



PARENTING AFTER DIVORCE: HELP YOUR KIDS ADJUST TO TWO HAPPY HOMES

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By Rosalind Sedacca

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Rosalind Sedacca has posted articles as a guest article several times here on DivorceMinistry4Kids.com. We are pleased that she is now an official member of our team and will offer regular articles aimed at helping parents to help their children during after a divorce. For those of us who work with kids, these articles offer valuable insights and will assist us in advising parents of children of divorce who seek out our advice.



All human beings are resistant to change. It's especially difficult for children. One of the greatest disruptions in a child's life can be the upheaval caused by divorce. For this reason it is incumbent on you, as a parent, to do everything possible day by day, month by month, to help your children adjust, assimilate into their new routines and accept the changes in their lives in the most positive possible ways.

To do that, you must be committed to putting your children's physical, emotional and psychological needs foremost in your mind and heart. In that way, you will make decisions that are child-centered rather than based on your needs for getting back, proving your points or hurting your child(ren)'s other parent.

Yes, it's not always an easy proposition to parent after divorce from this perspective. However, it's the only option that will allow your children to have a sane childhood, good self-esteem, joy in their lives and a future that includes healthy relationships for themselves. Isn't that what we all want for our children?

You can help your children adapt to two happy homes if you make that a priority and respect the fact that your kids are attached to their other parent. Don't force them to break that bond or make them feel guilty for still loving their Dad or Mom, despite your divorce.

Because helping your child feel happy, safe, and loved is such an important goal for every parent, you can make joint parenting (custody is becoming a word of the past in many legal systems) arrangements work out if that is your honest intention.

To help your children feel wanted – little things count a lot!

All children need to know that they are loved and wanted in both homes. To help instill that important sense of belonging, try to avoid the need to pack a suitcase when children move between Mom and Dad's homes.





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It is smart to talk to your children early in the divorce process about starting a new chapter in their family life. Some things are changing – others will not change. It's all part of the new chapter ahead – and new doesn't have to mean sad or bad.

Many parents start by taking the kids shopping for some new things so they'll have their own personal "stash" at both houses. Let each child make some personal selections of bedding, toiletry and clothing items. Little things like new pajamas, underwear, toothbrush, alarm clock, pillow, sunglasses, towels, shampoo, etc. can make a big difference in helping your children feel more at home, welcome and excited about some of the transition process.

A few new toys as well as old familiar ones are also important at this time. Selecting some DVDs or games together that are part of the new home environment will also help with readjustment, giving the kids something to look forward to when they arrive.

If your relationship with your former spouse is on a positive level, the family can get together to divide much of the children's belongings as a family, letting the kids make some decisions about where certain items will remain or move. Try to have enough clothing changes and other routine possessions in each home, so you can avoid last-minute emergency pickups or misplaced items. Also, allow the children to carry a few items back and forth if they choose, such as a favorite toy, jacket or photo.

Ideally each child should have some private space – a place in each home where they can keep their things – be it a closet, drawers, shelves, etc. The goal is to create a sense of "home" when they spend time with either Mom or Dad so they know they are safe, wanted and very much belong in the lives of both parents.

*Rosalind Sedacca, CCT, is a Divorce & Parenting Coach and author of **How Do I Tell the Kids about the Divorce? A Create-a-Storybook Guide to Preparing Your Children -- with Love!** For her free book on Post-Divorce Parenting: Success Strategies For Getting It Right!, her blog, coaching services and other valuable resources on divorce and parenting issues, please visit <http://www.childcentereddivorce.com>.*

