

## **SEPARATION - 10 TIPS FOR PARENTS TO HELP CHILDREN**

1. Listen. Your child needs to be heard. Keep the channels of communication open, without forcing children to talk if they are not ready. Help the children voice their feelings and do your best not to influence them, however strongly you feel.
2. Be honest with your children but don't burden them with more than they can handle, emotionally or developmentally. They don't want to be caught in the middle by hearing different sides of an argument.
3. Discourage children from 'telling tales' or being spies about the other parent. This can cause guilty feelings and divided loyalties.
4. Try to be positive about the other parent's situation, habits, friends, activities and parenting decisions. If you have concerns, speak to the other parent personally, far away from the children's hearing.
5. Try to divide the children's things so they will be comfortable in both homes.
6. Agree on some basic rules if you can, so that children don't play you off against each other.
7. Try to develop a positive, enthusiastic, optimistic attitude about your parenting arrangements. Your attitude will help your children adapt in a difficult situation.
8. Regard the parenting as a shared responsibility. Try to develop trust in the other as a parent, even if you have lost trust as spouse.
9. Be reliable. Children are very hurt if you cancel time with them, show up late to pick them up or bring them back earlier than planned.
10. Look after yourself and build a new life when you are ready. Your sense of well-being and hope will affect your children's adjustment in many positive ways.