



FIVE MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN TELLING KIDS ABOUT DIVORCE Page 1 of 2

By Rosalind Sedacca

September 10, 2012

EDITOR'S NOTE: The focus of Divorce Ministry 4 Kids is on equipping those who work with children of divorce and children from single parent homes to minister to those kids. As part of that role though, we are sometimes asked for advice from parents going through a separation or a divorce. One critical question that comes up time and again is, "How do we tell the kids?" While we believe that parents should do all they can to avoid divorce, we understand that divorce does happen, and when it does it is important to handle telling the kids in the best way possible. Today, we are excited to have Rosalind Sedacca provide an article with advice on how to tell kids about a divorce – more specifically what not to do! Rosalind is the founder of the Child-Centered Divorce Network, and we are thrilled to be able to share this article with you!



Preparing to break the divorce news to your kids? Wondering how to broach the subject and how much to share? How your children will react and how to handle their questions?

Well you're not alone. Talking about divorce to your children is tough. You don't want to make errors you will regret.

There are many common mistakes parents make at this time. Here are five of the most important you should avoid:

- Blaming or speaking disrespectfully about your children's other parent. It creates pain, guilt and confusion for your kids. They wonder, "If there's something wrong with Dad/Mom, there must be something wrong with me for loving them." This can damage your parental relationship.
- Pressuring children to make choices. Most kids feel torn when asked to choose between their parents. Don't put them in that position.
- Assuming your children understand they are not to blame. Children are innocent victims of divorce. Remind them frequently that they are not at fault – even, and especially, if you are fighting with their other parent about them.
- Confiding adult information to your children. Parents do this to bond with or try to win the kids over. It creates a burden that children can't handle and they'll resent you for it. Talk to adults about adult issues.
- Fighting in front of the children – ever! Remember you will still be their parents following the divorce. The more you can create a parenting alliance, the happier and more stable your children will be.



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Fortunately there's a lot of support to turn to before having the tough "divorce talk." Speak to a divorce mediator or see a therapist. Find a Child-Centered or Collaborative Divorce attorney. Seek the advice of Divorce and Parenting Coaches, school counselors or clergy. There are also many valuable books on this topic.

Whatever you do, prepare yourself in advance and try to approach the children together. Be aware of the impact of your words on their innocent psyches. Think before you speak, listen to your children's responses, and be there to help them face the changes ahead with security, compassion and love.

*Rosalind Sedacca, Founder of the Child-Centered Divorce Network, is the author of **How Do I Tell the Kids about the Divorce?** For her free ebook on Post-Divorce Parenting, blog, coaching services and other valuable resources for parents, visit: www.childcentereddivorce.com.*