

Ten Tips for Divorcing Parents

Divorce is never easy on kids, but there are many ways parents can help lessen the impact of their break-up on their children:

10. Never disparage your former spouse in front of your children. Children know they are "part mom" and "part dad" and the criticism hurt your child's self-esteem.

9. Do not use your children as messengers between you and your former spouse. The less the children are used as part of the conflict between their parents, the better.

8. Reassure your children that you love them and that the divorce is not their fault. Many children assume that they are to blame for their parent's hostility.

7. Encourage your children to see your former spouse frequently. Do everything within your power to accommodate the visitation as frequent and continuous contact is required by law.

6. At every step during your divorce, remind yourself that your children's interests – not yours – are paramount, and act accordingly. Make sure you connect with love at each opportunity.

5. Your children may be tempted to take care of you. Resist the temptation to let them. Reach out to your peers, adult family members, and mental health professionals your counselors and sounding board.

4. If you have a substance problem, get counseling right away. Addiction can inhibit your ability to reassure your children and give them the attention they need at this difficult time.

3. If you are the non-custodial parent, pay your child support. The loss of income facing many children after divorce puts them at a financial disadvantage that impacts them for the rest of their lives.

2. If you are the custodial parent and you are not receiving child support, do not tell your children. Conversations about scarcity can feed a child's sense of abandonment and further erodes their stability.

1. If at all possible, do not uproot your children. Stability in their home and school life helps shield children from the trauma of their parent's divorce.