

- ✓ **Reassure.** Reassure your child you love them and that divorce won't change that.
- ✓ **Manage finances.** Avoid discussing finances in front of the kids.
- ✓ **Have structure.** Aim for similar rules in both households.
- ✓ **Establish a routine.** Your child will feel more secure when they know what to expect.

KEEP IN MIND

You're not the first to ride the rough waters of divorce. And you don't have to do it alone. Seek family counseling if you feel it would help. Support services are also available through community organizations and your child's school.



Children and Divorce
Health & Wellness

Children and Divorce

Around 1 in 2 marriages don't make it, and the majority of people who divorce do so while their children are still under the age of 18.

Ending a marriage is never easy. No matter how civil your divorce, it will impact your kids. But if you you're aware of—and plan for—potential issues, the transition can be a lot smoother.

BE AWARE OF POTENTIAL ISSUES

Children often take the blame for divorce and the responsibility for getting their parents back together. Younger children may regress to using a pacifier, wetting the bed, or having separation anxiety. Older children may feel guilt, anger, relief, or experience depression or anxiety. You might also see:

- withdrawal
- lack of cooperation
- low self-esteem
- moodiness
- irrational fears
- repetitive behaviors
- no desire to communicate with one or both parents
- aggression at home or school
- academic or behavioral problems at school

PLAN YOUR NEXT STEPS

Your child's reactions to your divorce can be hard to handle. But there are steps you can to make the transition less negative.

- ✓ **Talk about It.** Good communication is critical. If possible, both parents should be involved. It's important to tell your child exactly what's happening, how it does and doesn't involve them, and what life post-divorce will look like. Be sure to ask them if they have questions and concerns.
- ✓ **Acknowledge.** Let your kids experience their emotions without guilt or confusion.
- ✓ **Support.** Don't lean on your children for support. They're not equipped to handle your emotional needs.
- ✓ **Respect.** Your ex-spouse is still your child's mom or dad. Don't complain about them. And keep your arguments private.
- ✓ **Be direct.** Your children are not messengers or spies. Go to your former spouse for information.
- ✓ **Be reliable.** Don't cancel plans with your child unless absolutely necessary, then sincerely apologize.
- ✓ **Prepare.** Last-minute changes and decisions can cause anxiety and strain relationships.
- ✓ **Keep it simple.** Keep conversations about the other parent simple and factual.
- ✓ **Give permission.** Unless there's a threat of danger or abuse, tell your child it's okay to have a relationship with your ex.
- ✓ **Release.** Be clear that divorce is between parents, not parents and children.