



# KIDS Services

Parent Education Center

September 2009

## Caring For Yourself

Divorce feels like a crisis. It is a traumatic, crazy and an uncertain time for you and your children. What do most people do when they are in crisis? Well, we survive by living from moment to moment and finding some way to keep going until things get better or at the very least, tolerable. Until you reach that point, one of the most important things you can do for your children is to **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.**

If you exhaust yourself mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally, what will happen to your children?

It is important to remember our children's feelings are going to be different than our own. At times we may have strong feelings about our child's other parent. Don't make your issues and feelings your children's problem. Not only do we need to care for ourselves so we are available to care for our kids, we also need to set an example for our children. Kids learn that life is going to be okay when we show them through our words and actions that we have things under control. In times of crisis, even adults may need reassurance that life is going to be okay. As a result, we may forget or need to relearn how to care for ourselves.

Take good care of your physical self. Eat right, sleep and exercise.

Take care of your emotional self. If you are having a hard time, seek out a support group or professional help.

Take time to do things for yourself that are nurturing or positive. Be sure to monitor your level of stress and strive to maintain balance. Make time to take hot baths, read good books, have coffee or dinner with a friend. Put energy into activities that promote your confidence and self worth.

Separate your feelings from problems or issues involving your children and the other parent.

Give yourself permission to feel your feelings in a healthy way. You have every right to feel the way you do. What you do with those feelings, however, can make a world of difference in your life and the lives of your children. Avoid destructive expressions such as drinking alcohol, mind games, seeking revenge or engaging in verbal assaults with your ex-spouse. Instead, find safe healthy people to talk with and vent your frustration. Invest your energy into new interests or other growth promoting activities.

Change your expectations. When you were married you had little control, if any, over what your spouse did and said. Now that you are divorced, you have even less control. Don't spend your valuable time and energy trying to change or control issues involving the other parent. Rather, focus on being the best parent you can be and maintaining a positive relationship with your children.

Avoid making sudden or rash decisions. Make peace with the past and move forward. Give yourself time to heal from the divorce and process your feelings of grief and loss.

Be creative, don't get hung up on only one way of doing things. Instead of locking yourself into absolutes, when problems or situations arise try changing your perspective or doing something different. Try to stay flexible and remember sometimes plans will need to be revised or altered to accommodate your children's needs. **Above all, keep your sense of humor.**

[www.divorceandchildren.com](http://www.divorceandchildren.com)

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[Kidservices@qwestoffice.net](mailto:Kidservices@qwestoffice.net)  
[www.Kidservices.net](http://www.Kidservices.net)

### Parent Education Classes

- ☺ Love and Logic
- ☺ Parenting Skills for Teen Parents
- ☺ Smart Steps for Stepfamilies
- ☺ Nurturing Fathers
- ☺ Nonviolent Family Skills
- ☺ Skills for Families in Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery

See back cover for more information and times of classes

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## Joint Physical Custody

Being bounced from one parent's house to the other's is stressful for kids. The rules are constantly changing; there is little consistency in their lives. These kids spend all their time either at Mom's house or Dad's house. Neither one truly belonging to them. There are things parents can do to help relieve their children's stress and fears.

First, help your child to create a "going away routine." Explain to your child that this is something you will do together the day of each and every switch. Stress to your child that this routine is a way of reminding him/her that you love them and will miss them very much. It should be something you enjoy doing together that is relaxing and reassuring for the child.

When it is time for your child to leave, make sure you tell them you'll miss them. Don't assume they already know. A child needs to hear the words each and every time.

If it's not upsetting to your child, call them every day they are gone either around breakfast time or bedtime. If hearing from you makes things worse for your child, or you end up arguing with your ex, then don't call.

When your child returns, spend time sharing what

you both did while you were apart. Make that time special. Create something your child can keep. Have your child draw pictures or write about their time away. You do the same. Now, ask your child to illustrate your weekend story. You draw pictures (or write the words) to go with your child's story. Put everything together in book form, using cardboard for a book cover. Have your child decorate one side of the cover and you decorate the back.

Talk with your ex about the rules around their house. Try to keep the rules and expectations as close as possible. If that isn't possible, make sure your child knows what is required of him/her at each house. Sit down and discuss it. Make sure your child clearly understands. Confusion and uncertainty is a main cause of stress in children. They need to have limits and expectations clearly outlined and explained.

Try to be understanding of behavioral changes during this stressful time. If your child reacts to the change with depression, anger, or anything that strikes you as particularly odd, consult a family/child counselor or your pediatrician for advice.

*[www.allsands.com/lifestyles](http://www.allsands.com/lifestyles)*



## Family Acts of Kindness

- Have each member of your family choose someone outside the family who has made a positive difference in his or her life. Write short thank-you notes, and mail the letters together.
- Bake cookies together, and take them to a neighbor who needs a lift.
- Pitch in and clean up the yard of a neighbor who is ill, has had surgery recently, or has had a family emergency.
- Volunteer with your children to help at a soup kitchen.
- Leave a bouquet of flowers on a neighbor's front step anonymously.
- Start a Family Kindness Journal, about kind acts both given and received, and create a family scrapbook. If you have photos, include them with the stories. As years go by and as your children grow, all of you can review the many ways that kindness has touched your family's life.
- Clean up litter on a stretch of road in your neighborhood.
- Include a note or joke in your child's lunchbox.
- Call your mom just to say hello.
- Place a flower in your neighbors' newspaper without them seeing it.
- Arrange a conference call for the entire family.

## Separated and Divorce Parents Need. . .

To feel and express love and affection for their children.

To *receive* love and affection from their children.

To have continued, meaningful and consistent contact with their children.

To feel safe and protected.

To grieve the losses associated with marital and family changes.

To receive help and support from family, friends, and the community.

To build a cordial and cooperative parenting relationship with the other parent.

To stay out of the middle of the relationship between the children and the other parent.

To set appropriate rules, limits and consequences for their children that are consistent in both homes.

To create a healthy and happy future for their children.

*kidsinthemiddle.org*

## How Do You Decide Who To Marry By Kids

You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming. - Alan, age 10

No person really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with. -- Kristen, age 10

WHAT IS THE RIGHT AGE TO GET MARRIED?

Twenty-three is the best age because you know the person FOREVER by then. -- Camille, age 10

HOW CAN A STRANGER TELL IF TWO PEOPLE ARE MARRIED?

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids. -- Derrick, age 8

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR MOM AND DAD HAVE IN COMMON?

Both don't want any more kids. -- Lori, age 8

WHAT DO MOST PEOPLE DO ON A DATE?

Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say if you listen long enough. -- Lynnette, age 8 (isn't she a treasure)

On the first date, they just tell each other lies and that usually gets them interested enough to go for a second date. -- Martin, age 10

WHAT WOULD YOU DO ON A FIRST DATE THAT WAS TURNING SOUR?

I'd run home and play dead. The next day I would call all the newspapers and make sure they wrote about me in all the dead columns. -- Craig, age 9

WHEN IS IT OKAY TO KISS SOMEONE?

When they're rich. -- Pam, age 7

The law says you have to be eighteen, so I wouldn't want to mess with that. - - Curt, age 7

The rule goes like this: If you kiss someone, then you should marry them and have kids with them. It's the right thing to do. -- Howard, age 8

IS IT BETTER TO BE SINGLE OR MARRIED?

It's better for girls to be single but not for boys. Boys need someone to clean up after them. -- Anita, age 9 (bless you child)

HOW WOULD THE WORLD BE DIFFERENT IF PEOPLE DIDN'T GET MARRIED?

There sure would be a lot of kids to explain, wouldn't there? -- Kelvin, age 8

And the #1 Favorite is.....HOW WOULD YOU MAKE A MARRIAGE WORK?

Tell your wife that she looks pretty, even if she looks like a truck. -- Ricky, age 10

## KIDS Services

(Kids In Divorce Support Services)

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Email: [kidsservices@qwestoffice.net](mailto:kidsservices@qwestoffice.net)

Web Site: [www.kidsservices.net](http://www.kidsservices.net)

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## Parent Education

### *Becoming a Love and Logic Single Parent*

Wednesday Evenings 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Saturday Mornings 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

### *Parenting Skills for Teen Parents*

**New class starting in September**

### *Nonviolent Family Skills Program*

Call for days and times

### *Smart Steps for Stepfamilies*

Call for days and times

### *Nurturing Fathers*

Call for days and times

### *Skills Program for Families in Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery*

Call for days and times

### *Training the Non-Professional Provider of Supervised Visitation*

Call for days and times

## Some Of Our Favorite Websites

[www.kidsservices.net](http://www.kidsservices.net)

[www.childrenanddivorce.com](http://www.childrenanddivorce.com)

[www.about.com/parenting/](http://www.about.com/parenting/)

[www.celebratingfamilies.net](http://www.celebratingfamilies.net)

[www.childparenting.about.com](http://www.childparenting.about.com)

[www.christianitytoday.com](http://www.christianitytoday.com)

[www.confidentkids.com](http://www.confidentkids.com)

[www.divorceinfo.com](http://www.divorceinfo.com)

[www.divorcesupport.about.com](http://www.divorcesupport.about.com)

[www.focusonyourchild.com](http://www.focusonyourchild.com)

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

[www.kidsinthemiddle.org](http://www.kidsinthemiddle.org)

[www.kidsturncentral.com/topics/issues/divorce.htm](http://www.kidsturncentral.com/topics/issues/divorce.htm)

[www.makinglemonade.com](http://www.makinglemonade.com)

[www.montanameth.org](http://www.montanameth.org)

[www.myparentime.com](http://www.myparentime.com)

[www.parenting-advice.net](http://www.parenting-advice.net)

[www.parentcenter.com](http://www.parentcenter.com)

[www.parenting.org](http://www.parenting.org)

[www.practicalparent.org.uk](http://www.practicalparent.org.uk)

[www.onthefence.com](http://www.onthefence.com)