

Kids in the Crossfire

Helping Parents Understand the Impact of Divorce



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"The greatest gift you can give your child is a mentally healthy parent."

— Carol Lane
National Program Coordinator
Practical Parent Education



"Kids in the Crossfire" is a short video designed to emphasize the impact of parents' behavior during divorce. Through dramatizations and interviews with children, parents, judges, and counselors who have been impacted by divorce or work in the family law field, the video gives parents a road map of behaviors to avoid and suggestions for improving communication and minimizing stress on children.



I feel torn between
my mom and my dad.



*"More than anything else, kids
want their parents to get along."*

— Judge Curt Henderson
219th District Court



Ten Tips for Divorcing Parents

by Mike McCurley and the American Academy
of Matrimonial Lawyers

- 1 Never criticize 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 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 parents’ hostility.
- 4 Encourage your children to see your former spouse frequently.** Do everything within your power to accommodate the visitation.
- 5 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.

- 6 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.
- 7 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.
- 8 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.
- 9 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.
- 10 If at all possible, do not uproot your children.** Stability in their residence and school life helps buffer children from the trauma of their parents' divorce.

*"No matter what you are feeling,
the most important thing for your
child is to be in a place where
they can continue to grow, feel
safe, and have the benefit of
both parents in their life."*

— Judge Chris Oldner
416th District Court



*Why do you
guys have to
keep fighting?*





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