

Children Bill of Rights - for Parents going through a divorce

1. Children love and need both parents, no matter how imperfect their parents may be. Your children need to be encouraged to love both of you even when times are tough. Reassure your children often that your divorce is not their fault.

2. Try hard not to say angry things to or about the other parent when the children can hear you. Don't share your criticisms or bad feelings about the other parent with your children. Children often feel undifferentiated from their parents and criticism of either parent becomes a source of poor self esteem for the child.

3. Children should not be used as messengers between parents. It is your obligation to talk to and to deliver objects to the other parent directly.

4. Try not to ask your children lots of questions about what is going on at the other parent's home or where they went, what they did, and who else was there when they were with the other parent. If your children are having a hard time during the time they spend with the other parent, reassure them and encourage them to talk directly to their other parent.

5. Never ask your children to take sides in the divorce or tell them anything about what is going on in court. If your children ask questions, tell them that you and their other parent both love them very much and that you are doing your best to work everything out so that the children are always cared for in the best way. Feel free to call your Children's attorney to discuss concerns you have about communications.

6. Do not try to influence your children to spend more time with you by promises of trips or gifts. Children deserve to have a good time with both parents and both parents deserve the right to discuss between themselves in advance what activities are appropriate the children.

7. Don't say or do things that might make your children feel they are being disloyal to you by enjoying time spent with the other parent. Reassure them that you are fine when they are with the other parent and encourage them to have a good time, too.

8. Help your child to remember to take necessary homework, clothing or gear when they are going to the other parent's home, and if they forget, go out of your way to help get whatever it is they need, where they need it.

9. Do not share your own worries about the future, or your own concerns about money with your children. Your job is to shield your children from your adult concerns and reassure your children that they will be fine because you and their other parent will always take care of them and love them. Say this even if you don't believe it.

10. Allow your children the freedom to talk to you about their feelings, even when they are hard to hear, but also allow your children the freedom to keep their feelings to themselves if they choose not to talk.