

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR DIVORCING PARENTS

1. Decide with your spouse the best way to inform your children of why you are divorcing and tell them together if possible. Try to let them know what to expect in straightforward and realistic terms. Answer any questions simply and directly. It is alright to refuse to answer embarrassing or inappropriate questions..
2. Let your children know you both will always be their parents and you will always love them. Don't be long distance parents. If you must live in another town, stay in touch with frequent letters and telephone calls. Make sure your child has your address and telephone number so they will always have easy access to you.
3. Show your love in actions, not just words. Don't make promises you cannot keep. Promises not kept are worse than not making plans at all. Don't attempt to substitute your love with money or gifts. Kids know when they are being bought off.
4. Remember birthdays, holidays and all other important events. These times are important to children and indicate to them that you are there and that you care. It may be difficult to remember these dates in your busy life, so use a calendar and mark them down.
5. Don't "badmouth" your spouse, or anyone else in your family. Hold children to this rule as well. Children will not love you more if you attempt to make your spouse the bad guy in their eyes. This only makes it difficult for them, and at some point they will more than likely resent you for your attacks. Children need to feel it is okay to love both parents without making anyone unhappy.
6. When you are angry with your spouse, do not take it out on the children. For example, "You are just like your father your mother..."
7. Don't compete for your children's love and time. They need and want to have a healthy relationship with both of their parents. The more you work for this, the better adjusted they will be.
8. Do not put your children in the middle. Do not make your children the mediators for you and your spouse. Put your feelings aside for the sake of your children and handle in an adult fashion all practical matters that must be decided directly with your spouse.
9. Expect that your children may have sad, angry, or depressed feelings following the divorce and allow them to tell these feelings to you without criticism. Just being able to talk about what they are feeling will go a long way in helping your child adjust to the changes in his/her life.
10. Make a new and fulfilling life for yourself. Don't try to obtain information about your ex-spouse's private life through your children. The best thing you can do for yourself and your children is to move ahead with your life and create your own happiness.