

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

Mediation Herefordshire

Help to make practical arrangements for the future, both financial and for the children.

Tel—01432 264087
www.mediationherefordshire.co.uk

Women's Aid

Support and advice in situations of domestic violence .
Herefordshire & Shropshire Helpline

Tel—0800 783 1359

Parentline Plus

Helpline for advice and useful information sheets.

Tel—0808 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk

One Parent Families

Helpline and Information

Tel—0800 018 5026
www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk

Gingerbread

Support and practical help for lone parents. Helpline for advice on many practical issues.

Tel—0800 018 4318
www.gingerbread.org.uk

USEFUL WEBSITES

www.divorceandchildren.com

www.divorce.co.uk

www.itsnotyourfault.org

www.divorceaid.co.uk

www.bbc.co.uk/relationships

www.channel4.com/health



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Mediation
Herefordshire

Divorce

A Parents' Guide



Parents can be concerned about how their children might be affected by their divorce. Children can be upset and sad when their parents separate. However, there are some dos and don'ts which can really help children manage this difficult experience. Here are some ideas:

TELLING YOUR CHILDREN

Tell your children together if you can. Agree what you are going to say and keep it simple.

Children need an explanation that they can understand.

Children will need a lot of reassurance. Some things they need to know -

- The separation is not their fault
- Both their Mum and Dad love them.
- It's ok for them to love both their Mum and Dad.
- You will make sure that they will be able to see both of their parents.
- They will continue to see their wider family and friends.
- They will continue with any regular activities—whenever possible.

If life at home has been difficult with arguments or violence, then children may feel relieved.

You may need to have these conversations several times. Children may not take everything in at once.

AS TIME GOES ON

Divorce is a process, not a one-off event. Different aspects will be important at different times. Children do best when they can see their parents co-operating. There may be times when this is difficult or situations when it is not possible, but even small steps are helpful.

WHAT HELPS

Listen to your children. It helps to try to understand their point of view and they really appreciate it.

Let them know that it is ok to have feelings such as sadness, anxiety, anger and confusion and that they can talk to you about those feelings. It can be hard as a parent to hear your child express such feelings to you, but it is a real help for them.

Let them know that they can talk to other people for support, such as other family members, teachers or counsellors.

Let them know which parts of their life will change and which will stay the same.

Try to co-operate with your ex when making arrangements about the children. It is helpful if you can work together, but if this is difficult then polite and business-like will still be very helpful.

Support your child's relationship with the other parent. Encourage them to keep in touch with phone calls, letters or e-mails.

Let your children talk about what they do when they are with the other parent.

Remember that it is very common for children to wish that their parents would get back together again, even if they know that it is not going to happen.

Look after yourself. If your children know that you are ok, then they will feel better too.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Don't criticise the other parent and ask other people not to do so either. Remember that you are both part of your child's identity.

Don't argue or fight with the other parent in front of your child or in their hearing.

Don't discuss grown up issues such as court proceedings, finances, housing matters or personal details about your relationship, even if your children ask.

Don't get your children to carry messages between you and the other parent.

Don't ask intrusive questions about life at the other parent's house.

Don't draw them into a battle.

Don't use your child for your own emotional support.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Children can manage different households with different rules.

Coming back to one parent after visiting the other is often the most difficult part for children to manage. It is not unusual for them to be quiet or upset at this time.

Sometimes brothers and sisters will fight more after their parents separate. This will pass in time.

It is not unusual for children to become anxious and clingy with the parent they are living with. Again this will pass.
