

## Ten Tips for Divorcing Parents

Divorce is never easy on kids, but there are many ways parents can help lessen the impact of their break-up on their children:

**Never disparage your former spouse in front of your children.** Because children know they are "part mom" and "part dad", the criticism can batter the child's self-esteem.

**Do not use your children as messengers between you and your former spouse.** The less the children feel a part of the battle between their parents, the better.

**Reassure your children that they are loved and that the divorce is not their fault.** Many children assume that they are to blame for their parent's hostility.

**Encourage your children to see your former spouse frequently.** Do everything within your power to accommodate the visitation.

**At every step during your divorce, remind yourself that your children's interests – not yours – are paramount, and act accordingly.** Lavish them with love at each opportunity.

**Your children may be tempted to act as your caretaker.** Resist the temptation to let them. Let your peers, adult family members, and mental health professionals be your counselors and sounding board. Let your children be children.

**If you have a drinking or drug problem, get counseling right away.** An impairment inhibits your ability to reassure your children and give them the attention they need at this difficult time.

**If you are the non-custodial parent, pay your child support.** The loss of income facing many children after divorce puts them at a financial disadvantage that has a pervasive effect on the rest of their lives.

**If you are the custodial parent and you are not receiving child support, do not tell your children.** It feeds into the child's sense of abandonment and further erodes his or her stability.

**If at all possible, do not uproot your children.** Stability in their residence and school life helps buffer children from the trauma of their parent's divorce.