

## Dealing with Divorce and Children

In the United States today, one out of two marriages ends in divorce. If you are in the middle of a separation or divorce, one of the first worries is "what about the children?"

There are several tips that psychologists give about dealing with divorce and children. Here are just a few of these tips:

- Maintain consistency with your disciplines and rewards for the children. Keep the same bedtime and mealtime routines. Children feel safe when things are familiar to them.
- Be more affectionate with your children. Give just a few more hugs than usual. Remember they are also feeling scared and missing that other parent.
- Avoid letting your children take care of you, though. Remember, you are the parent.
- Help your children stay connected with friends and loved ones. This is not the time to change schools unless it is unavoidable. If you must change schools or neighborhoods, make an effort to have friends over for sleep overs or play dates.
- Reassure your children that both parents still love them and that the divorce isn't their fault. Many children feel guilty about divorce and they think that they could have done something to have prevented it.
- Even if finances are tough, don't share this information with your children. They can't do anything to help and this will just stress them out and make them feel guilty.
- Be adults about the divorce. Don't use the children as pawns in your scheme to get back at each other. Spare the children from fighting and disagreements. Don't quiz them about the estranged or divorced spouse.
- Take good care of yourself---mentally and physically. You cannot be of any help to your child if you are sick and worn out. If you start to feel over-whelmed, anxious, or angry, see a physician, support group, or personal counselor.

If you have other questions, check out these websites:

[http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/families/divorce.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/families/divorce.html)

<http://www.flc.org/hfl/marriage/mar-flf03.htm>

<http://www.psychpage.com/family/divorce/tellingchildren.htm>

