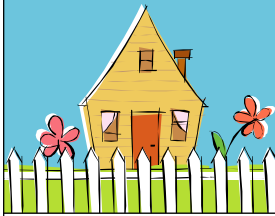


DIVORCE AND PARENTING NEWSLETTER

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DID YOU KNOW... ONLY 10% OF ALL CHILDREN OF DIVORCE ARE RELIEVED BY THEIR PARENTS' SPLIT?

Most children of divorce want desperately for their parents to get back together. It is particularly difficult for children when parents divorce because they are powerless about the decision and are not the ones who wanted it.

How can divorcing parents help their children accept the split? Parents **MUST** realize that their children will need time to grieve their loss. Parents should refrain from trying to convince their children that “everything will be fine” or that “the divorce is for the best.” The majority of children of divorce do not think that “everything will be fine” and may believe their parents do not understand what they are feeling if they respond in this manner. Children do not need their parents to be cheerleaders, but rather, they need their parents to support them while they work towards adjusting to the changes in their family.

The best way for parents to convince their children that the divorce is “for the best” is to show them this is true through their actions. Has the stress and fighting been greatly reduced in the home since the divorce? Are both parents following through on the promises they made to their children at the time of the separation? Are the parents respectful towards each other in their children’s presence? Do the children have adequate time with each parent? Success in these areas will be more helpful in getting the children to reconcile the divorce rather than by just trying to tell them with words.

Divorce is not easy for anyone, but can be especially tough on kids. When a child expresses sadness or anger about his or her parents’ divorce, a parent should use his



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or her very best listening skills and be sure to validate the child’s experience. An example of a supportive, nonjudgmental statement would be something like: “I can see how sad you are about the divorce” or “I know how hard it must be not to have mommy/daddy living here anymore.”

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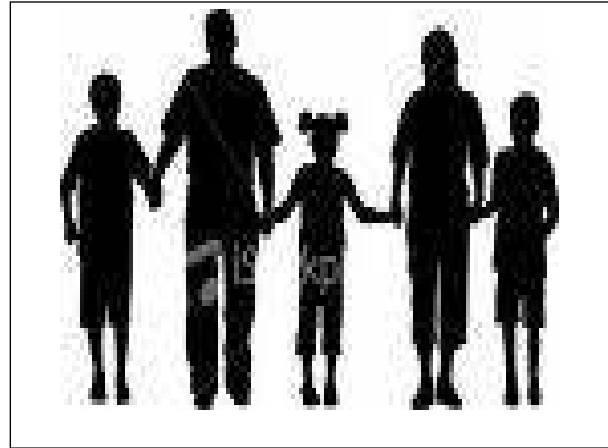
A parent can also validate his or her child's feelings by helping the child to do something about them. For example, if a child expresses missing daddy, the mother may encourage the child to call or write a letter to the other parent. Likewise, if a child tells dad he doesn't want to move to another house, dad can offer to take the child to explore the new neighborhood and pick out a

special color paint for the walls of his or her new room to make the transition easier.

A SIMPLE MESSAGE

The message of this newsletter is simple - children of divorce are unlikely to share their parents' view of the divorce being a relief or a good thing. Therefore, parents need to accept that their children may not see the benefit of the divorce at this time and validate their children's views accordingly. Divorce is never easy, but parents do have the ability to help ease their children's adjustment by being supportive, listening, and accepting their child's experience as valid.

Dr. Lisa Rene Reynolds is a marital and family therapist, author, and instructor of classes for divorcing parents. For more information on her books or appearances, please visit her website at: www.drlisarenereynolds.com



Look for more information on her newest book:

Marriage Ending and Family Mending: A Guide to Good Parenting through a Divorce

COMING SOON!!!!!!!

