

How to Tell Your Kids About Your Divorce

Divorce is not easy for families to go through, especially when children are involved. One of the most difficult conversations divorcing parents will ever have is when they tell their children about their impending divorce. It is critically important to handle this delicate conversation properly. The better you are able to have this discussion, the easier it will be for your children to understand and cope with the coming changes your family will soon face.

Below is a list of some tips that will help guide you through this conversation:

- Create a plan before you have this talk to ensure you have a clear idea about what points you intend to cover with them. It would also be best to tell them about 2 to 3 weeks before your actual separation. Otherwise, this might be too much for them to handle all at once.
- It would be best to speak to your children together as a team. Your marriage is ending, but you are still co-parents, so try to present a united front to your children. When speaking to them, do not argue and bicker in front of them. This conversation is not about you or what went wrong, so pointing fingers will not do anyone any good. Keep the focus on your children.
- Speak with your children in a quiet space and at a time when nothing else needs to be done afterward. Telling them on a Friday evening before the weekend is a good time to do it since this gives them a couple of days to mull it over and ask any follow-up questions they might have. Do not tell them before dropping them off at school or before bedtime. It might be easier to not have to face what your children have to say about the divorce, but taking away their opportunity to voice their concerns will only hurt them.
- Tell your children's teachers about your divorce a day before you plan to tell your children. The purpose of telling their teachers is mainly to give them a head's up in case your children act out in the aftermath of learning this new information. You will want their teachers to be understanding and empathetic. However, they should not ask your children anything about it unless your children mention it first.
- Try to emphasize a few key points during this conversation with your children. First, it is important to impress upon them that this was an adult decision that the two of you made and that they had no impact on it whatsoever, nor could they have made it better. Despite whatever you might feel about your spouse, now is not the time to play the blame game, so try not to point fingers during this conversation. The most vital point you should drive home is that, despite the divorce, you will continue to be a family.
- Do you have a plan in place yet? If you do, try to give them the basics. For example, if you know one of you is moving out, tell them who, when, and where if you know the answers to these questions. That said, you do not need to go into the details. Instead, only provide information that might directly affect them, such as whether or not they will have to change schools or what the schedule might be like for visiting the other parent until the divorce is finalized. If you are unsure about an answer to something, do not make one up and do not make promises you are unable to keep.

- In addition to the initial conversation you have with your children, you will also have some follow-ups and it is important to handle these appropriately. If you did not have enough answers during your first conversation, maybe you have more now and, therefore, can provide better answers to their questions. Just make sure you are available to continue to talk about the implications your divorce might have on life and ready to provide reassurance.
- You should be ready for any reactions your children might have, but you should also avoid hounding them about their feelings. This is a lot to take in and not all children are ready to discuss their feelings in the immediate aftermath, so try to give them some space and just make sure they know you are both there for them when they need to talk.
- Lastly, there is no better way to help your children than to put the words you say during this conversation into practice by working hard at becoming effective co-parents. Your children are going to observe your behavior closely, so try to treat each other with respect and avoid fighting in front of your children.

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