

# TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT DIVORCE

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**Don't minimize your children's awareness of ongoing issues at home.** As much as we'd like to tell ourselves that we can keep the tension and marital issues hidden from our children, they are very sensitive and perceptive. And, also, they tend to blame themselves, even if they have no concrete explanation for what they may have done. They need reassurance that this is not their fault, that they can't control it or fix it, and that you are both here to support them. At the same time, be aware that they may be completely shocked and need your support with those feelings as well.

**Ideally, talk to them together.** No matter how angry you are, you need to put your kids first, and presenting a united front in terms of the current situation not being their fault and not being their problem to fix is a must.

**Get clear about what you want to share with your kids.** Get on the same page with the language you want to use and what you want to share and stick to your script. Your kids may have questions, especially if they are older, about what has happened and what will happen, so be prepared. Even though you may be extremely angry with your spouse or ex-spouse and feel the urge to tell your child(ren) how they have hurt you, you need to think about what the potential impact might have on your child(ren). And, at the same time, be aware that they likely know that something is wrong in the household, and you need to have a conversation with them about that.

**Tips for what to share.** Keep things general. Never go into details about your sex life or other detailed aspects of the issues. Basically, you need to let your kids know that, yes, something is wrong between mom and dad, and that:

1. They didn't cause it.
2. They can't fix it.
3. They can't control it.
4. They can care for themselves by communicating their feelings, making healthy choices, and celebrating themselves



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