



CO-PARENTING IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A FAMILY

Rodney Chiang-Cruise

OUR FAMILY

2000 – Jeff and Rodney meet

2005 – Jeff and Rodney decide to start a family (via surrogacy)

2007 – Ethan born

2007 – Justin born (“co-parent” arrangement with first lesbian couple D & L)

2009 – Aki born (“co-parent” arrangement with first lesbian couple D & L)

2018 – Edith born (“co-parent” arrangement with second lesbian couple N & L)

2019 – Angus born (“co-parent” arrangement with second lesbian couple N & L)

2010 – 2015 – 5 Children born via Identity Released Sperm Donation

WHAT IS CO-PARENTING

Co-Parenting is whatever you choose to make it

Shared Responsibility

- 50/50 60/40.....90/10

Shared Resources

- Finances, Living Arrangements, Locations

Shared Decisions

- Religion, Schools, Medical Treatment

Shared Culture

- Extended Family, Festivals, Fathers/Mothers Days

Co-Parenting – What are you modelling it on?

Western Nuclear Family

- The most common approach – similar to a separated heterosexual couple sharing custody
- Based around the modern western concept of the nuclear family

Non-Nuclear Family

- Common in other cultures and historically the norm
- Extended family structures, intergenerational, not focused on biology but focused on the “village” concept.

HOW CAN IT WORK

How to make it work

- Understand “baby lust” and work to manage the expectations you create before the baby is born
- Choose co-parents who share values
- Choose co-parents who share visions
- Understand that co-parents change
- Make sure you know them well
- Have difficult conversations before you make agreements

Examples

- Prior to birth, meet regularly for meals and get to know each other
- Prior to birth, meet friends and family of your proposed co-parents
- Have discussions – long ones, difficult ones, honest ones
- Post birth – understand what the baby will need rather than what you need
- Post birth – make a regular (weekly) time to meet and get to know each other again
- Expect people to change

AGREEMENTS — DO THEY WORK?

Co-Parenting Agreements

- You should have a written agreement
- It doesn't have to be long or detailed but must contain information that covers intention of all parties
- Make them renewable – every 12 months, meet to discuss and refresh them
- Ensure both parties agree that if a dispute can not be settled, that you seek impartial counselling to resolve
- Good co-parenting usually ensures agreements become redundant very quickly

Disasters in Co-Parenting Occur

- There are high profile cases of breakdowns of co-parenting arrangements
- Successful ones don't make the news – but they exist in abundance.
- There is no magic to making them work – just hard work, compromise, understanding – and putting the child at the centre of all decisions.