



Tips from the **Divorce Support Club**

Supporting your children
through your divorce

1 Two important things to be **aware** of as parents

As parents who are separating, there are 2 important things that you should be especially aware of.



Exposure to ongoing conflict has long term damaging effects. Children look at their parents as people who should make them feel safe. Exposing them to ongoing conflict breaks this view.

Not being able to have a relationship with both parents is detrimental. Don't make your child feel like they have to choose between you. Put your child first, not in the middle.

2 How will this affect **my** child?

Everything that you say and do will affect your child, so make sure you are always asking yourself "how will this affect them?"

- It is so important to distinguish the difference between 'your ex' and 'co-parent'. They are two separate roles, so separate your emotion and keep them as such.
- Recognise when you go wrong, and admit this to your child.
- When reacting to something, ask yourself 'how will I feel about this reaction if I look back in 5 years? Will I be proud, or will I be embarrassed?'



3 Healthy conflict

There is healthy conflict, and unhealthy conflict. Conflict is a part of life, so teaching your children to deal with conflict in a health way is important.



- ✓ Seek clarification and understanding
- ✓ Stay calm
- ✓ Ask for more information 'why do you feel this way?'
- ✗ Slamming doors/physical reactions
- ✗ Nasty comments
- ✗ Instantly reactive/defensive

4 When your child is struggling

When your child is struggling, make them feel safe, seen, soothed and secure.

- Don't dismiss their feelings or immediately try to make them feel better. Try to help them to understand what they're feeling.
- Dealing with this in the right way will develop their emotional intelligence, and really strengthen your relationship with them.
- Validate how they feel. 'We'll handle this together', 'I can see why you feel that way', 'How can I help you?'



5 Practical tools

Each child is different, but these tools can be beneficial to many children in helping them cope with the changes happening in their lives.



Remember how things you say are received. When your child visits their other parent, don't ask 'When are you coming home?' This gives the impression that their other parent's house isn't their home. Instead, ask 'When are you coming back here?'

3 Questions to ask your children every day:

- What's your number? (how are you feeling on a scale of 1-10)
- What's your word? (describe how you feel in one word)
- Is there anything you want to talk about?

Sometimes just asking what they need is enough.

