

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Children of Divorce: What they need from parents

Divorce ... It is never an easy decision. When it involves children, it can become very complicated. Parents may not realize the stress children go through if the parents cannot work out their problems peacefully.

If you could hear the children, this is what they might say:

1. After the divorce, I need both of my parents to stay involved in my life. I might think you don't love me anymore if you don't come to see me.
2. Please don't fight in front of me. I feel helpless, it hurts my feelings, and it scares me. I feel worse about myself when my parents hate each other.
3. Please let me love both of my parents. Sometimes I worry that one parent will be jealous if I want to spend time with the other parent. I don't want to take sides.
4. Please don't say bad things about the other parent in front of me. I don't want to get caught in the middle.
5. Please don't make me spy on the other parent. It makes me feel guilty.
6. Please don't make me send messages back and forth between parents. Tell them yourself so I don't have to be the bad guy.
7. Please pay child support so I know you care about my needs. If we can't pay our bills, it stresses our family and we have more problems.
8. Please let me have regular visits with the other parent. I am the one who loses out if you change your mind.
9. Please help raise me. Sometimes I need my Dad to help me with homework and sometimes I need my Mom. I need advice and guidance from both of you.
10. Please let me talk about my feelings. Sometimes you act like my feelings are not important when you say ..."Oh, you shouldn't feel that way." I do feel that way ... I just need you to listen.

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Adapted from Child Abuse Prevention Team, Salt Lake/Summit County/UCPCA – Utah Chapter for the Prevention of Child Abuse.