

Helping Your Child with a Separation or Divorce

Here are some things that may happen to children when their parents separate or divorce:

- Child may blame himself for what has happened.
- Child may try to make/manipulate you and your spouse to get back together again.
- Child may get into trouble by acting up in school, doing illegal acts, etc – so that both parents have to be contacted/involved
- Younger children may do things that they grew out of like wetting the bed or sucking their thumb.
- Older children may complain about being sick when there is no physical reason.
- Child may start fights with other children or say bad things to you.

HELP – What do I do?

- You can let him know that the divorce is not his fault and there is nothing he can do to make your marriage better.
- You need to be patient and listen to your child's feelings, even if you don't like what she says. Let her talk.
- Teenagers sometimes do better talking to another adult instead of their parent. You can help by giving your teen time to talk to other adults that you trust.
- Your child may begin to think that you owe him something because of the divorce. Don't buy your child extra things to "make up" for what they've gone through...this will only cause more problems later.
- You may feel guilty, but you must make sure your child keeps whatever rules you make.
- Keep your child's schedule regular: bed time, meals, and homework.
- Be a good example with dealing with your emotions appropriately.