

Title: 5 Must-Tell Messages to Prepare the Kids for Your Divorce

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One of the most difficult conversations any parent will ever have is telling their children about their pending divorce. I know first-hand because many years ago I went through the experience. I fought and faced the overwhelming emotions. The deep gut-wrenching fear. The continuous anxiety. The incredible guilt. And the oppressive weight of shame.

My son, after all, was innocent. A sweet, gentle soul who loved his father and mother dearly. He certainly did not deserve this.

I struggled with the anxiety for weeks in advance. When should I tell him? How should I tell him? Should we tell him together? And most frightening of all, WHAT SHOULD WE SAY?

How do you explain to a child that the life he has known, the comfort he has felt in his family setting, is about to be disrupted – changed – forever?

How do you explain to a child that none of this is his fault?

How do you reassure him that life will go on, that he will be safe, cared for and loved, even after his parents divorce?

And, even more intimidating, how do you prepare him for all the unknowns looming ahead when you're not sure yourself how it will all turn out?

I needed a plan. A strategy. A way of conveying all that I wanted to say to him at a level of understanding that he could grasp.

Thankfully I found that plan. I came up with a storybook that told my son, in words and pictures, the story of how his father and I met, married and started a family. It explained problems we encountered that we could not readily fix, and the decision we ultimately made to get a divorce.

In my new ebook, *How Do I Tell the Kids about the Divorce?*, I provide a fill-in-the-blanks template that other parents can use to prepare their children for the many changes ahead. The interactive format allows parents to customize the story to fit their family dynamics. It also focuses on five key messages that are essential for every child to hear, understand and absorb. By sharing and repeating these five points to your children in the weeks and months following the initial conversation, you will enable them to better handle, accept and even embrace the challenges and changes they will soon be facing. Here are the five must-tell messages for your children:

This is not your fault.

Mom and Dad have been having problems. We don't agree about certain key issues and that creates conflict. Even when some of the issues are about you, that does not mean you are to blame. You are an innocent child who we both love and cherish. It is not your fault that Mom and Dad disagree about your bedtime, where to go on vacation, how to help you with your homework or whether you should play soccer. We are not fighting about YOU. We are disagreeing with each other about issues that concern you and our family. But you are not in any way at fault.

Mom and Dad will always be your parents.

No matter what changes occur over the weeks, months and years ahead, one thing is for certain. Mom and Dad will still always be your parents. No one else will ever be your real Mom. No one else will ever be your real Dad. We will both always love you and be there for you, no matter

where we live or how things should change.

This is about change, not about blame.

Divorce is a scary word. But all it really means is that our family will be experiencing some changes. Change is okay. Everything in life keeps changing. You grow bigger, taller, stronger and smarter every year. The seasons change every year. Clothing styles and hair styles keep changing. You change grades and schools as you grow older. Change means things will be different in some ways. It doesn't mean things will be bad. Change can be fun, exciting and new. Sometimes it takes a while to get used to changes, like beginning a new grade with a new teacher. Other times change gives us a chance to do things in a new and better way, like trying a new sport or a hobby you grow to love.

The change in our family is not about who's right or wrong or who's good or bad. Mom and Dad both tried their best to resolve our problems. The old way didn't work for us and now we will be trying a new way for our family to live so there's more peace, calmness and happiness for us all. Instead of worrying about who's to blame, let's think about how we can see the changes ahead as a new adventure -- a brand new chapter in our lives. Who knows what lies ahead?

Things will work out okay.

We're often frightened when we begin new things and face new challenges. Like the first time you learned to ride a bicycle, the first day of school or day camp, your first trip to the dentist. Things always have a way of working out, even when we're scared that they won't. Divorce will be the same way. Things will be new and different for a while.

We'll have new ways of doing some things ... some new responsibilities ... some differences in our schedules. But life will go on. We will get used to the differences. Some of them we may even prefer. And after a while, we'll look back and say, life is different than it used to be, but it's all okay. I'm okay, our family is okay and, most important of all, we still love each other. That is a lot better than okay. It's great!

Mom and Dad will always love you.

No matter what happens, no matter what changes occur, one thing is for certain. Mom and Dad will always love you. That will never change. Regardless of where we live, what we do and how old you get. You can count on that. And don't ever forget it.

These core messages are the foundation your children will depend on when they are feeling frightened, sad or insecure. Repeat them often in your own words and your own style. You'll be rewarded in countless ways as you and your children encounter and overcome the challenges of life after divorce.

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Rosalind Sedacca, CCT, has been facilitating relationship seminars and workshops for more than fifteen years. As a Certified Corporate Trainer and professional speaker, she now focuses her attention on coaching troubled families on how to create a "child-centered divorce." For other free articles on this subject, to receive her free ezine, and/or to order her book, *How Do I Tell the Kids about the DIVORCE? A Create-a-Storybook Guide*™ to preparing your children -- with love, Rosalind invites you to visit her website, <http://www.childcentereddivorce.com>

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