

## **Books for Parents Going Through Divorce**

Prepared by 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Supreme and Family Courts

### **Caught In the Middle: Protecting the Children of High-Conflict Divorce**

Author: Garrity, Carla and Baris, Mitchell.  
Publisher: Wiley, John & Sons, Inc. 1997.

### **Families Apart: Ten Keys To Successful Co-Parenting**

Author: Blau, Melinda. Publisher: Penguin Group. 1995

### **For the Sake of the Children: How to Share Your Children With Your Ex-Spouse In Spite Of Your Anger**

Author: Kline, Kris and Pew, Stephen. Publisher: iUniverse, Inc. 2000.

### **Helping Children Cope With Divorce**

Author: Teyber, Edward. Publisher: Jossey-Bass, Inc. 2001.

### **Joint Custody With a Jerk: Raising a Child with an Uncooperative Ex**

Author: Ross, Julia and Corcoran, Judy.  
Publisher: St. Martin's Press. 1996.

### **Mom's House, Dad's House: A Complete Guide for Parents who are Separated, Divorced, or Remarried**

Author: Ricci, Isolina. Publisher: Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group. 1997.

### **The Co-Parenting Survival Guide**

Authors: Davis, Jennifer, Thayer, Elizabeth and Zimmerman, Jeffery. Publisher: New Harbinger Publications. 2001.

### **Parenting After Divorce: Resolving Conflicts Meeting Your Children's Needs.**

Author: Stahl, Phillip. Publisher: Impact Publishers, Inc. 2007.

### **Parents are Forever: A Step-by-Step Guide to Becoming Successful Coparents after Divorce**

Author: Thomas, Shirley. Publisher: Springboard Publications. 2004.

### **The Custody Revolution**

Author: Warshak, Richard. Publisher: Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group. 1992.

### **Divorced Parent: Success Strategies for Raising Happy Children after Separation**

Author: Stephanie Marston. Publisher: Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group. 1994.

### **The Good Divorce: Keeping Your Family Together When Your Marriage Comes Apart**

Author: Ahrons, Constance. Publisher: Harper Collins. 1995

### **What about the Kids? Raising Your Children Before, During, and After Divorce.**

Author: Wallerstein, Judith and Blakeslee, Sandra. Publisher: Hyperion. 2004.

### **Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children and Divorce**

Author: Marquardt, Elizabeth. Publisher: Crown Publishing Group. 2006.

### **Vicky Lansky's Divorce Book for Parents**

Author: Lansky, Vicky. Publisher: Book Peddlers. 1996.

### **Helping Your Kids Cope with Divorce the Sandcastles Way**

Author: Neuman, M Gary and Romanowski, Patricia. Publisher: Random House Publishing Group. 1998.

### **Making Divorce Easier on Your Child: 50 Effective Ways to Help Children Adjust**

Author: Long, Nicholas and Forehand, Rex.  
Publisher: NTC Publishing Group. 2002.

### **Between Love and Hate: A Guide to Civilized Divorce**

Author: Gold, Lois. Publisher: Penguin Group. 1996.

### **Does Wednesday Mean Mom's House or Dad's? Parenting Together while Living Apart**

Author: Ackerman, Marc. Publisher: Wiley, John & Sons. 2008.

### **Custody Chaos, Personal Peace: Sharing Custody with an Ex Who Drives You Crazy**

Author: Wittmann, Jeffrey. Publisher: Penguin Group. 2001.

## *Helpful Websites for Parents*

- ★ <http://www.uptoparents.org/>  
-interactive website for divorced and divorcing parents
- ★ <http://www.divorce-education.com/links.htm>  
-provides videos and booklets for divorcing/separating parents
- ★ <http://www.divorcenet.com/>  
-information for parents on various issues related to divorce
- ★ <http://www.tnpsc.com>  
-The National Parenting Center
- ★ <http://www.familyresource.com/parenting/divorce-and-separation>  
-information on divorce and separation pertaining to the parents as well as the children involved
- ★ <http://www.whileweheal.org/>  
-for parents remembering children's needs while they work on marital problems
- ★ <http://www.wholefamily.com/indexIE.html>  
-information for all individuals in a family going through divorce
- ★ <http://www.parentsforever.umn.edu/resourcesParents/index.html>  
-information for parents on various issues related to divorce
- ★ [http://www.missourifamilies.org/quick/divorceqa/#\\_parentinganddivorce](http://www.missourifamilies.org/quick/divorceqa/#_parentinganddivorce)  
-common questions and answers about divorce
- ★ <http://divorceinfo.com/children.htm>  
-information for parents on various issues related to divorce
- ★ <http://www.proudtoparent.org/>  
-for parents who never married
- ★ <http://www.divorceabc.com/html/faqs.htm>  
-information for parents on various issues related to divorce
- ★ <http://www.preparerespondrecover.com/childrensneeds/>  
-helps parents to recognize children's needs during the time of divorce
- ★ <http://www.hec.ohio-state.edu/famlife/family/divorce.htm>  
-information for parents on various issues related to divorce
- ★ <http://www.helpguide.org> (*Go to Children & Parenting, then Co-Parenting After*

## **Co-Parenting with Teenagers**

*Prepared by 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Supreme and Family Courts*

Just because your children have reached their teen years, and may seem to be only interested in friends and activities, don't be fooled into thinking the breakup of their parents has less of an affect on them than younger children. Below are some ways that a teen might feel/ behave during a break-up and/or conflict between parents, and some ways that parents can help teens through this process.

- Teenagers may blame themselves for parents breaking-up, or for conflict between parents. Parents need to provide consistent, frequent reassurance that a break-up or conflict is not a teenager's fault. Answer a teen's questions about this as honestly as possible WITHOUT insulting the other parent. Remember that you are the parent, and despite appearing grown-up, your teenager is still a child.
- Teenagers may feel angry and/or critical of one or both parents. They may feel rejected by one or both parents, and reject parents in turn. Additionally, a teen may take the "side" of one parent over the other.
- Teenagers may express feelings of disillusionment with relationships.
- Teenagers may try to assume a parental role in the household (for example, become the "man of the house"). Parents need to maintain the adult/child relationship.
- Teenagers may begin to engage in "risky" behaviors such as drug/alcohol use, sexual activity, skipping school, etc. Parents should maintain awareness and involvement in all aspects of a teen's life. Signs of drug and alcohol use may include personality changes, decline in school performance, lack of interest in activities previously enjoyed, excessive fatigue, etc.
- Parents can HELP teenagers by maintaining consistency through family routines, and supporting teens' connections to friends and extended family. Be flexible with parenting schedules (visitation) whenever possible. Keep in mind that teens' friends, school, sports, and activities are often the most important part of a teen's life. Teens may feel resentful of a schedule which interferes with socialization.
- Stay connected with teens by finding out and being involved with their interests and activities. Remember that all the time you may spend driving teens from place to place is an opportunity to talk and connect. Communicate through text messages, email, and/or cell phones if necessary.
- Parents should maintain discipline and expectations of teenagers despite a break-up or conflict with the other parent.
- Dating and parental sexuality can be hard for teens to accept. Parents can limit dating initially to times when teens are with the other parent, or have other plans. Don't introduce a date unless it is a long-term relationship.

**EFFECTS OF SEPARATION/ DIVORCE ON CHILDREN  
AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT**

Prepared by 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Supreme and Family Court

Age	Characteristics of Children in this Age Group	Separation Issues for Children in this Age Group	Warning Signs of Distress in Children	Suggestions for Helping Children
0-8 months	Children this age depend on parents to meet all their needs. They will develop trust through nurturing.	Children need to have basic needs met to feel secure at this age.	Problems sleeping, clinginess, excessive crying.	Allow child time to bond with both parents, provide nurturing environment, keep routines consistent. Frequent contact with both parents important.
8 months- 2 years	Children become attached to caregivers at ages 8-18 months	May experience loss of primary caregiver.	Same as above.	Same as above.
2-4 years	Children becoming more independent, learning to talk, and verbalizing needs and feelings. They can remember absent parent when separated.	If children lose contact with one parent may feel abandoned. They may feel separation is their fault. Also, may feel anxiety about basic needs being met.	Children may regress, and have problems with toilet training, sleep, or acting out behaviors, etc. May also develop excessive separation anxiety.	Show patience with regression issues (toilet training, etc.), provide nurturing, maintain routines, frequent contact with both parents important.
5-8 years	Children this age are forming friendships, and begin to develop a sense of right and wrong.	Children this age may feel separation is their fault. They may be preoccupied with parents reconciling, and miss the absent parent.	Children this age will express sadness and anger. They may not eat and sleep as well, can develop behavioral problems, complain they are not feeling well frequently, may feel torn between parents, and begin to act like the absent parent in the household.	Children this age need to express their feelings, and learn to cope. (Possibly with counseling). They need reassurance they are not to blame for separation, and need to know they are "allowed" to love both parents. They will benefit from friendships and involvement in activities. Also, need to have frequent contact with both parents.

9-12 years	Children this age are more self-conscious and aware of themselves. Also, may be preoccupied with peer relationships.	Children may feel angry about separation. They may take sides with one parent, and blame the other.	Strong expressions of anger, may complain they are not feeling well frequently, may be ashamed of parents' separation, may show loyalty to one parent over the other.	Children this age need the chance to express feelings, and learn to cope. (Possibly with counseling). They need reassurance they are not to blame for separation, and need to know they are "allowed" to love both parents. Also, will benefit from friendships, and involvement in activities. Frequent contact with both parents is important.
13-18	Children this age are developing a sense of identity in the world. They may be preoccupied with their own needs.	Children may be ashamed of separation, and may blame one parent. Also, they may feel their peer relationships are more important than family, and may resist visiting one parent.	Children this age may withdraw from their family. They may have trouble concentrating, and may develop "risky" behaviors such as drinking alcohol, having sex, drug use, etc.	Children this age need parents to set limits, however, they also need to have some independence and the ability to make choices.

\*\* This information was adapted from Johnston & Roseby, 1997; Solomon, 2005.

## Helping Children by Easing Transitions Between Households

### *Tips for Parents*

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- \* Post a "family calendar" where children can see it which clearly marks visit times with the other parent. Talk to children about where and when visits will take place.
- \* Give children a lot of reassurance before and after visits with the other parent. One of the best ways to reassure children is to be sure to send only positive and encouraging messages about visits with the other parent. Let children know they have "permission" to love and enjoy time with the other parent.
- \* Be aware of your own reaction to an upcoming visit. If you are feeling anxiety or tension about a visit try to avoid communicating this to children. Children are very sensitive to the reactions of a parent, and may become anxious or tense as a result.
- \* Do not use children to deliver messages to the other parent. Parents in conflict can communicate through email or a notebook passed between them at exchanges.
- \* Allow children "down time" before and after visits. This will help prepare children for a visit, and to adjust to being back in your household after a visit.
- \* If possible, maintain consistent discipline in both households by agreeing on common rules with the other parent.  
Parents in conflict can establish consistency for children in their own household by explaining rules and expectations to kids, and enforcing these consistently.
- \* During exchanges of children, avoid any and all conflict with the other parent. Try to be civil to the other parent in the presence of children. Children exposed to conflict at exchanges will have difficulty going back and forth between households.  
Parents in conflict may choose to do exchanges in a public place, or use a neutral third party to help with exchanges such as a friend or family member.
- \* Before visits, help children to prepare a travel bag. Include transitional objects in this travel bag such as a book, toy, special blanket, etc.. These transitional objects are particularly comforting to younger children.  
Many children, especially younger kids and/or those with developmental delays may benefit from a special book they make with a parent. This book can include pictures of both homes, bedrooms, or toys, and tells a story about the child's different homes and families.

## **Talking to Children about Why Their Parents Don't Live Together**

### ***Tips for Parents***

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- **If possible, discuss with the other parent how, when, and what you are going to tell children about a divorce/separation. Agree on an explanation ahead of time. If possible, tell your children together. Don't keep the divorce/separation a secret, and don't wait until the last minute to talk to your kids.**
- **Tell children the divorce/separation is not their fault. This is very important because children may feel they did something to cause the situation, and blame themselves. They may also believe they have the power to get their parents to reconcile.**
- **Explain the permanence of the divorce/separation.**
- **Keep explanations simple and straightforward. Don't go in to detail about the problems in your marriage, or talk about "adult issues" with children.**
- **Explain the difference between the love a parent has for a child and the love between a husband and wife. Let children know that you will always love them, and will never stop being their parent.**
- **Admit to children that this is a sad time for everyone in the family. Give children a chance to express and name their feelings. Reading books together is a good way to encourage children to talk.**
- **Check with children often about their fears and concerns. Don't assume that one discussion is enough. Give children time to think and process the divorce/separation. Children may want to talk about different issues over time. Listen to what your children are saying, and take it seriously.**
- **Be alert for signs of distress in children. These signs may include: changes in sleeping and/or eating patterns, withdrawing from activities/friends they used to enjoy, complaints of physical pain or illness, acting out, not performing well at school, and any other change in their behavior. If you notice any of these signs or others, contact your doctor, a counselor, or other professional who can advise you how to help your child(ren).**