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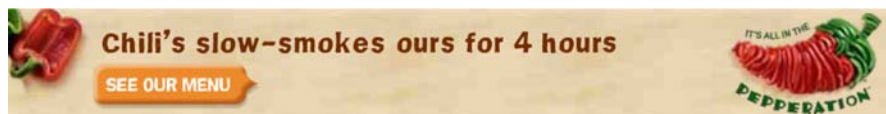
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## geoparent tips & tricks

### [How to talk to kids about divorce](#)

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Going through a divorce is emotionally taxing for adults, but when children are involved the situation can become even more heart wrenching. Not only do you have to cope yourself, but you must take into consideration what your children are experiencing as Mom and Dad go their separate ways.

By Elizabeth Weiss McGolerick

Divorce isn't kid stuff. It can create irrational fears in your children about safety, as well as their own happiness and yours. Depending on the ages and maturity of your children, each can react to the divorce in different ways. Some children may withdraw while others act out. It can be easy to let your own anger get the best of you when your child's frustrating behavior seems to be taking over, but remember that their emotions are fluctuating too. Allow and encourage your kids to talk about their feelings, whether they are sad, angry, or confused.

**Below are some tips for the best ways to approach your children, talk with them, and help them cope with your divorce.**

- **Join forces with your ex.** Though your marriage may have ended, one place you must work to keep a united front with your former partner is when it comes to talking with your children about divorce. When you decide to tell your children that you're going your separate ways, do so together. And if you can't interact with your ex without hostility, find a mediator who can help you. You both love your children – make every effort to work as a team for their sake.
- **Timing is everything.** Choose a time of day when there are no other obligations pending and you are certain to have your child's full attention. Kids can be frustrated when you interrupt something they enjoy, but when it's to deliver such unwelcome news, their reactions could be even stormier. In addition, your child's once-favorite activity could long be tainted because they'll associate it with your divorce.
- **No trash talk.** It's important for your children to have the freedom to be loyal to both of you, love and respect both of you, and not feel forced to choose between you. Your divorce may be a messy one, but do everything you can to shield the children from any trash talk and refrain from it yourself.
- **No need to get specific.** It isn't necessary to divulge the dirty details of the reasons for your divorce. Explain to your children that the two of you have grown apart and still care about each other but that you don't want to be married anymore. Your kids will ask questions – answer them honestly and as best you can with protecting them from what they don't need to know.
- **Reassure them.** It's common for children to feel guilty or blame themselves when their parents' marriage breaks up. Reassure them that they are not responsible for your divorce in any way. Let them know that you both love them and will care for them as always, even if you're no longer together.
- **Maintain a sense of order.** Stability and routine are very important in a child's life and essential to their healthy development. Determine your new living arrangements, how the children fit into them, and make every effort to stick to your choices. This sense of order goes for how you parent your children as well – don't get lax on discipline or spoil them just to make up for the trauma of divorce. Your kids need you and your love now more than ever, but they need to know that you are still in charge and they will feel more secure knowing that life is remaining consistent.
- **Don't be afraid to turn to others.** Maintaining a household in the midst of a divorce is easier said than done, so cut yourself some slack if your children haven't adjusted as well as you might have wished. Reach out to organizations that can offer you parenting support. Or consider contacting a therapist who can help your child cope by providing a safe, neutral place for them to express their feelings.

Finally, remember to take care of yourself. You need support during your divorce as well and an opportunity to let your true emotions out. It's fine to let your children know that you're naturally sad about what's happening, but don't make them your



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counselor or sounding board. Don't be shy about finding a support group to help you manage your own feelings and emotional health.

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1. Thanks for this excellent advice regarding talking to your kids about divorce. My own experience more than a decade ago led to my writing a guidebook for parents on how to create a storybook with family photos and history as a successful way to have the tough break-the-news conversation. I'm recognized as The Voice of Child-Centered Divorce and my new book is How Do I Tell the Kids about the Divorce? A Create-a-Storybook™ Guide to Preparing Your Children — With Love! What makes the book unique is that I don't just tell parents what to say. I provide customizable templates to say it for them!

Therapists, attorneys, mediators, educators and other professionals from around the U.S. and beyond have endorsed the book, attesting to the value of my fill-in-the-blanks, age-appropriate templates. Six therapists contribute their expertise to the book, as well. My goal is for divorcing couples to stop, talk and create a plan before having that crucial "divorce" talk with their children. I hope, for the sake of their kids, they will decide to move ahead in creating a child-centered divorce. For free articles, my ezine and other valuable resources on this topic, visit <http://www.childcenterreddivorce.com>.

Best wishes,  
Rosalind Sedacca, CCT

Comment by [Rosalind Sedacca, CCT](#) — August 7, 2008 @ [6:32 am](#)

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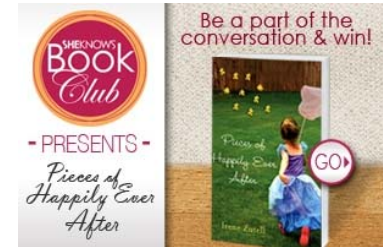
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