

Helpful Tips for Telling Your Kids You're Getting a Divorce

When it comes to sharing the news about your divorce, one of the hardest conversations you might have will be with your kids. However, this is one of the most critical conversations you'll have, and one that needs thought and planning. Here are ten of our most useful tips for telling your kids you're getting a divorce to help smooth the edges of this sensitive topic.

1. Make a plan and schedule enough time for your kids to ask questions.

Create a plan and schedule a time to talk to them on a day where there is enough time for questions and feelings to be expressed. Don't do it on a special occasion or one that might be tainted in the future as "the day mom and dad told us the news."

2. If at all possible, present a united front.

It's far better to share the news of your split with both you and your soon-to-be-ex present. This allows for consistency of information and gives children the opportunity to ask questions of both of you. It also reassures children that just because you are divorcing, doesn't mean you can't get along.

3. If you have more than one child, tell them all together.

Even if they are different ages, tell all children at the same time so one doesn't have to keep a painful secret from the others. This way, You can address their questions right away and with all present, and they'll have the benefit of supporting each other.

4. Spare them the details – even if they ask.

Keep it simple and age-appropriate. There's no need to go into that much detail; they don't need to know if there was an affair, if you're experiencing financial difficulties, etc. Use expressions like, "We know things will be better if we're not together," or, "We just don't feel the same way about each other any longer."

5. Let them know which parent will be staying with them in the house.

Explain which parent will be staying in the house and which parent will be moving. This information is directly relevant to their daily lives and lets them know how their living situation will differ from the present. It also reassures them immediately that even though both parents won't be living under the same roof, they are still able to have a relationship with both parents.

6. Let them know what will be changing and what will be staying the same.

Talk about any upcoming changes that might be expected and tell them you will do your best to keep them included when making schedule changes, whenever possible.

Children crave structure, and when decisions are made that are not within their control, they can feel powerless and scared.

7. Avoid accusing one another of any wrongdoing in front of your kids.

Remain civil during this conversation. This is not the time to bicker or blame one another for what's happening. This conversation is solely to provide information to your kids in the healthiest way possible.

8. Remind them that both mom and dad love them and that the divorce is not their fault.

Tell them that you love them and emphasize that none of this is their fault – and then tell them again. This is *critical*, especially with younger children, in order to prevent unwanted anxiety and possible childhood trauma.



9. Be prepared for them to express a wide range of feelings.

Children are unpredictable and can surprise us by either displaying no emotion at all or by having a complete breakdown. Make sure you validate any feelings they choose to express, and be prepared for those feelings to shift from day to day (or even hour to hour).

10. Keep the lines of communication open.

Keep an open dialogue outside of this meeting so your children are free to process everything you've told them and so that they feel comfortable asking any questions at a later date. This type of news will likely need some time to sink in, so don't expect every question to be asked and answered in one sitting.

Telling your kids that you're getting a divorce isn't easy, but these tips can help you and your kids navigate through the process relatively unscathed.