caregiving — the agreement should be revisited too. It is a living document, not a one-time fix.

+ FOUR SENTENCES THAT HELD UP UNDER PRESSURE

A caregiver and an incarcerated father spent one visit writing out their agreement together on the back of a visitation form: urgent things (health, safety, school discipline, housing changes) get a message within 48 hours by whatever channel is fastest; everything else goes in the biweekly letter; adult disagreements get handled in a private letter, never on the child's call; if either of them misses something, they'll say so plainly rather than letting it build into resentment.

Six months later, the caregiver was late getting an urgent update out during a genuinely chaotic week — a

medical scare that resolved fine but that she'd been too depleted to write about right away. When the father found out four days later instead of two, he was frustrated, but he brought up the agreement rather than accusing her of not caring: 'we said 48 hours — what happened?'

She explained honestly, he accepted it, and they didn't have the blowup that a similar delay had caused a year earlier, before they'd written anything down. The agreement didn't prevent the mistake. It gave them a way to talk about it that didn't turn into a referendum on the whole relationship.

+ WORDS YOU CAN USE

Proposing the agreement for the first time

"I'd like us to write down a simple agreement about what gets shared and how, so we're both working off the same expectations instead of guessing. Can we talk through it together next time we connect, even just for ten minutes?"

A short agreement draft to adapt

Template language both adults can edit together.

"Urgent things — health, safety, school discipline, and changes in who's living in the house — get shared within [X days] by [channel]. Everything else goes in our regular update every [X weeks]. Anything between the two of us as adults stays between us, not through [child]. If either of us misses something, we'll say so plainly instead of letting it sit."

Returning to the agreement after a slip

"We agreed urgent things get to me within two days, and this took a week. I'm not trying to pile on — I just want to understand what got in the way so we can fix it, because I don't want to find out about something like this late again."

Revisiting the agreement at a milestone

"It's been a while since we set up how we share information, and things have changed since then. Can we look at it again and see if it still fits, now that she's older / now that things with school have changed?"

+ WRITE YOUR AGREEMENT

- [ ] List your family's actual urgent categories, not a generic list.
- [ ] Decide the channel and timeframe for urgent updates.
- [ ] Set a realistic rhythm for routine updates.

- [ ] Agree explicitly that adult topics don't route through the child.
- [ ] Draft it together, not as one person's document handed to the other.
- [ ] Keep it to about half a page and store a copy somewhere accessible.
- [ ] Agree in advance on how much grace a missed update gets.
- [ ] Set a checkpoint to revisit it — a new school year or a change in circumstances.

+ REFLECT AND WRITE

What has our information sharing looked like so far — planned, or improvised under stress?

What are the two or three categories that are truly urgent for our specific child?

How would I want to be told if I missed sending something I'd agreed to send?

When is our next natural checkpoint to revisit this agreement?

+ YOUR NEXT STEP

> Write the three things that will be in every update from now on.

+ WHERE THIS COMES FROM

Written by My Fairy GodParents — reviewed August 2026.

This is general information and practice guidance — not legal advice, mental-health treatment, or a statement of any court, agency, or facility's rules. Policies differ by state, county, facility, school, and program, so always confirm details with the office involved.

For decisions with legal, medical, financial, or clinical consequences, work with a licensed professional or the organizations listed with each resource.

You do not have to do this alone.

More free guides, scripts, and checklists:
myfairygodparents.org/resources/family-blueprint