

Giving the Kids the Bad News About a Divorce

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Telling children about an impending divorce frequently seems like adding additional pain and discomfort onto an already frustrating process. And, unfortunately, it can be highly emotional because the news is frequently the first time the children may hear that divorce is a reality now. Kids aren't blind; they know, hear, and watch as parents' arguments and disagreement increase. However, they may not fathom in even these situations that divorce has arrived and may still be shocked by it regardless.

Communication is Essential

Divorce should not be hidden from kids or dropped on them right after the last proceeding has been finalized. Many parents try to avoid the conversation as long as possible because they may not know what to say, they aren't sure how detailed to get, they want to avoid hurting the kids entirely, and they fear being blamed for the divorce. In reality, any and all of these issues may occur anyways, but kids should not be kept in the dark. Divorce attorneys in Utah often see the opposite, and it only makes things harder with kids.

A divorce and children discussion should be age-appropriate but a divorce plan that is already decided on shouldn't be avoided. The children should be told before they find out by accident and resent being kept in the dark. It's best to tell children as soon as is reasonable as anyone else who knows, such as relatives, may accidentally let it slip and cause an even bigger problem as well.

Having a Plan Works Better

First, the correct way to communicate is, as hard as it may seem, to coordinate with your spouse and keep the story the same. ***Avoid blaming each other and focus*** instead on explaining why divorce is necessary. It helps to have a common ground on what details will be kept out of the conversation as well.

Second, only start the conversation when is ***100 percent certain*** that the separation or divorce is going to happen. Don't talk about either if it's just a possibility. When doing so, have the conversation before physically separating and one of the spouses moving out of the home. Make sure all the kids hear things at the same time, but then followup with the older children for more serious conversations. The younger ones will often look to the older siblings for support in these scenarios.

Third, the timing of the talk matters. Don't jam it in right before the kids go to bed or go to school or on a holiday. The best scenarios tend to be on a weekend when there is plenty of time to digest and have a discussion without being rushed. It gives the kids time to ask questions, get reassurance and digest what they are hearing, and parents have time to calmly answer.

It may seem difficult, but parents need to still communicate in terms of "we" to the kids. While the divorce might be the end of a marriage, both spouses are still parents of the child. But the kids need to know their parents are still "we" in terms of them specifically.

Managing the Change

Be clear about what is going to change and how it's going to work. If a spouse is moving out of the home, explain why and how the kids will still be involved with the now-outside parent. Anticipate a reaction and work through it. It's the same approach divorce lawyers Utah experts use in court.

Divorce is challenging in the best of times, but the Law Offices of David Pedrazas are here for you and to help get through this major life change successfully for your family.