



HOW TO TELL THE KIDS LOOKING AFTER YOUR KIDS THROUGH A DIVORCE



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Explain the separation / divorce to the children jointly in a simple straightforward way while being open and honest. Remember that they don't need to know all the details. Reassure them that they are loved and explain how the separation will work for everyone in the family.

How you can do this:

- ◇ Offer support, encouragement and reassurance
- ◇ Be patient and understanding. Allow the children to talk about their feelings and show their emotions
- ◇ Suggest someone else to talk to and encourage them to communicate.
- ◇ Minimise the disruptions to the children's daily routines
- ◇ Keep each parent involved in the children's lives
- ◇ Don't speak negatively about the other parent to your children, extended family or friends
- ◇ Keep visible conflict, heated conversations and legal talk away from the children
- ◇ Create two comfortable homes making sure each home contains some familiar items to help them feel secure and at home in both places
- ◇ Look out for behavioural changes, such as sadness, anxiety, moodiness, difficulties at school, with friends or loss of sleep as this could be a sign of problems

Be prepared to answer these and other questions from your child:

- ◇ Who will I live with?
- ◇ Where will I go to school?
- ◇ Will I have to move?
- ◇ Where will each parent live?
- ◇ Who will we spend holidays with?
- ◇ Will I still get to see my friends?
- ◇ Will I still go to my afterschool activities?

Most importantly through it all, make it clear the child feels loved.

Useful websites for children

Kids helpline - www.kidshelpline.com.au

Raising children - www.raisingchildren.net.au

Please see page 2 of this document for a helpful worksheet to think about and fill in which will help you gain some clarity about future arrangements for your children.

Are you thinking about separating or recently separated and wanting to know more about our process?

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Worksheet for parents.

When we write things down and have a plan, we seem to have much better clarity of our future.

Remember when answering these questions to think of the children first.

What can you do to make it as easy as possible for the children to move between their two homes? Are there special possessions they can retain in each house

Who will your children spend holidays with? Are there any special family days and times that the children would want to be part of?

Where will the children go to school? If they have to change schools, who do you have to inform? How can you make this easy for your children?

Who are the people who are important in your children's lives – friends and family members? What can you do to help them maintain contact?

Will the children have to move? If so – where to and when? How can you make this easy for them?

What extra-curricular activities do your children enjoy? What do you need to do to maintain these?

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