



5 WAYS TO KEEP CONNECTED WITH YOUR KIDS

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By Rosalind Sedacca

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Editor's Note: In this article, Rosalind Sedacca offers advice for parents on how to stay close to their kids following a divorce. As those who work with kids, we should be prepared to assist parents who may ask us for this type of advice.

Divorce is a time for disconnect. It's not uncommon for you to feel alone, rejected and insecure in the months following your divorce. So can your children. It is important for you to strengthen your bond with your children during this time of transition – whether you are living with them or apart.

Children want to know they are still loved, valued and cared about. Show them, tell them and keep in close communication with them – during the happy times and the sad ones. They need to know they have a safe place to turn, a shoulder to cry on and a non-judgmental ear when they need it. If divorce has been tough on you – remember it's even tougher on them – whether they confide that to you or not.

Here are five important ways to reinforce your connection with the children you love.

1. Connect through notes

If you're living together, slip a note in your child's lunch box or notebook every few days. A quick joke, cartoon, reminder about a special event ahead or just a warm "I Love You!" will let them know they're on your mind and in your heart. If you're not spending time together, send an email note or a quick text message to convey that you're thinking about them.

2. Connect through idle chats

Take advantage of idle moments here and there when you're together with your child. Driving in the car is a great time to ask questions, share your feelings, and be empathic about their comments. When you're helping them with homework, cooking meals together or doing other chores you can strike up a conversation as well. Just be careful not to turn these communications into lectures. You're there to listen, reflect and learn. If you judge or condemn, you'll close the door to hearing any more.

3. Connect through bedtime routine

It's always wise to create a before bedtime routine with your children that integrates warm connection. Spend time reading books on changing themes, talk about your own childhood memories and challenges. Share your





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own insecurities and how you overcame them. It's also beneficial to ask your child about the best part of their day or a new lesson they learned. Bedtime routines help you both unwind and appreciate one another. It also creates a security bond that most children really value.

4. Connect through a new project

After divorce many things change in a child's life. It's a good opportunity to create connection through new projects that take on special meaning. Whether it's a multi-day puzzle, a plastic model you complete together, new shelves or other decorating project in their bedroom, this shared time is a wonderful time to talk, listen to music and make a stress-free connection.

5. Connect through special dates

Every now and then create a special outing alone with just one of your children. Take them to lunch, the zoo, a big-city shopping trip, a sports game or a wonderful movie. Children cherish alone time with you and the opportunity to catch up with one another without competition from siblings. Prepare this "date" in advance so you both have something to look forward to. End the date with a token gift as a keepsake "reminder" of your time together.

It doesn't take a lot of effort to reinforce your connection with your children, especially as you all transition through and after a divorce. It's the sincerity of your effort, not the money you spend, that impacts their lives and helps them to feel safe, loved and secure despite the changes and challenges created by the divorce.

Connection time will also heighten your awareness about your children's attitudes, moods and feelings so you can address potential problems early-on before they become serious behavior issues. Create the time to keep connected with your kids. You won't regret it!

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, her free weekly ezine, coaching services and other valuable resources about divorce and parenting issues visit <http://www.childcentereddivorce.com>. To learn more about her internationally acclaimed e-book, visit <http://www.howdoitellthekids.com>.

