

# *Parenting Through Transitions*



Court of Common Pleas  
Division of Domestic Relations  
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# PARENTING THROUGH TRANSITIONS

## Agenda

- I. Introduction
- II. Legal/Court Process: What to Expect
- III. Stages of Divorce/Emotional Process of Divorce
- IV. Children's Perspective on Divorce
- V. Children's Reactions to Divorce

### **Break**

- VI. Activity
- VII. Harmful Games/Ongoing Parental Conflict
- VIII. Children's Bill of Rights
- IX. Co-Parenting/New Roles
- X. Communication
- XI. Dating
- XII. Resources
- XIII. Quiz/Survey



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# Statistics

## Divorce

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that half of all marriages occurring since 1970 end in divorce, with the majority of these divorced parents remarrying. <sup>(8)</sup>

Serial transitions in and out of marriage/divorce/cohabitation is now typical of family life in the US but has significant consequences for children. <sup>(12)</sup>

Approximately 1/3 of divorced parents remain bitter and hostile several years after the divorce. <sup>(7)</sup>

## Children

Most divorces involve children, and more than 1 million children are affected by divorce each year. <sup>(10)</sup>

40% of children will witness their parents' divorce before reaching adulthood.

More than 1 million children experience divorce each year. <sup>(1)</sup>

A significant proportion of children entitled to child support receive nothing. <sup>(2)</sup>

Approximately 30% of all children are raised in a single-parent home. <sup>(4)</sup>

Children raised in a single-parent home are more likely to experience living in poverty than children raised in two-parent households. <sup>(4)</sup>

## Mothers

On average, during the first year of divorce a woman's standard of living drops 45%. <sup>(3)</sup>

A divorced woman is 4 to 5 times more likely to live in poverty than a married woman. <sup>(3)</sup>

In 2002, 23% of children under the age of 18 lived with their mother. <sup>(9)</sup>

## Fathers

In 2000, single-father families comprised 1 in 6 single-parent families. <sup>(5)</sup>

In 2002, 5% of children under the age of 18 lived with their father. <sup>(9)</sup>

## Remarriage

In 1995, less than 60% of children in the U.S. lived with their biological parents. <sup>(6)</sup>

75% of women and 80% of men remarry within 5 years after divorce. <sup>(7)</sup>

More second marriages occur today than first marriages. <sup>(7)</sup>

40% of married couples with children (i.e., families) in the US are stepcouples (at least one partner had a child from a previous relationship before marriage; this includes full and part-time residential stepfamilies and those with children under and/or over the age of 18). The percentage of all married couple households is 35%. <sup>(14)</sup>

A national Pew Center report finds that 40% of all new marriages in the US are remarriages for one or both of the partners. <sup>(13)</sup>

Of new marriages, 40% are remarriages (20% for one partner, 20% for both partners). <sup>(13)</sup>

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# A Primer on the Journey of Relationship Termination

## Definitions of types of terminations

Annulment  
 Legal Separation  
 Dissolution  
 Divorce

## You are parents forever: definitions of types of parenting

Sole custodian: designated, legal custodian for the children

- Makes all the decisions and arrangements for the children
- Other parent has parenting time with the children
- Always able to have access to schools, teachers, medical and academic records

Shared Parenting: share legal rights and responsibilities for the children

- All rights and responsibilities are contained in a document known as a **shared parenting plan**: religion, transportation, schedule, holidays, medical decisions, medical insurance, records, extended families, discipline, tax exemption, vacations, living arrangements, child support (if any), relocation

Parents know their children best; therefore, the decisions should be how to continue to have healthy, happy children.

## Methods to resolve issues

Continuum of dispute resolution processes  
 Mediation  
 Early Neutral Evaluation  
 Brief Focused Investigation  
 Full Investigation  
 Parenting Coordination  
 Litigation

## The legal process of ending the marriage

The Plaintiff files a Complaint for Divorce or a Petition for Dissolution

The Defendant has to receive service—receive the documents and then has 28 days to respond.

The parties will receive a notice from the Court as to where they make their first appearance. The parties discuss with the judicial officer expectations, requests and potential resolutions. The matter could be uncontested or go to a full trial.

Parenting issues are addressed. Property is addressed.

Notice of a final hearing called merits. All documents have been submitted and signed.

## Other processes

75N (temporary orders)  
 Scheduling Conference  
 Motion: a means to address issues with the Court

## How long will it take? Supreme Court of Ohio Guidelines

Divorces with children—18 months maximum  
 Divorce without children—12 months maximum  
 Dissolution—90 days maximum

## Do's

Keep the Court advised of your address so you can receive all court-issued correspondence.

Remain respectful during your trial, your hearings and your interactions with the judicial officer.

Remember neither the Judge nor the Magistrate can discuss the case, unless the parties are at a hearing and under oath.



# Stages of the Divorce Process

Divorce is actually a process that occurs over a long period of time, although we tend to view it as a legal event in which a judge declares that the marriage is over. The following are the stages of divorce:

**Pre-divorce/Deliberation Stage:** This stage is where significant marital conflict began and when divorce may have crossed your mind. The marital conflict may have been unresolved, or resolved for only a short period of time, leaving you feeling frustrated, angry, hurt, and disappointed. Some people express conflict with loud arguments, while others respond with silence and withdrawal.

**Decision Stage:** This is where one or both spouses decide to formally end the marriage. If one spouse initiates the divorce, that parent may be in a different place; he or she is likely feeling relief, accepting that the marriage is over. The other parent may feel anger, hurt, or shock.

**Divorce Crisis/Transition Stage:** After the decision to divorce is made, there is typically a separation. Attorneys are contacted and legal issues are considered. There may be a filing of divorce. This stage is when parents often experience feelings of anxiety, rage, or resentment.

**Post-divorce/Healing Stage:** This is a time of rebuilding and restructuring the family. Tasks include parenting the children, accepting losses from the divorce, and looking toward the future.

Stages of Divorce	Emotions	Behaviors
<b>Pre-divorce/Deliberation</b>	Unhappiness Disappointment Dissatisfaction Hurt Guilt Fear of Failure Uncertainty	Arguing/Fighting Avoiding Withdrawing Efforts at Reconciliation Reduced Parenting Capacity
<b>Decision</b>	Sadness Relief Shock	Verbalizing the decision
<b>Divorce Crisis/Transition</b>	Rage Anger Resentment Blame Fear of losing children Anxiety about legal issues/finances Low self-esteem	Consulting attorney Considering legal issues (custody, finances, property) Separating homes Filing for divorce Using mediation and/or counseling <i>Parenting Through Transitions class</i> Finalization of divorce
<b>Post-Divorce/Healing</b>	Sadness/Loss Relief Acceptance/Resignation Peace Renewed Self-Confidence	Developing new friends/relationships Focusing on the future Resuming ability to parent well Building co-parenting relationships Setting healthy boundaries



# The Emotional Process of Divorce:

*Divorce involves change...change involves loss...and growth.*

The emotional process of divorce involves changing emotions and conflicting feelings. Each person may experience these feelings at different times. Divorce does not have a clear beginning, middle and end. It is not a single event but a process, and every person will move through this process at their own pace. Sometimes, a parent or a child can get stuck in one feeling for a long time. It is normal to have experienced a feeling and then revisit it again as changes occur (such as a remarriage). One recovers from a significant loss by going through the following stages repeatedly, which is known as

## The Grief Cycle:

Feelings	Thoughts
Denial	This cannot be happening. This does not feel real.
Anger	How dare he/she do this to me, after everything I sacrificed?
Bargaining	What can I do to make you stay? I'll go to counseling; I'll make changes.
Depression	My life is over. Things will never be the same. I'll never be happy again.
Acceptance	There is nothing I can do about it, but I can control how I react.

## Common physical symptoms:

- insomnia
- change in appetite (overeating or loss of appetite)
- fatigue
- head in a fog/fuzzy thinking
- nausea
- diarrhea

## What helps?

- crying
- doing things you like to do
- connecting with loved ones/family/friends
- taking care of yourself such as healthy eating, exercise
- attending support groups
- church/spiritual gatherings
- writing in a journal
- seeking counseling
- reading
- meditation
- prayer
- sharing experiences with others



# Children's Reaction to the Divorce

Children experience many feelings and concerns during separation and divorce. Some common emotions are anger, hurt, fear, sadness, confusion, and loneliness. Certain behavioral and emotional changes are expected from different age groups.

Infant (0-18 months)			
Issues	What the child understands	Possible emotional/behavioral reactions	What you can do to help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistency of caregivers, environment, and routines</li> <li>Emotional connection with caregiver</li> <li>Affection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not understand conflict, but may react to changes in parent's energy level and mood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sleeping changes</li> <li>Eating changes, such as loss of appetite</li> <li>Upset stomach, may spit up more</li> <li>More fretful or anxious</li> <li>Clingy behavior/difficulty separating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep normal routines</li> <li>Maintain consistent contact with people</li> <li>Make any necessary changes gradually</li> <li>Lots of hugging, physical affection</li> <li>Remain calm in front of the child</li> <li>Avoid angry expressions in front of the child</li> <li>Avoid fighting in front of the child</li> <li>Do not deprive the child of his or her favorite toys, blanket, or stuffed animal</li> </ul>

Toddler (18 months – 3 years)			
Issues	What the child understands	Possible emotional/behavioral reactions	What you can do to help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistency of caregivers, environment, and routines</li> <li>Fear of abandonment</li> <li>Affection</li> <li>Concern about safety: "who will take care of me?"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands that a parent has moved away but doesn't understand why</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More crying or whining</li> <li>Regression in sleeping</li> <li>Regression in toilet skills, other infant behaviors</li> <li>Clinging to adults or security objects.</li> <li>Fearfulness</li> <li>May feel anger but not understand why</li> <li>Increased aggressiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep normal routines</li> <li>Maintain consistent contact with people</li> <li>Make any necessary changes gradually</li> <li>Provide affection and verbal reassurances</li> <li>Provide clear and concrete explanations of changes</li> <li>Allow some return to infantile behaviors but set clear limits</li> <li>Provide opportunity to express feelings and fears through words and play</li> <li>Spend time alone with the child</li> <li>Avoid angry expressions in front of the child</li> <li>Avoid fighting in front of the child</li> </ul>

Preschooler (3-5 years)			
Issues	What the child understands	Possible emotional/behavioral reactions	What you can do to help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fear of abandonment (rejection)</li> <li>Doubts own lovability</li> <li>Sexual identification (presence of both parents important to sexual development)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doesn't understand what separation or divorce means. Realizes one parent is not as active in his or her life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regression in behaviors such as eating, sleeping, and talking</li> <li>Regression in toilet skills</li> <li>Clingy behavior</li> <li>Difficulties with separation</li> <li>Increased aggressiveness</li> <li>Over compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep normal routines</li> <li>Maintain consistent contact with people</li> <li>Make any necessary changes gradually</li> <li>Provide affection and verbal reassurances</li> <li>Provide clear and concrete explanations of changes</li> <li>Provide opportunity to express feelings and fears through words and play</li> <li>Spend time alone with the child</li> <li>Avoid fighting in front of the child</li> </ul>





Young School Age (6-8 years)			
Issues	What the child understands	Possible emotional/behavioral reactions	What you can do to help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearning for absent parent</li> <li>• Fantasies that parents would reunite</li> <li>• Loyalty conflicts</li> <li>• Concern about parents well being</li> <li>• Overly responsible children may feel they caused the divorce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begins to understand what a divorce is</li> <li>• Understands that her or his parents won't live together anymore, and that they may not love each other as before</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pervasive sadness, grief</li> <li>• Withdrawal</li> <li>• Fear of loss of relationship with a parent</li> <li>• Feelings of being deprived</li> <li>• Anger and increased aggressiveness</li> <li>• Difficulty playing and experiencing pleasure</li> <li>• Complaints of headaches or stomach aches</li> <li>• Problems with sleeping and/or eating</li> <li>• Academic difficulties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide affection</li> <li>• Assure the child that they will continue to be taken care of and that the parents will resolve problems</li> <li>• Encourage the child to talk about how he or she feels</li> <li>• Assure the child that they will see both parents</li> <li>• Give child permission to love and be with the other parent</li> <li>• Plan special time together</li> <li>• Avoid bad-mouthing the other parent</li> <li>• Avoid fighting in front of the child</li> <li>• Avoid putting the child in the middle</li> </ul>

Older School Age/Pre-teen (9-12)			
Issues	What the child understands	Possible emotional/behavioral reactions	What you can do to help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child views situation in extremes – someone is right and someone is wrong</li> <li>• Child may feel shame or embarrassment about the parents' divorce</li> <li>• Child may feel divorce threatens their own developing identity, because a child is the combination of both parents</li> <li>• Child's need to overcome sense of powerlessness</li> <li>• Loyalty conflicts</li> <li>• Assuming more responsibility in the household</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands but does not accept the divorce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical complaints such as headaches, stomach aches, fatigue</li> <li>• Intense anger, particularly at parent blamed for the divorce</li> <li>• Academic difficulties</li> <li>• Peer relationship problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to child's complaints without taking sides or judging</li> <li>• Avoid bad-mouthing the other parent or fighting in front of the child</li> <li>• Encourage the child to see the good in the other parent</li> <li>• Say positive things about the other parent on occasion</li> <li>• Encourage child's positive communication with the other parent</li> <li>• Support child's contact with the other parent</li> <li>• Avoid pressuring the child to choose sides</li> <li>• Remind the child that the parents own the problem, and free him or her from guilt</li> <li>• Avoid involving the child in parental struggles</li> <li>• Avoid sending messages to the other parent through the child</li> <li>• Avoid pumping the child for information about what goes on in the other parent's home</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to discuss the divorce with other children who are experiencing the situation</li> </ul>



Adolescent (13-18)			
Issues	What the child understands	Possible emotional/behavioral reactions	What you can do to help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distressed and preoccupied parents may be unable to provide the needed support and limits</li> <li>• Normal teen/parent tensions might be heightened</li> <li>• Adolescents may experience premature or accelerated independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands but does not accept the divorce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School problems because of difficulty concentrating, chronic fatigue, physical complaints</li> <li>• Becomes moralistic</li> <li>• Becomes involved in high-risk behaviors (use of drugs and alcohol, sexual promiscuity, shoplifting, skipping school)</li> <li>• Depression, suicidal thoughts, loss of self-esteem</li> <li>• Anxiety about their own intimate relationships (fear of commitment, fear of betrayal, fear about survival of relationships)</li> <li>• Feels like he or she must grow up too soon</li> <li>• Worries about finances, including college tuition</li> <li>• Grief over loss of family and loss of childhood</li> <li>• Becoming distant and aloof from family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid pressuring adolescents to choose sides</li> <li>• Discuss issues and situations honestly; adolescents are now able to understand there is more than one side to the story</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to share feelings, concerns, and complaints</li> <li>• Avoid relying on adolescents for emotional support. This creates an emotional burden for them (role reversal, parentification)</li> <li>• Avoid using the child as a replacement partner (don't discuss adult problems with him or her)</li> <li>• Allow adolescents to maintain appropriate friendships and activities</li> <li>• Encourage the other parent's relationship</li> <li>• Communicate with your adolescent's other parent in a civil, business-like manner</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to discuss the divorce with other children who are experiencing the situation</li> </ul>

The reactions of children, as outlined above, are common and expectable. Research on the effects of divorce on children and the experience of most professionals have provided useful information about what can help children through the divorce period and what can help prevent the development of long-term problems for children.

Giving your child permission to have a free and on-going relationship with the other parent and not putting your child in the middle of parental conflicts will help prevent the development of emotional problems. Parents need to learn how to solve problems regarding the child in a manner that protects the child rather than exposing him/her to hostile battles.

Children thrive and make a positive adjustment when they have a close and nurturing relationship with both parents, when the parents stop fighting and resolve or contain the anger and conflict, and when the life of at least one of their parents has improved after the divorce. The children have better grades in school, fewer behavioral problems in school, fewer problems with the law, higher self-esteem, greater sense of security, fewer mental health problems, lower rates of teen pregnancy, and happier and healthier friendships and relationships.

When to seek professional help for your child:

- (1) When a child's distress and problems are constant and/or chronic.
- (2) When a child's symptoms get worse rather than subside.
- (3) When a parent feels unable to cope with child or self.





# Harmful Games

Divorce is painful. Adults who have not resolved their own pain, anger, and insecurities may raise their children in destructive ways by playing what we call "harmful games". The games are usually not intentional, they sort of just happen, unless one recognizes them and avoids them. If you find yourself playing these harmful games, ask for help.

## Parent Games

Game	Destructive Purpose of Game
Poison	Bad-mouthing the other parent to sabotage the parent/child relationship
Spy	Asking the child to gather information about the other parent and to report back
Messenger	Asking the child to carry messages to the other parent
Scapegoat	Taking out one's own anger or frustration on the child
Disneyland Parent	Buying the child anything he/she wants to get rid of guilt or to buy the child's love
Substitute	Placing the child into the role of being an adult friend or partner
Guided Missile	Using the child as a weapon to change the other parent's behavior, to try to get something from the other parent, or to get even with the other parent for some hurt that occurred during the marriage
Empty Promises	Trying to win the child over by making unrealistic promises and then not following through

## Kid Games

Game	Destructive Purpose of Game
Blackmail/Threat	Manipulating the parent for personal gain or control over their situation
Destroy	Displaying detrimental behaviors – can include withdrawal, aggression/violence or personal harm
Poor Me	Using the divorce as an excuse for behavior
But Mom/Dad said "yes"	Playing the parents against each other



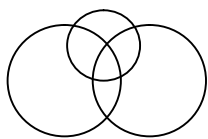
# A Bill of Rights for Children of Divorce

1. The right to love and be loved by both of your parents without feeling guilt or disapproval.
2. The right to be protected from your parents' anger with each other.
3. The right to be kept out of the middle of your parents' conflict, including the right not to pick sides, to carry messages, or to hear complaints about the other parent.
4. The right not to have to choose one of your parents over the other.
5. The right not to have to be responsible for the burden of either of your parents' emotional problems.
6. The right to know well in advance about important changes that will affect your life; for example, when one of your parents is going to move or get remarried.
7. The right to reasonable financial support during your childhood.
8. The right to have feelings, to express your feelings, and to have both parents listen to how you feel.
9. The right to have a life that is as close as possible to what it would have been if your parents stayed together.
10. The right to be a kid.

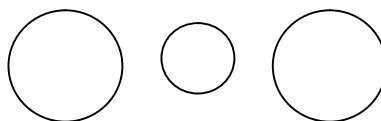
- From *The Truth about Children and Divorce*, Robert Emery, Ph.D., University of Virginia



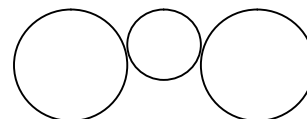
# Family Break-up and Restructuring



**Marriage**



**Break-Up**



**Co-Parenting**

## Psychological Task of Co-Parenting

1. Accept the idea that while the marriage is ending, you will be parents forever. The family is not ending; it is being restructured. You are still your children's family.
2. The new basis for your relationship is the sharing of love and mutual concern for your children. You no longer share life as spouses.
3. Separate the children's needs and concerns from your own. Your child does not experience your former spouse the way you do.
4. Focus on the strengths in your parental relationship, what you have done well together, and build on those strengths.
5. Create new boundaries in the relationship with your co-parent:
  - a. The spousal relationship is over. Think of and behave toward your former spouse as your business partner in raising the children.
  - b. Create new patterns for your interaction and don't assume old patterns.
  - c. Establish clear expectations.
  - d. Communicate solely about child-related issues such as health, school, and schedule without bringing in the marital or divorce issues.
  - e. While limiting communication to only the children might feel strange and unnatural at first, allowing old issues into your co-parenting relationship can interfere with effective communication, collaborative decision-making, and child development. If you do not limit the agenda to the children, old wounds and anger may surface, leaving the needs of the children neglected. It is easy and often tempting to get stuck in old battles.

<p>an <b><i>intimate relationship</i></b> includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- many assumptions</li> <li>- many unwritten and unspoken expectations</li> <li>- a lot of emotional and personal involvement</li> <li>- a lot of sharing of personal experience</li> <li>- not much privacy</li> </ul>	<p>a <b><i>businesslike relationship</i></b> includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- no assumptions</li> <li>- explicit agreements or contracts</li> <li>- formal courtesies, structured interactions, meetings, specific agendas</li> <li>- very little sharing of personal experiences</li> <li>- a lot of privacy</li> </ul>
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# Guidelines for a Successful Co-Parenting Relationship

Remember your mutual concern is your children. Keep in mind that your co-parent wants the same things for your children as you do. Your children love both parents and it is in their best interest to have a strong relationship with both parents.

The following guidelines are ways to create an effective co-parenting relationship. Commit to adopting these guidelines and ask your co-parent to do the same.

1. **Behave in a businesslike manner.**
2. **Make appointments to talk about your children.** *Except for emergencies, call only during agreed upon times. Ask if the time is convenient. If not, make an appointment for a time that is. Do not discuss parenting issues at the exchanges of the children.*
3. **Be polite.** *Do not use bad language or name call. Do not discuss issues under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. If you feel the situation is getting out of control, agree to talk at a later time.*
4. **Give your co-parent the benefit of the doubt.** *Do not assume anything based on past experience. There may be current reasons for your ex-spouse's behavior, thoughts, feelings, and decisions.*
5. **Show appreciation whenever possible.** *If you are able to say something positive about your ex-spouse's parenting, do so. Expressing appreciation, no matter how small, contributes to the greater success of the co-parenting relationship.*
6. **Respect each other's privacy.** *Do not seek the details of his/her life or intrude. Do not discuss matters not related to the children unless your co-parent agrees to do so.*
7. **Respect your children's relationship with the other parent.** *Your children did not divorce either parent. Encourage them to get over any negative feelings toward the other parent and to resolve any conflicts.*
8. **Be on time for the exchanges of the children.** *This shows respect towards the other parent and as well as your children. Your children are eager to see you and it is a disappointment for them when a parent is late or does not show up.*
9. **Make all agreements clear, and follow up with written communication when possible.** *Be clear and complete in your communication; include the time, place, whether children will be fed or not, what clothes they need, etc. Communicate directly; do not ask the children to do the parenting business.*
10. **Keep agreements; be true to your word.** *If you say you will do something that might affect the other parent, then do it. Carry out what you promised. If you can't follow through with an agreement for good reason, then explain why. If you are not able to promise something or accommodate a request, make it clear that you can't and say why.*
11. **Allow flexibility.** *Life happens. Sometimes, things come up. If you allow flexibility with your co-parent, then he/she is likely to allow flexibility with you.*
12. **Accept that you can only control your own thoughts and behaviors.** *As much as you might try, you can never control anyone else.*
13. **Do not expect approval from your ex-spouse.** *Have your personal and emotional needs fulfilled with others.*



14. **Take responsibility for your shortcomings.** Admit when you are wrong and apologize. This will go a long way to establishing an amicable, working relationship with your co-parent.
15. **Forgive your co-parent.** As humans, we all make mistakes. Be willing to let go of past mistakes and move on. Do not hold grudges.
16. **Determine the best way of communication for you and your co-parent.** Will it be via telephone, email, text messages, Ourfamilywizard.com, etc?
17. **Try not to compare households.** Parents often have different parenting styles, financial resources, etc. Children can learn flexibility when experiencing different lifestyles.
18. **Behave in a trustworthy manner and prove your reliability.** Trust is a two-way street. It takes time to rebuild trust.
19. **Plan for how disagreements will be resolved.** There may be a time when you will have a difference of opinion with your co-parent, but it is not a platform for judgment of who's right and who's wrong. You will need to eventually resolve the disagreement. Will you go to counseling or mediation? Or, obtain more information about the issue?
20. **Communicate only about the children.**
21. **Present as a united front to your children as often as possible and support the other parent's decision regarding discipline (unless you suspect abuse).** Children aim to get their needs met by playing the parents against each other-even in integrated homes. When children know their parents are on the same page, the less likely they can manipulate.
22. **Do not make assumptions about what is going on in your co-parent's household.**
23. **Avoid making commitments to your child without first discussing it as co-parents.**
24. **Understand that parental roles may change.** If you historically relied on the other parent to remind you of where you need to be and when, then you must begin to do that for yourself. If you have historically taken the children to doctor appointments, allow the other parent to do so, if he/she requests.
25. **Share information about your children with the other parent (school pictures, sport schedules, etc.) so both of you can participate as fully as possible.**
26. **Make child support payments on time.** If you are the one receiving payment and it is overdue, that is not a reason to keep your child from seeing that parent. With any child support questions or concerns, you can receive assistance from Job and Family Services, your attorney, or the court.

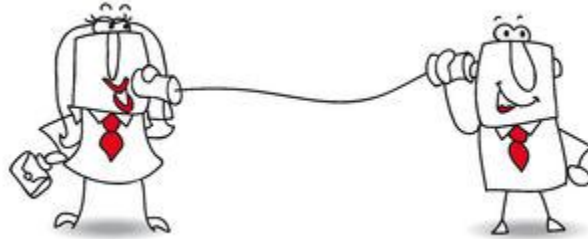
Remember that it takes much time and practice before the above behaviors become second-nature.





# Guidelines for Effective Communication

Communication is the key to an effective co-parenting relationship. Although many of you are divorcing because of poor communication, now is the time to improve your communication.



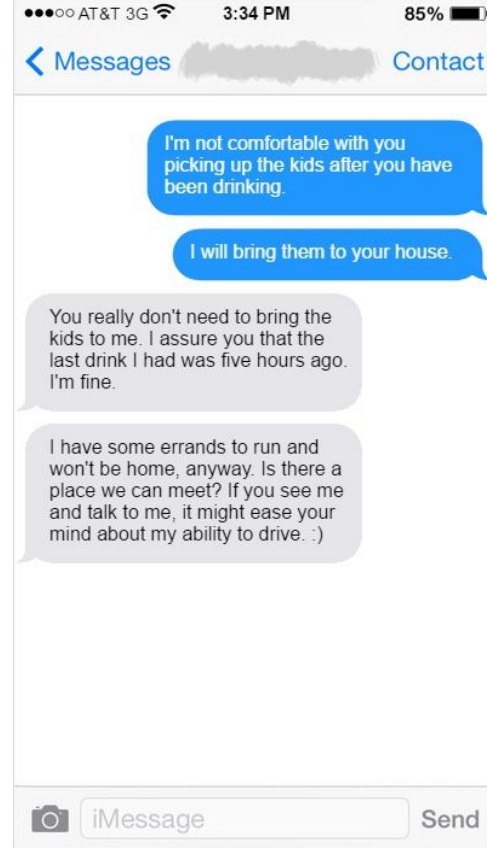
1. Discuss only child-related topics.
2. Use polite language and courteous manners. Start discussions by using a common, courteous greeting: "Hello, how are you?" and respond to greetings: "I'm well, and you?"
3. Say something positive about your child/children.
4. Listen fully to your co-parent without thinking about your response. Once you are sure that the parent is finished speaking, then respond. If you need a few minutes to think or process what you just heard, just say so. If the other parent makes this request, be silent.
5. Be explicit and detailed about child-related issues. Ask for clarification when necessary and be patient when asked for clarification.
6. Speak in an even, calm tone.
7. Avoid raising your voice or yelling.
8. Avoid using sarcasm.
9. Avoid "pushing buttons."
10. Avoid name-calling and derogatory comments.
11. Avoid bringing up past marital and divorce issues.
12. Avoid blaming and criticizing the other parent's way of doing things.
13. Avoid saying things such as "You shouldn't... You should have... Why didn't you... I expect you to..."
14. Avoid making demands; make requests.
15. Avoid responding in a defensive manner.
16. Use "I" statements. "I feel...when you..."
17. Discuss an issue/problem as if it is both of yours.
18. Do not expect your co-parent to discuss issues with your current spouse/partner.
19. Do not relay messages through your child.
20. Discuss one issue at a time; do not bring up an issue to avoid addressing the initial issue raised by the co-parent.
21. If you feel angry or any other negative emotion that might result in poor communication, request that you talk at a later time when you have calmed down. If the other parent makes this request, be agreeable.
22. Use email, text, or voicemail if you cannot talk to your ex-spouse.



### Bad Text Message



### Good Text Message



## Protocols for email communication

1. Use a simple caption to identify the subject. Include "RR" (response requested) or "FYI" (for your information)
2. FYI does not require a response—only an acknowledgment.
3. Use polite format: "Hi", "Dear \_\_\_\_\_", "Please", "Thank you"
4. Properly identify yourself; do not have others send an email as if they are you.
5. Keep messages succinct, businesslike, and to the point.
6. Respond to the issue, question, etc. in a timely manner.
7. Avoid using old emails for new subjects. Write an appropriate subject in the subject line.
8. Agree on how many emails per day are appropriate.
9. Only respond to the response if a question is posed or additional information is necessary.
10. Do not allow or encourage children to read emails related to parenting.



# Ineffective Email Communication vs. Effective Email Communication

Below you will find three examples of email message exchanges that are not good—they are sometimes unclear, sometimes angry, and sometimes hurtful.

As you read the message exchange on the left side of the page, note how challenging it can be to understand, and how easy it is to feel offended. As you then read the right side of the page, note the difference and the improvement.

## Example 1:

### *Ineffective email message*

**To:** Dad  
**Date:** Thursday, June 23, 2016, 10:13 am  
**Subject:** Found Items  
 Some of your crap is still at the house. You need to come get it or I'm throwing it away.

**To:** Mom  
 It's about time you returned these things to me. Where am I getting them at 6?

**To:** Dad  
 My house and you can drop them off at 7 on Monday since you requested this time with them.

**To:** Mom  
 The holiday schedule is the same as any other parenting time so you still need to get them at 7 at Frisch's.

**To:** Dad  
 You changed the schedule last minute so what you want as always Jack. I'm having huge issues and the steering wheel will barely turn but I'll drive down there I guess. I hope its safe enough for the girls.

### *Effective email message*

**To:** Dad  
**Date:** Thursday, June 23, 2016, 10:13 am  
**Subject:** Found Items  
 I was organizing our bins in the basement and found some items of yours. I will have them for you today at 6.

**To:** Mom  
 Thanks. Where am I getting the kids at 6?

**To:** Dad  
 If you don't mind dropping them off at my house that would be appreciated. Would you be able to drop them off at 7 instead of 6?

**To:** Mom  
 Could we continue to use the same drop off location and time, Frisch's at 7?

**To:** Dad  
 That will work. Would you be willing to change the locations during the holiday schedule if needed and you if knew in advance?



## Example 2:

*Ineffective email***To:** Dad**Subject:** Tired of your lack of attention to Johnny's grades/homework/contact with teachers and lack of follow through/punishment

I just received an email from the teacher. Johnny has failed to turn in homework assignments and his current grade in math is a 65%. I feel this is unacceptable. Please let me know how you want to handle this since Johnny is with YOU. I would be more than happy to pick Johnny up right now so he can complete these assignments and finish his book report project which is due tomorrow. Johnny is more than capable to do the work and very smart with numbers. He is not applying himself or turning his homework in on time. With this grade report and this ongoing issue of turning in homework on time, I do not want the iPad coming to my home until final report cards are received. You need to discipline him too!

**To:** Mom

My concern is why wasn't I (as the more active parent) not notified of this directly. No Jill I don't need you to step in and finally show support but I do need to know what assignment I am looking for and will be happy to get Johnny on the ball to reach his full potential.

**To:** Dad

Could you contact teacher directly for once?

**To:** Mom

Funny this email was only sent to his mother but since I'm the man it only makes me a weekend dad, eh?

**To:** Dad

It's your own fault.

**To:** Mom

Since you don't spend as much time with our children as I do, maybe you can take my child support money and invest in a tutor instead of yourself. Makes me sick I have to support what is soon to be there people additional when my own children deserve the benefits they are not getting.

**To:** Dad

Yes as long as my hard earned money goes to financially supporting you and your new boyfriend when it could be spent on my children, you will get every bit of this nasty attitude from me.

*Effective email***To:** Dad**Subject:** Johnny's Homework and Consequences

Johnny has failed to turn in homework assignments and his current grade in math is a 65%. Please let me know your thoughts on how we'll handle it. He has a book report due tomorrow which demands a lot of time. I could help finish it if you have a lot going on. He is not applying himself or turning his homework in on time. With this grade report and ongoing issue of turning in homework on time, I'm wondering if the iPad is a problem.

**To:** Mom

I will reach out to his teacher to see what I can do at home to help him reach his full potential. I agree that he should not be on his iPad until his grades improve. Maybe we can use the iPad as an incentive/reward? Let me know your thoughts.

**To:** Dad

Would you mind contacting his teacher?

**To:** Mom

I'm concerned that the email was only sent to you. I will contact the teacher to make sure she includes me on any communication regarding Johnny.

**To:** Dad

*(Would not respond to this message.)*

**To:** Mom

We could look into getting a tutor to help Johnny with the subjects he is struggling with in school. We agreed on parenting time in front of the Magistrate and child support was ordered by the court.

**To:** Dad

*(Would not respond to this message.)*

### Example 3:

#### *Ineffective email message*

**To:** Dad

**Subject:** Today's pick up

Why did Jane and Abby pick Sally up? Sally cried to not leave and of course Abby picked her up and she cried. Please tell Abby to leave her alone. Emily said you lied about Sally's busted lip as soon as you shut the van door she said it was Abby mom he just lied to you. A heads up would be nice. I would do and do the same for you. I also need responses back to my emails!! Not sure what the point of reading them and not responding?! Communication?! Issue!!!

**To:** Mom

I was still on a job so I asked Jane to pick her up. I'm allowed to anyone I designate to pick them up if needed. As for Abby, she can help out whenever she wants. I didn't lie about her busted lip. I have responded to your emails, I can communicate but as I have said before I'm not going to reply to 10 messages a day. If you could maybe try to keep your thoughts together and send one a day that would be nice! I worked every day and have a family to take care of as well so I obviously will respond to things you need answers on, and as I have time to do so unless it is an urgent issue then obviously I won't address it right away. Please stop trying to create issues and stir up drama over nothing.

**To:** Dad

I'm not stirring anything up Jack.

Abby picked her up when it was not needed today and she and Emily don't need to help her. She is fine. She cries when they touch her. She doesn't like it.

I do not send 10 messages a day or even 5 a day. So read them and respond and go on with the day.

Taking care of your family...you just said it in your email...what about your children's child support? What about clothes and shoes for back to school? What about school supplies? What about school fees? You haven't done any of it!!!! You owe over 4500 in child support so I'm a lil confused as to what you are doing to support your family? Must be a different family because your kids get nothing and no attention. What about not sending them back to me in nasty dirty clothes. You are very confusing and contradictory. Kate needs help from a doctor! What about that? What are you working on that? Love to know what doctors you have contacted!

Those are taking care of your family!!!! Not a country club you can't afford and everything you do wasting money trying to show off.

Family does not = what Jack wants FYI.

So please let me know about the things I've asked then it wouldn't be a continuous conversation all the time.

I need to know about Thanksgiving and Xmas and spring break as well. ASAP!!!!

#### *Effective email message*

**To:** Dad

**Subject:** Today's pick up

I am worried about interactions between Abby and Emily. Are you able to ask Abby not to pick Emily up at pick up and drop off?

**To:** Mom

I will ask Abby not to pick Emily up and to be more careful around her.

**To:** Dad

Thank you. I appreciate it.

# Dating

Parents' dating can be both exciting and challenging for divorced parents and their children. The following are suggestions to minimize some of the negative results of parents' dating on children.

- Hopefully you will have had some adjustment time after your divorce before you begin dating. You and your children need time together to adjust to all the changes that divorce can bring to a family. Introducing more changes can be overwhelming for both parent and child, which can create resentment and anxiety for children, especially younger ones.
- Once you do begin dating, do not introduce your dates to your children right away. If it is someone with whom you hope to have a long-term relationship, introduce them as friends and briefly explain how you met. Do not surprise the children by showing up with your date at your side. Make sure that you have a private conversation with your children so that they have an opportunity to talk about their feelings prior to their introduction.
- Develop a supportive relationship with your ex-spouse to minimize difficulties with you dating. It is much easier for both parties to hear from the other that dating has begun, as opposed to hearing it from the children. You do not need to share details of dating, but you *do* need to talk about it in terms of how it affects the children. By letting your former spouse know that you have begun dating, they can be alerted to any behaviors or questions that the children might bring to them.
- Remain neutral in front of the children about your former spouse's dating. No matter how it makes you feel that there is someone else in your former spouse's life, it is not acceptable to share those feelings with your child. If your children feel that you are angry or sad about their other parent's dating, it will cause them to feel the need to dislike their parent's choice in a new partner. They may believe they are betraying you by accepting newcomers.
- When children discover that their parents are dating, this may make them reverse back to feelings they experienced when the divorce occurred. Potential partners may destroy the children's fantasies that their parents will get back together. It is normal for children to regress at the news that mom or dad is involved in a new relationship.
- Do not expect your child to be happy about a new person in your life, or to immediately like him or her. Some children see this as a threat. You may have been a single parent for a while, and they have had you all to themselves. Now, your attention is turned to a new person, which can naturally cause resentment, jealousy, or fear. Children need to know that they are important in your life; you can make them feel this way by spending time alone with them, and not always including your date.
- Live up to the same sexual and social behavior standards that you expect of your children. Teenagers especially do not think of their parents as sexual beings. Be respectful of their feelings.

Children may behave in a way that is designed to sabotage new relationships. They may become withdrawn or depressed, cry, have temper tantrums, get sick, fight with their brothers and sisters, attack the other person or create other emergencies. Other children may hope their parents will remarry, and may eagerly welcome all possible candidates, becoming attached too quickly.

When children do become attached to a new person, they can suffer a deep sense of loss if the relationship ends. It can have a more severe long-term effect on the children than on the adults involved.

However, the good news is that 75% of divorcing parents do remarry, often with very satisfying results for the whole family. This is especially true if people are realistic and patient.



# Telling Children about Divorce

It helps for parents to think through what information children need before announcing the divorce.

## ***What children need to hear:***

1. Though a marriage has ended, the family continues (but with a different structure).
2. While adults' feelings for one another change, the special bonds between parent and child will last.
3. Parents will continue taking care of and providing for their children as best they can.
4. The decision to divorce was carefully thought out. A lot of effort went into trying to make the marriage work.
5. Parents regret the hurt this decision has caused for their children.
6. Children did not cause the divorce.
7. Children may wish their parents would stay together, but it's not their decision.
8. Children will be able to continue to love both parents.
9. Changes will take place in children's lives, such as where they will live, with whom, how these changes will affect school, friends, etc. Talk about what will remain the same.
10. Younger children in particular need routines to structure their lives. Share current routines that will continue. Teens still need rules.
11. Parents know children will have a lot of concerns and feelings about the divorce and they are available to listen. Invite children to share their worries and fears. Tell them the hard feelings they have are okay.

**When parents can tell children together about divorce, several things are more likely to happen:**

- There is less focus on a "bad guy".
- Parents are modeling their ability to cooperate.
- There is less pressure for the child to take sides.
- Children will adjust more readily.



# 30 Things That Children of Divorce Wish Their Parents Knew

1. No matter what happens, we love you the same.
2. We hate packing a bag to go between houses.
3. Not every bump in the road is a result of the divorce, so stop blaming yourself for everything.
4. Please don't overshare; we don't need to know every grimy detail of what our parents are fighting about, especially when we're old enough to understand what it all means.
5. We're protective of you with new significant others. If they're worth it, we'll warm up.
6. We want you to fight to see us . . . every other weekend isn't enough, and it hurts if you don't seem to care.
7. When you try to "buy" our love with trips and gifts or to one-up the other parent, it makes us feel uncomfortable.
8. . . . but don't worry, we really like having two Christmases!
9. When we're at your house, we're going to miss our other parent. It's not because you're not good enough; we just love you both.
10. Stop trying to get information out of us about your ex. They're not our enemy, and we're not your middleman. It's not fair to put us in that position.
11. We can tell when you're deferring to the other parent for unpleasant decisions, and we'd rather just have a straight answer.
12. Please answer your phone when we're not at your house; it's already hard enough being apart.
13. We know that single parenting isn't easy — you don't have to do it all. You're allowed to have bad days.
14. Nobody wants to grow up in an "us vs. them" situation, so please do your best to make ours a "we" situation. You don't have to be married to be a team.
15. Your kids are not your therapists. Please seek out professional help or rely on one of your close friends for comfort, because we won't know what to do.
16. To make the transition easier on us, take dating slow and don't introduce us to people that you're not serious about.
17. We still want both of you at our sports games and school events, even if it's not "your week".
18. Your unhappiness with one another rubs off on us.
19. Please don't scream and fight in front of us. The whole point of your divorce was to avoid all of that nastiness.
20. We know that your divorce happened for a reason, but that doesn't mean we want to know what that reason is.
21. We know when your "friend" isn't just a friend.
22. We hate seeing you cry. We want to make it all better, but we can't.
23. The moments we have with you are precious—please don't waste them being bitter.
24. When you work together and are civil toward one another, we know it isn't easy. Thank you for trying so hard for us.
25. Don't use us as ammunition in your arguments, especially to hurt one another. It puts us in an unfair position and makes us feel responsible.
26. After the divorce, we are upset in a totally different way than you are...try to be understanding when we act out or say mean things.
27. We can tell when you're faking it.
28. Please don't make us choose between you.
29. Don't make us feel guilty for enjoying our time with the other parent. It doesn't mean we love you less...it means that we're not miserable. Isn't that a good thing?
30. Your divorce doesn't make us love you any less.

March 25, 2016 by [Brinton Parker](#). Accessed from the world wide web on April 27, 2016.

[http://www.popsugar.com/moms/Things-Kids-Divorce-Want-Parents-Know-37191083?stream\\_view=1#photo-37191084](http://www.popsugar.com/moms/Things-Kids-Divorce-Want-Parents-Know-37191083?stream_view=1#photo-37191084)





# Anticipating Difficult Times

- **Keeping children's routines** (bedtime, mealtime, bathtime, etc.) the same will help children deal with the changes in their family.
- **Give warnings about transitions.** Examples:  
 "We need to leave in five minutes. Finish up what you are playing with."  
 "As soon as we finish this book, it will be time to take your bath."
- **Set expectations ahead of time, and tell the child what you expect.** Example:  
 "When we are in the store, walk beside me. Keep your hands to yourself or on the cart. You can choose the kind of cereal we buy."
- **State expectations without a question. Do not ask a question unless there is a choice.** Example:  
 "It's time to go to bed."      *Instead of*      "Are you ready to go to bed?"  
 "We need to leave now."      *Instead of*      "Do you want to go now?"
- **Offer choices.** It is a lot easier for parents to make the important decisions (i.e. whether or not to attend school) if we allow children to make the choice about less important decisions. **This gives the children experience with making decisions.** Examples:  
 "Which one of these pants do you want to wear to school tomorrow?"  
 "You need to use a quieter voice if you are going to stay in the room with us. If you want to be noisier, you need to go in the other room."  
 "We need to clean up the finger paint. Do you want to get the paint off your arms or the floor first?"
- **In serious situations, involving danger, set limits quickly.** Example:  
 While you, the parent, are physically intervening, say:  
 "I need you to...treat the baby gently."  
     ...ride your bike on the sidewalk."  
     ...get an adult before you open the door."
- **Always tell children what you want them to do** instead of telling them what not to do. Children see themselves doing what people tell them. Example:  
 "Keep your feet on the floor."      *Instead of*      "Quit jumping up and down."  
 "Hang up the phone softly."      *Instead of*      "Don't slam down the phone."

An excellent book with parenting suggestions and ideas is *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen*: Faber, A., & Mazlish, E. (1980). *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk*. New York, NY: Scribner Classics.



## If one parent is irresponsible or has disappeared

It is important for the parent left with sole parenting to keep in mind that children do cope with divorce when they have at least one parent who is reliable, loving and supportive.

- Rather than focusing on the absent parent, keep the focus on yourself. "You can count on me." Putting down the other parent is very harmful to the child.
- Focus on what you can control, not what you cannot change.
- Find books to read with your children that include family change situations.
- Help children learn that the "absent parent" problem is not a reflection of the child's worth.
- Do what you can to build self-esteem and make your children feel important.
- Get support from other single parents, groups or mental health professionals.
- If possible, help your child keep/build relationships with the absent parent's extended family.



# Divorce Mediation: A Cooperative Process

## ***Divorce does not have to destroy the lives of children***

You have decided to divorce (or someone has decided for you). It is not what you planned at the time of your marriage and your emotions may feel out of control. But your children need stability and they don't want to be caught in the middle of adult conflict.

There is an alternative to waging war or instructing your attorney to make demands for you.

Divorce Mediation offers you and your spouse an opportunity to sit down together with a neutral person who will help you examine all the issues that need to be resolved:

- A Comprehensive Parenting Plan
- Division of Property
- Financial Agreements
- Provisions for Change as Children Grow Older

***Goal: Divorce mediation helps work out all issues in a cooperative manner so that parties may seek dissolution of their marriage. Property may be hard to divide but the mediation process can help people be creative and fair about a settlement.***

The Court and Mediators believe that children do better during divorce if parents can resolve their differences outside of court. Spouses who are ending their relationship need to strengthen their parenting partnership for the sake of their children. Cooperating with one another to create a parenting plan that suits both parents and is in the best interest of the children is possible through mediation. It is less costly, less stressful, and puts the parents in charge of decisions regarding their children.

## ***Do not divorce the children***

Research has shown that a civil parent-to-parent relationship following divorce is important to a child's adjustment. Kids tell us that most of all they want their parents to stop fighting. Communication established during mediation often helps reduce angry feelings and assists parents in planning for the future.

## ***Will I need an attorney?***

Divorcing persons are always advised to have their mediation agreement reviewed by an attorney and to consult an attorney for legal advice while involved in mediation. Mediators cannot offer legal advice. It is best to seek out an attorney who understands mediation and will not add to any anger that is already present.

## ***Can children be involved in mediation?***

If both parents agree, children may come and speak with the mediator. Their opinions will be shared with parents if the children want that to happen. Sometimes a child has been refusing to see one parent. Conversation with a child or teen maybe helpful, but generally it is best for the parents to work out the agreement and communicate their decisions to their children together.



# Divorce Mediation: A Cooperative Process, cont'd.

## ***What happens in mediation?***

At the first session, the mediator explains the process and participants identify the issues which they want to discuss. Each person has time to tell their side of the story and many options are considered. As agreements are reached, they are written down. The mediator will offer suggestions but will not make decisions or tell people what to do.

Many people find that it is easier to talk in an office with someone to help keep the conversation going in a safe way. Often arguments get worked out if people feel validated and understood. The presence of a person who will not take sides helps people control their emotions and see things in a different way. People want to be treated fairly. If the agreement seems fair, most people will live up to them.

When mediation sessions end, the mediator prepares a written summary of all the agreements. These might include parenting, property, child support, pensions, etc. The mediator mails this document to the participants. Lawyers can then offer legal advice and prepare papers for court.

## ***What does mediation cost?***

Mediation is almost always less costly than going to court.

## ***Post Decree Mediation***

When the divorce is over, you may find that mediation could be helpful. There may be issues that include:

- Child Support
- Parenting Time Schedule
- Formation of New Step-Families
- Options for Teens
- Vacations and Camps
- Cars and Curfew

## ***How Children Benefit from Mediation***

Kids tell us most often that they want their parents to **Stop Fighting**. They want to go back and forth from Mom's house to Dad's house without tension or whining. After divorce, parents need to learn how to form a civil business partnership for their kids' sake.

You've said it many times! "I'll do anything for my kid(s)." Your kids love both of you. If there are communication problems and you cannot work issues on your own call a mediator—for the sake of your kids!



# Litigation vs. Mediation

Mediation is an alternative to the adversarial court process. In mediation, parents make decisions about parenting issues, property and other matters. Individual attorneys play an important role in the mediation process by giving legal advice and reviewing the agreements.

Mediation requires considerable effort on the part of parents. Negotiating with your spouse in the midst of a crisis may seem impossible. Nevertheless, the effort can create an environment in which the children are helped to succeed after divorce, and new communication boundaries can be built for co-parenting.

<b>Litigation</b>	<b>Mediation</b>
Competitive process	Cooperative process
Lack of communication or misleading communication	Open, honest communication of relevant information
Widens personal differences	Narrows personal differences
Suspiciousness, hostile attitude	Leads to trusting, respectful attitude
Tendency to exploit other's needs and respond negatively to other's requests	Increases willingness to respond helpfully
Outcome oriented	Process oriented
Emphasis on a winner and a loser	Emphasis on gain for both parties
Agreement imposed by others	Agreement developed by parents
Often both parties are unhappy with results	Often brings a greater sense of satisfaction

Adapted from Helping Children Succeed after Divorce: A Handbook for Parents. Children's Hospital Guidance Centers, Columbus, Ohio (with minor changes)



## Custody Arrangements in Ohio

If a couple with children is divorcing or petitioning for dissolution, arrangements will need to be made regarding the care of the children. These arrangements, which are legally called “allocating parental rights and responsibilities”, can be agreed upon by the parents. Or, if they are unable to agree, the Court will make these arrangements for the family. In Ohio, there are two ways permissible by law to “allocate parental rights and responsibilities”:

- One person being designated the residential parent and legal custodian for the children
- or*
- Both parents sharing legal rights and responsibilities for the children (shared parenting)

Both situations are good alternatives for parents, depending upon their circumstances. Neither situation is superior to the other.

In a situation where one parent is designated the residential parent and legal custodian, this parent is responsible for most decisions and arrangements for the children. The other parent is the non-residential parent who is granted specific rights, including visitation with the children. Each parent is able to have access to schools, teachers, medical and academic records, activities and daycare facilities. In this situation, parents can be cooperative and alter the schedule if both are agreeable.

In the situation where parents have shared parenting, both parents are considered the residential parent and legal custodian. Their rights and responsibilities are contained in a document called a “shared parenting plan”. This plan sets out the time each child will spend with each parent. It also addresses issues of child support, medical care, transportation, education, religion, and discipline. Each shared parenting plan is unique; no two are usually the same. Shared parenting does not necessarily mean a 50-50 split in time or responsibilities. Sometimes children basically live with one parent during the week and the children spend time with the other parent on alternate weekends. This is still shared parenting. Shared parenting usually indicates that parents are able to work together and make joint decisions in the best interest of their children.

If parents are unable to agree upon parenting arrangements for their children, it is recommended that they attempt mediation. Mediation is a process whereby a neutral third party (the mediator) assists parents in making agreements. Hamilton County Court of Domestic Relations has a list of accredited mediators in the community that are skilled in divorce mediation. In some cases, the Court will order couples to mediation if they are unable to agree upon parenting arrangements. If, after mediation, parents are unable to agree upon parenting arrangements, the Court will order Early Neutral Evaluation or a parenting investigation. A parenting investigation is a three-month long process in which parents and children are involved in a series of interviews. Information is obtained from professionals and witnesses who have had contact with the family. A full investigation is normally a highly conflictual and costly alternative, which is often followed by a more costly and emotionally damaging custody trial.



# Glossary of Legal Terms

- Agreed Entry** is a document that indicates parties have settled issues, that is filed for Judge/Magistrate signatures and that becomes the Order of the Court in the Court records.
- Allocation of Parental Rights and Responsibilities** is a Court or agreed determination for the arrangements regarding the minor child(ren).
- Annulment** is a legal termination of an invalid marriage where according to law, neither party was ever married. Any child(ren) born of an annulled marriage remain legitimate.
- Answer** is the second pleading in a legal action in response to the Complaint for Divorce. The Answer admits or denies the complaint allegations and may make claims against the other party.
- Antenuptial Agreement or Pre-Nuptial Agreement** is entered into prior to a marriage that determines how property shall be distributed upon death or termination of marriage.
- Appeal** is a process where a higher Court reviews the final judgment of a lower Court. The Appeals Court will affirm, modify, remand or reverse a lower Court's Order or judgment.
- Appraiser** is a person who determines the monetary value of an asset such as a house, property, business, furniture or household goods.
- Arrearages** are monies owed that remain unpaid, such as child support or spousal support.
- Assets or Debts** are those acquired properties or liabilities and are considered to be the responsibility of both parties. A termination of a marriage must include a disposition of all assets or debts.
- Child Support** is an obligation of regular payments from one parent to the other parent to help share in the costs of raising the minor child(ren). Either party may have this obligation through a Court Order. The obligation is not taxable to the recipient, or deductible for the payor.
- Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA)** is the county office through which support payments must be made.
- Cohabitation** is living together as husband and wife, which can terminate a spousal support award.
- Complaint** is an initial pleading filed with a Court to start the divorce or other legal matters stating the relief the plaintiff is seeking. The Complaint must state grounds for the complaint.
- Contested Case** is any matter in which the Court must decide one or more issues on which the parties have not agreed.
- Continuance** is a request from a party to postpone a hearing so that the party or attorney may prepare for the hearing and be present at the hearing. Good cause must be shown for a continuance.
- Court Order** is a written document which is the directive of a Judge or Magistrate entered in writing and filed with the Court. Failure to follow a Court Order may result in a finding of contempt.
- Custody** is the legal right and responsibility that the Court awards to a parent for the care, possession and rearing of a child. The custodial parent becomes the parent who makes all the decisions for the minor child(ren).
- Decree** is a final judgment or pronouncement of the Court terminating the marriage or ordering a legal separation. The Decree must be entered into the Court journal before the marriage is officially ended.
- Defendant** is a person who must answer the Plaintiff's Complaint in Court and is the person being sued. In Domestic Relations Court, the Defendant is generally the spouse of the Plaintiff.
- Deposition** is sworn testimony of a witness taken outside of Court.
- Direct Examination** is the initial questioning of a witness whom the lawyers call to testify.
- Discovery** is a process where the parties exchange information relevant to the issues in the case about assets and debts—for example, funds on deposit, pension plans, insurance policies or automobiles.
- Dissolution** is a legal process to end a marriage where the parties have reached a full agreement on all matters to settle all issues. No fault is found. Upon filing, the parties have 90 days to file and to complete all documents.
- Divorce** is a legal process to end a marriage where the parties cannot agree on issues and the Court must decide the issues. Divorce is granted to one party on specific grounds. The parties must allege and provide grounds.
- Domestic Violence** is where a household member has either threatened or committed an act of violence against another household member.



**Duration of Marriage** means the period of time from the date of the ceremonial marriage through the separation or the final hearing. The period is important so that the Court can equitably distribute the assets. Common Law marriage is no longer valid in Ohio as of October 10, 1991.

**Early Neutral Evaluation** is a confidential process where the parties are able to explain their financial or parenting position in front of two evaluators for an evaluation of a possible outcome in the divorce matter.

**Emancipation** describes a child who reaches age 18 or completes high school, whichever is later, marries, enters the armed forces or is financially independent. An emancipated child is deemed to no longer be the parents' responsibility and the duty to provide child support is generally terminated.

**Equitable Distribution of Property** is a system of dividing property in connection with divorce proceedings on the basis of a variety of factors without regard to who holds title. The Court determines what is equitable, not necessarily equal.

**Evidence** includes documents, testimony, or other demonstrative material offered to prove or to disprove allegations.

**Foreclosure** is a legal process where a lender cancels a borrower's right of redemption for a mortgaged property.

**Free and Clear** is a determination of ownership for one person.

**Grounds** are the basis for action alleged in Court. Incompatibility, gross neglect of duty, living separate and apart for more than one year without cohabitation are most commonly used grounds for divorce.

**Guardian Ad Litem** is a Court-appointed attorney to represent the best interest of the child(ren).

**Hearing for Merits** is a brief session in which the Plaintiff tells the Judge or Magistrate in a few words the grounds for divorce. The Plaintiff must have a witness to confirm these grounds if the Defendant does not testify. The Defendant may appear and act as the witness.

**Hearing for Parenting** is a presentation of the parents' request for specific time during the week in which the parents will be responsible for the minor child(ren) as well as other responsibilities.

**Hearing for Property** is a presentation of the evidence on the identification and valuation of assets or debts which lead to a Magistrate's Decision for fair and equitable division.

**Hearing for Temporary Orders** concerns the 75N Order and is the presentation of household expenses, bill payments, temporary parenting issues, child support and/or spousal support, until the final Order of the Court has been made. The goal is to maintain the status quo until the final merits hearing.

**Hearing/Trial** is the presentation of evidence or legal arguments to the Judge or Magistrate for the Court to make a decision concerning the issues.

**Hold Harmless** is a determination where one party assumes the potential liability for property or a debt.

**Interrogatories** are a series of written questions served on the opposing party to discover certain facts regarding disputed issues. Answers to Interrogatories must be made under oath and submitted within a prescribed period of time, usually 30 days.

**Journalized** is where the Court's Order or decision is filed into the Court's docket and becomes the Order of the Court.

**Judge** is an elected official who presides over all matters and renders decisions. A judge has a 6-year term and must be a lawyer.

**Jurisdiction** is the limits or territory over which a Court has authority. If a divorce is granted in Hamilton County and if the parties were residents of Hamilton County, the Court retains authority unless a change is requested.

**Legal Separation** is a judgment of the Court or written agreement directing or authorizing spouses to live separate and apart. A Decree of Legal Separation does not dissolve the marriage and does not allow the parties to remarry. A Legal Separation does address property and custody issues.

**Liquid Assets** are property which can readily be converted into cash, such as stocks, bonds or savings accounts.

**Magistrate** is a judge-appointed lawyer who is given authority under Ohio law to examine evidence and to make decisions. The Magistrate presides over temporary custody, property, support, contempt and merits. Judges hear objections to a Magistrate's Decision and render an Entry that affirms, remands, or modifies the Decision.

**Marital Property** is a set of items, real or personal, that are acquired during the marriage which must be divided.

**Mediation** is a confidential process where a neutral third party assists people to develop their own agreement without the Court's intervention. Topics for mediation include parenting or financial matters.





**Mortgage** is the amount a party borrows from a bank for real estate or property.

**Motion** is a written application to the Court for some relief such as temporary support, contempt, attorney's fees or expert's fees.

**Objections** are written disagreements with a magistrate's decision filed within 14 days of the decision. The trial judge renders a decision whether to affirm or overrule the magistrate's decision.

**Obligor/Obligee** are terms used to describe Court Ordered responsibilities for payments. The Obligor is the payor, and the Obligee is the payee.

**Parent Coordination** is a Court Ordered, child-focused, dispute resolution process established to assist parties in implementing a parental rights and responsibilities Order or companionship time Order using assessment, education, case management, conflict management, coaching, or decision-making.

**Parenting time**, also known as visitation, is a parent's scheduled time with his or her child(ren). The schedule is specifically outlined in any parental agreement or Judge/Magistrate decision.

**Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO)** is a judgment that sets out the payment of all or part of individual pensions, profit sharing or retirement benefits.

**Secured Debt** is a liability where a debtor pledges a specific asset to insure the payment to the creditor if the debtor fails to repay the obligation.

**Separate Property** is a set of items that are real or personal property that belongs to one spouse. For example, separate property could be a gift from a parent or an inheritance.

**Separation Agreement** is an agreed itemization of the distribution of all property matters, support and care of the child(ren).

**Service** is the delivery of documents to a person who is then officially notified of an action or proceeding in Court.

**Shared Parenting** is joint decision making. Co-parents have equal responsibility relating to the care, control, discipline and education for the minor child(ren).

**Shared Parenting Plan** is an agreement filed with the Court where the parents agree they will both make decisions and be responsible for the minor child(ren) including medical decisions, religion, education and discipline.

**Show Cause/Contempt** is a legal action where a party is found to have failed to comply with a Court Order or judgment.

**Spousal Support** is a support payment to the other spouse for a period of time and for a specific amount of money. Spousal support is a tax deduction for the obligor and income for the obligee.

**Unsecured Debt** is a legal obligation based on a person's reputation and creditworthiness and not secured with any collateral property.





# HAMILTON COUNTY RESOURCE DIRECTORY

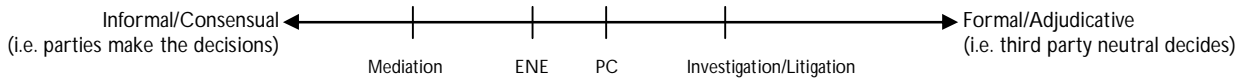
## Hamilton County Court of Domestic Relations

[http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/government/courts/court\\_of\\_domestic\\_relations/](http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/government/courts/court_of_domestic_relations/) ..... (513) 946-9000

**Docket Office** (to set or reschedule a hearing) ..... (513) 946-9043

**Dispute Resolution Department** ..... (513) 946-9079

The Dispute Resolution Department assists parties in achieving less acrimony and quicker resolution of their disputes through the use of processes designed to be utilized outside the courtroom. Litigation can be emotionally and financially draining on families, so the Court is committed to providing less expensive and less harmful alternatives. The Dispute Resolution Department offers numerous services that allow the parties greater participation, greater self-determination and greater control of their case. The Dispute Resolution Department offers a variety of services across a broad spectrum so that the Department can be responsive to the needs of the parties and the nature of the dispute.



- **Mediation:** a confidential process in which a neutral third party facilitates negotiation between the parties to assist them in reaching a voluntary agreement. The parties have the opportunity to discuss the issues and their interests and then explore ideas for the resolution of the dispute. The mediator guides the conversation but does not have the power to make any decisions for the parties.
- **Early Neutral Evaluation (ENE):** a confidential process in which the parties are referred to a Court Magistrate and Court Social Worker/Counselor, who are asked to provide a balanced and unbiased evaluation of the dispute after hearing the case background from the parties and their attorneys. The experts identify each party's strengths and weaknesses and then provide an evaluation of the likely outcome if the case proceeds to trial. This evaluation can assist parties in assessing their case and may propel them towards settlement.
- **Parenting Coordination (PC):** a process in which a mental health or legal professional assists high conflict parents with implementing their parenting plan by mediating the resolution of their disputes in a timely manner, educating them about their children's needs and, if necessary, with prior approval of the Court, making decisions within the scope of the court order.
- **Investigation:** a process in which a Court Social Worker/Counselor assesses a divorcing family and the effects that custody and parenting time arrangements will have on the children. After interviewing the family members and collecting information from those involved with the family, the Social Worker/Counselor writes a report for the Court with recommendations regarding the course that the Social Worker/Counselor believes is best for the children. The Social Worker/Counselor may be called as a witness during trial.

The Dispute Resolution Department also provides educational opportunities for parents and their children. Because continued conflict between parents is a risk factor for a variety of child problems, including poor emotional adjustment, low self-esteem and behavioral problems, the Court is invested in helping parents learn about the impact of parental conflict on their children, as well as specific skills for co-parenting, communication, and conflict resolution.



## PARENTING CLASSES

*Some classes may be divorce-focused*

### Beech Acres Parenting Center

[www.BeechAcres.org](http://www.BeechAcres.org) ..... (513) 231-6630

### Catholic Charities of Southwestern Ohio

[www.ccswoh.org](http://www.ccswoh.org) ..... English (513) 489-8898 Español (513) 752-0113  
Delhi: (513) 922-6537; Downtown: (513) 241-7445; Eastgate: (513) 752-0113; Hamilton: (513) 863-6129

### Central Clinic

[www.centralclinic.org](http://www.centralclinic.org) ..... (513) 558-5823

### Council on Child Abuse

<http://cocachild.org> ..... (513) 936-8009

### LifePoint Solutions

[www.lifepointsolutions.org](http://www.lifepointsolutions.org) ..... (513) 721-7660

### Santa Maria Community Services

[www.santamaria-cincy.org](http://www.santamaria-cincy.org) ..... (513) 557-2710

### Healthy Moms and Babes (hablamos español)

[www.healthymomsandbabes.org](http://www.healthymomsandbabes.org) ..... (513) 591-5600

## ADDITIONAL WEB SITES

### American Academy of Pediatrics

[www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)

### Divorce Care 4 Kids

[www.dc4k.org](http://www.dc4k.org)

### Divorce Care Information

[www.uptoparents.org](http://www.uptoparents.org)

### Mental Health America

[www.mhaswoh.org](http://www.mhaswoh.org)

## BUDGET COUNSELING

*Managing finances*

### Apprisen: Consumer Credit Counseling

[www.apprisen.com](http://www.apprisen.com) ..... (513) 366-4500

### Smart Money Community Services

[www.smart-money.org](http://www.smart-money.org) ..... (513) 241-7266



## ALCOHOL AND DRUG TREATMENT

*Agencies who provide treatment and assistance for substance use disorders.*

- Alcohol Abuse 24-Hour Assistance and Treatment** ..... (513) 281-7422
- Alcoholics Anonymous**  
[www.ny-aa.org/hamilton](http://www.ny-aa.org/hamilton) ..... (513) 351-0422
- Center for Addiction Treatment (formerly the CCAT House)**  
[www.catsober.org](http://www.catsober.org) ..... (513) 381-6672
- Council on Alcoholism**  
[www.alcoholismcouncil.org](http://www.alcoholismcouncil.org) ..... (513) 281-7880
- Greater Cincinnati Al-Anon/Alateen**  
[www.cincinnatiAFG.org](http://www.cincinnatiAFG.org) ..... (513) 771-5959
- Talbert House**  
[www.talberthouse.org](http://www.talberthouse.org) ..... (513) 751-7747

## BEREAVEMENT

*Services upon the death of a loved one*

- Cancer Family Care** (Cancer related death only)  
[www.cancerfamilycare.org](http://www.cancerfamilycare.org) ..... (513) 731-3346
- Fernside Center for Grieving Children** (offers grief counseling for children)  
[www.fernside.org](http://www.fernside.org) ..... (513) 246-9140

## CHILD ABUSE / ENDANGERMENT

*Abuse and neglect involving children*

- Hamilton County Job and Family Services** (to report abuse)  
[www.hcjfs.hamilton-co.org](http://www.hcjfs.hamilton-co.org) ..... (513) 241-KIDS (5437)

## CHILD CARE

*Locating quality childcare*

- 4 C for Children**  
[www.4cforchildren.org](http://www.4cforchildren.org) ..... (513) 221-0033
- Step Up To Quality Program** (search for quality rated providers through Hamilton County Job and Family Services)  
[www.jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/stepUpQuality.stm](http://www.jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/stepUpQuality.stm)



## CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

*Assistance with child support issues*

### Hamilton County Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA)

[www.hcjfs.hamilton-co.org](http://www.hcjfs.hamilton-co.org) ..... (513) 946-SETS (7387)

## LEGAL ASSISTANCE

### Cincinnati Bar Association Lawyer's Referral Service (attorney referrals)

[www.cincybar.org](http://www.cincybar.org) ..... (513) 381-8213  
381-8359

### Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati

[www.lascinti.org](http://www.lascinti.org) ..... (513) 241-9400

### Domestic Relations Court Family Law Clinic

800 Broadway, 2nd Floor

Tuesdays 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. and Thursdays 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. First come, first served

**Must meet Legal Aid low-income poverty guidelines**

[www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/government/courts/court\\_of\\_domestic\\_relations/self\\_help\\_resources](http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/government/courts/court_of_domestic_relations/self_help_resources)

### Collaborative Law (provides information about the process and referrals)

[www.collaborativelaw.com](http://www.collaborativelaw.com)

### CCROW (Cincinnati Citizens Respect Our Witnesses)

Witness program through Cincinnati Police – A witness support service encompassing a variety of services and referrals.

<http://cincinnati-oh.gov/police/ccrow/> ..... (513) 352-3542

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELP

*Support and services*

**Transform** (group counseling for batterers)..... Central Downtown: (513) 361-2129

[www.ywca.org](http://www.ywca.org) ..... Eastern Area: (513) 732-0450 (machine)

### Salvation Army Family Service Bureau

[www.use.salvationarmy.org](http://www.use.salvationarmy.org) ..... (513) 732-6328

### Women Helping Women (crisis intervention, legal and support services)

[www.womenhelpingwomen.org](http://www.womenhelpingwomen.org) ..... (513) 977-5541

24-hour hotline (513) 381-5610

**YWCA** (24-hour hotline)..... (513) 872-9259



Dispute  
Resolution  
Department



## DIVORCE GROUPS & SERVICES FOR PARENTS & CHILDREN

*These agencies offer parenting education and/or various services for parents and children affected by divorce.*

### Beech Acres Parenting Center

[www.BeechAcres.org](http://www.BeechAcres.org) ..... (513) 231-6630

### Catholic Charities of Southwestern Ohio

[www.ccswoh.org](http://www.ccswoh.org) ..... English (513) 489-8898  
 Español (513) 752-0113  
 Delhi: (513) 922-6537  
 Downtown: (513) 241-7445  
 Eastgate: (513) 752-0113  
 Hamilton: (513) 863-6129

### Jewish Family Services

[www.jfscinti.org](http://www.jfscinti.org) ..... (513) 469-1188

### LifePoint Solutions

[www.lifepointsolutions.org](http://www.lifepointsolutions.org) ..... (513) 721-7660

### Santa Maria Community Services

[www.santamaria-cincy.org](http://www.santamaria-cincy.org) ..... (513) 557-2710

## PARENTING HELP LINES

*For further community resource information*

**Beech Acres Parenting Center, Parent Connections** ..... (513) 231-6630

**United Way Referral Service** ..... (513) 721-7900

## CRISIS HELP LINES

*Emergency mental health or substance abuse assistance*

**Lighthouse Youth Crisis Hotline** ..... (513) 961-4080

**24-hour Suicide and Crisis Hotline** ..... (513) 281-2273 (CARE)

**UC Psychiatric Emergency Services/Mobile Crisis Unit** ..... (513) 584-8577



## Divorce Bibliography

In choosing a book for your child, be sure that the story in the book matches your situation. For example, if your child's other parent is absent, do not choose a book about how it feels to have a "Mom house" and a "Dad house", or how both parents will be involved in the child's life and spend time together. Whenever possible, read the books you choose together; it is at that time when children are most likely to ask questions or let you know what is bothering them.

This book list is comprised of those that are most often recommended, but that does not mean that this list is complete. Fortunately, there are many books that will help you help your child transition through the divorce. Browse the library and bookstores and ask your child's school for recommendations; you will discover many great resources to assist you. ***The details of individual book listings were accurate as of 2016; various library resources and inventories can change often.***

Because the Internet is a tool that so many parents find useful, we have included some websites to help you with your search for material, articles and information.

### Websites:

[www.BeechAcres.org/parenting](http://www.BeechAcres.org/parenting)

[www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com)

[www.UpToParents.org](http://www.UpToParents.org)

[www.DivorceCare.com](http://www.DivorceCare.com)

[www.OurFamilyWizard.com](http://www.OurFamilyWizard.com)

[www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org) – American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/patients/child/special-needs> - Children's Hospital Special Needs Resource Directory

<http://www.helpmegrow.ohio.gov> – Help Me Grow is a voluntary family support program for pregnant women or new parents.

[www.dc4k.org](http://www.dc4k.org) – Divorce Care 4 Kids

[www.mhaswoh.org](http://www.mhaswoh.org) – Mental Health America

<http://www.nami-cc.org> – National Alliance on Mental Illness—Southwest Ohio

## Divorce Bibliography for Adults

*Families Apart: Ten Keys to Successful Co-Parenting.* Blau, Melinda. A Perigee Book; 1<sup>st</sup> Perigee Edition. 1995. Co-Parenting requires discipline, skill and hard work. This book focuses on the relationship and how crucial it is for the well being of the kids.

*The Essential Grandparents' Guide to Divorce.* Carson, Lillian. Health Communications, Inc. Deerfield Beach, FL. 1999. Helpful information for the grandparent in coping with the divorce of their grandchildren. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.





*Helping Your Grandchildren Through Their Parents' Divorce.* Cohen, Joan Schragar. New York: Walker & Co., 1994. Real life stories are used to illustrate specific ways grandparents can offer support, talk to grandchildren about the divorce and guidelines for maintaining family traditions. This informative book offers practical assistance, information and resources. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Be a Great Divorced Dad.* Condrell, Dr. Kenneth & Small, Linda Lee. St. Martin's Press 1997. Offers advice, guidance and support for the ever-growing number of divorced fathers who seek to remain "real" dads, but fear that their situation after divorce will make that possible. Paperback available.

*Between Love and Hate: A guide to Civilized Divorce.* Gold, Lois. New York: Plenum Press, 1992. This useful book offers mentoring to people who need to get divorced but want to do it in a dignified manner that will not cause trauma to their children. Joan Kelly comments "civilized divorces increase and preserve self-esteem, empower the participants, promote healthier adjustments for children and adults, and enable parents to retain or improve their working relationship on behalf of their children." Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Growing Up With Divorce: Helping Your Child Avoid Immediate and Later Emotional Problems.* Kalter, Neil. New York: MacMillan, The Free Press, 2006. A useful book for parents and professional in helping children more openly discuss their feelings about divorce. Practical advice about: How to help the child when the parent starts dating, how minimize the stress of divided loyalties. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Divorce Book for Parents.* Lansky, Vicki. Book Peddlers, 1996. A guide to help parents tell their children about divorce; what behavior to expect; practical tips from dealing with holidays to dating. Paperback available.

*Divorced Dad Dilemma.* Mayer, Gerald. IUniverse, Incorporated, 2000. Mayer counsels on dealing with such emotional problems father's experience such as guilt, anxiety, jealousy and he offers tips on handling more mundane concerns such as access, communications and time allotment. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Co-Parenting After Divorce: How To Raise a Happy, Healthy Children in Two-Home Families.* Schulman, Diana. Winnspeed Press, 1997.

*Men On Divorce: Conversations With Ex-Husbands.* Wymard, Ellis. Carson, CA: Hay House, 1994. The memories and recovery of divorced men are told through interviews with ex-husbands. This is an important book that enables the reader to see divorce as a human problem, heartache that is the same for men and women. Our efforts to expose the oppression of women have focused on wives as victims and survivors of divorce. Our stereotypes of male/female behavior sometimes prohibit us from seeing that a husband might feel abused, alienated and helpless. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*The Good Divorce: Keeping Your Family Together When Marriage Comes Apart.* Constance R. Ahrons. Harper Collins, New York, 1995. This book speaks directly to the needs of families. It is a survival guide for getting through the divorce process and beyond. Hardcover available. Paperback 1998. Available through Amazon as a Kindle book, and at the Cincinnati Public Library.



*The Language of Letting Go.* Melody Beattie. Hazeldon Publishing & Educational Services, New York, 1996. Daily meditation for co-dependents which encourages fruitful reflection on problem-solving, self-awareness, sexuality, intimacy, detachment, attachment, acceptance, feelings, relationships, spirituality and more. Hardcover and paperback available, as is the e-book version from the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Healing Hearts: Helping Children and Adults Recover From Divorce.* Elizabeth Hickey and Elizabeth Dalton. Gold Leaf Process, 1994. Of particular value is the focus on children and their needs and the emphasis on responsibilities and not rights. Paperback available.

*Crazy Times.* Abigail Trafford. William Morrow, Paperback, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2014. An easy-to-read book about the "crazy time" that follows divorce; author is a divorced journalist.

*Divorce Happens to the Nicest Kids.* Michael Prokop. Alegra House Publishers, 1996. This book disproves 14 irrational beliefs concerning divorce that often cause children and adolescents to feel anxious, nervous and depressed. Revised paperback available.

*Mom's House, Dad's House for Kids.* Isolina Ricci, Ph.D. Simon & Schuster, 2006. A complete guide for parents--separated, divorced, or remarried. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library as a book and an e-book.

## **Divorce Bibliography for Preschool and Early Elementary Children**

*Standing on my Own Two Feet.* Tamara Schmitz. Price Stern Sloan, Penguin Group., 2008, hardcover. The book is about a child whose parents are getting divorced but no matter what happens, he knows his parents will love him. The text is beautifully illustrated and inspiring for both children and parents alike and assures kids that they will always have two parents to lean on, just as they have two strong feet to stand on. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Dinosaurs Divorce.* Laurence Krasny & Marc Brown. Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1986 & 1988, hardcover. An excellent book presenting specific issues about divorce and remarriage with directness, humor and imagination. Engaging illustrations about a dinosaur family add to the appeal of this book. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Two Homes.* Claire Masurel (Author), Kady Macdonald Denton (Illustrator). Paperback, July 14, 2003. Young Alex's parents are divorced, and he spends time with each of them. He has two rooms, two favorite chairs, two sets of friends, two of everything. He loves both of them no matter where he is, and they love him, no matter where they are. There is no sign of the child missing one parent when he is with the other or questioning his situation, and he seems quite well-adjusted. This book is clearly intended to help parents tell their children that they are still loved despite their living arrangements. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.



*Was it the Chocolate Pudding?: A Story for Little Kids About Divorce.* Sandra Levins and Bryan Langdon. Paperback, September, 2005. With childlike innocence and humor, a young narrator living with his single father and brother explains divorce from a kid's point of view. Special emphasis is placed on the fact that divorce is not the child's fault, that it is a grown-up problem. Deals with practical day-to-day matters such as single-family homes, joint custody, child-care issues, and misunderstandings. Includes Note to Parents. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Mama and Daddy Bear's Divorce.* Cornelia Spelman, Albert Whitman. Morton Grove, IL, 2001. Dinah Bear feels sad and scared when her parents say they are going to divorce. This book provides reassurance that, as confusing as a divorce may be, it does not mean that both parents will no longer be part of a youngster's life. The words used to describe the divorce and what it means are carefully chosen, and the expressions on the bear characters' faces are appropriately sad. However, the message of this book is that life goes on. And so, while Dinah misses Daddy when she is with her mother, and misses Mama when she is with her father, some things, including her stuffed animal and red sandals, remain the same. In a note to adults, Spelman outlines children's concerns about divorce. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*My Stick Family: Helping Children Cope with Divorce.* Natalie June Reilly, Brandi J. Pavese. Paperback, March 1, 2002. Billy feels angry, confused and sad. His parents don't live together anymore — they have gotten a divorce. His deepest wish is for his mom, dad and little brother Alec to live together as a family again. In this tender story, simply and charmingly illustrated, Billy learns that just because his parents live in separate homes, it doesn't mean that the strength and love of a family has been taken from him.

*It's Not Your Fault, Koko Bear: A Read-Together Book for Parents & Young Children During Divorce.* Vicki Lansky (Author), Jane Prince (Illustrator). Paperback, 1998. This is a picture book designed to be read by parents to their children. Koko Bear's parents are getting a divorce, and Koko, a preschool-age bear, isn't happy about it. "I don't like this divorce. I don't want two homes," Koko says. Koko Bear's story doesn't minimize kids' pain, but it doesn't wallow in it either. The message is positive: Children are reassured that their feelings are natural, that their parents still love and will care for them, and that the divorce is not their fault.

*Tots Are Non-Divorceable: A Workbook for Divorced Parents and Their Children.* Sara Bonkowski. January, 1999.

## Divorce Bibliography for Teenagers

*Surviving Divorce: Teens Talk About What Hurts, What Helps.* Trudi Strain Trueit. Franklin Watts, publisher, March, 2007. With an open layout and reassuring text, this book is an inviting guide to the facts and feelings of parental divorce. Personal stories and photos of kids begin each chapter, and frequent statistics and quizzes will help readers to assess their feelings and put them into context. Solid advice well-presented that tells the readers they are not alone. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*The Divorce Workbook for Teens: Activities to Help You Move Beyond the Break Up.* Lisa M. Schab. Instant Help Books, March, 2008. It's tough being a teen even in the best of circumstances, but when parents divorce, teens are faced with emotional issues. This book gives them everything they need to get through their parents' divorce and emotional toll.



*The Divorce Helpbook for Teens.* Cynthia MacGregor. Impact Publishers, May, 2004. The popular author of *The Divorce Helpbook for Kids* is back with an all-new resource for teenagers in divorced and divorcing families. Her warm and friendly guide offers a helping hand to teens struggling to answer the tough questions when their parents' divorce: Why do parents get divorced? How will the divorce change our lives? What can I do to feel less depressed? What is there to talk about when you visit a parent who has moved away?

*Bouncing Back: Dealing With the Stuff Life Throws at You.* Jami L. Jones. Franklin Watts, publisher 2007. Each chapter begins with a vignette of a teen facing a stressful situation and ends by reminding readers of the story and hypothesizing solutions. There are many positives here: The advice given is psychologically sound, the writing is clear and easy to read, the pages are visually appealing, and photos show teens of both genders and various racial backgrounds. Even with all these plusses, though, there is little substance. The idea of becoming - resilient and thus resisting and coping with stress is well-explained. However, the solutions are incorporated into simplistic acronyms such as "ICAN," standing for Identify problems, Come up with solutions, Analyze them, and Now pick one and going for it. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*How It Feels When Parents Divorce.* Jill Krementz. Knopf Publishers, Reprint edition, May 2012. The issues as they see them are poignant and devastatingly incisive in the telling. That they all pay a price — of having to assume the responsibility for family breakup, of having to wonder whether family relationships are even a good idea — comes through loud and clear. That the price can be balanced in some ways by parents who do not use the child as a "football," but maintain good relationships with each other, is demonstrated as well. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Divorce and Teens: When a Family Splits Apart.* Elizabeth Price. Enslow publishers, 2004.

*No Easy Answers: A Teen Guide to Why Divorce Happens.* Florence Calhoun. Rosen Publishing Group, June, 2000. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

## Stepfamilies Bibliography for Children

*Her Blue Straw Hat.* Adler, C.S. Harcourt Brace, 1997. Having grown to accept and love her stepfather Ben, twelve-year-old Rachel is dismayed when his spoiled daughter joins the family in their beach vacation. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Blue Heron.* Avi. Harper Collins Publisher. 1993. 12-year-old Maggie goes to visit her father, his new wife and baby. Beautifully crafted story. (Ages 9-12) Available at the Cincinnati Public Library as an electronic resource.

*When I am a Sister.* Ballard, Robin. Greenwillow Books, 1998. Children's Press, 1998. Papa tells his daughter what will change and what will stay the same after he and his new wife have a baby. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.



*Good Answers to Tough Questions About Stepfamilies.* Berry, Joy. Children's Press, 1990. A book that gives some good answers to tough questions about feelings stepchildren might experience, disadvantages and advantages of being part of a stepfamily and recommended things for stepchildren to avoid. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library as an e-book.

*Angel Spreads Her Wings.* Delton, Judy. Houghton Mifflin, 1999. Angel, whose active imagination always causes her to expect the worst, is given many new things to worry about when her stepfather plans to move to Greece for the summer. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Everything You Need to Know About Stepfamilies.* Glassman, Bruce. Rosen Publishing Group, Revised edition, 1997. This book discusses the problems and adjustments in having only one parent in the family and what happens when that parent remarries, giving the child a stepfamily. Straightforward, well organized and readable with photographs and concrete examples. (Late elementary and Teens) Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Boundless Grace: Sequel to Amazing Grace.* Hoffman, Mary. Dial Books, 1995. A young girl gets to meet her absent father and deals with prejudice. (Ages 4-8) Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Stepsister From the Planet Weird.* Lantz, Frances Lin. Random House, 1997. Although twelve-year-old Megan usually discounts her younger brother's outer space fantasies, she is not so certain that he is wrong when he suggests that the unusual man with whom their surfer mother has fallen in love and his seemingly perfect daughter are aliens. Hardcover, paperback, audio CD, Movie. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library as an audiobook and a book.

*Dawn's Wicked Stepsister.* Martin, Ann. Babysitters Club, No. 31. Gareth Stevens Publisher, February 1995. Dawn and Mary Anne are good friends but when they become stepsisters, their relationship undergoes some changes. (Ages 9-12) Available at the Cincinnati Public Library as a book and as an e-book.

*More than a Name.* Ransom, Candice F. Diane Publishing Company, June 1995. When her mother remarries, eight-year-old Cammie feels awkward with her new stepfather and being part of a new large family. Hardcover.

*Making It As A Stepparent, New Roles/ New Rules.* Berman, Claire. Child Welfare League of America, 1990. This book is an intelligent, sympathetic look at the challenges and rewards of the stepfamily. It realistically acknowledges the fears, doubts and disillusionments that can affect the step parenting situation and offers help in overcoming them. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Stepfamilies: Love, Marriage and Parenting in the First Decade.* Bray, James H. and John Kelly. Broadway Books, re-print edition 2011. A handbook for blended families, that offers some substantive advice based on a 10-year study. Hardcover and paperback available, as well as Kindle edition. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*The Stepfamily: Living, Loving and Learning* Einstein, Elizabeth. Elizabeth Einstein, February 1994. This book stresses the positive aspects of being a member of a stepfamily. The author is active in the Stepfamily Association of America. Hardcover and paperback. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.



*Coping in A Blended Family.* Hurwitz, Jane. Rosen, 1997. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*Becoming A Stepfamily: Patterns of Development in Remarried Families.* Papernow, Patricia L. Gestalt Press; revised edition July 2015. Recommended for counselors working with stepfamilies. The author uses case histories to illustrate the dimensions of the stepfamily cycle. Insights and practical guidance are offered.

*Second Marriage: Make It Happy! Make It Last!* Stuart, Richard B. & Barbara Jacobson New York: W.W. Norton, 1985. A sensible approach to second marriage offering specific suggestions for choosing second partners wisely, balancing work and home, finances and coming to terms with first marriages. Valuable information on communication techniques. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*How to Win As a Stepfamily.* Visher, Emily & John. Routledge; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, September 1991. A practical guide for stepparents; authors are co-founders of the Stepfamily Association of America; they lecture and write frequently about remarriage. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.

*The Good Marriage: How and Why Love Lasts.* Wallerstein, Judith S. and Sandra Blakeslee. Grand Central Publishing; reprint edition, October 1996. A valuable book with many insights for anyone interested in marriage: newly or long-time married couples. A readable book with vivid descriptions from the fifty couples interviewed. Paperback available, audio cassette. Available at the Cincinnati Public Library.





