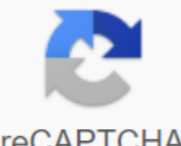


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Quints by surprise parents divorce

What's the best way to help your family get through a divorce? Every situation — and every family — is different. But these proposals may make the process less painful for children, teenagers and families. Helping children manage their feelings encourages children to share their feelings - positive or negative - about what is happening. It is important for divorce - and already divorced - parents to sit down with their children and encourage them to say what they think and feel. But keep this separate from your feelings. Convince your children that their feelings are important, valid and normal. Let them know that you can cope with talking about even difficult or painful feelings. During these conversations, avoid solving problems and trying to change the way the child feels. Instead, focus on listening and thanking your children for their honesty. Most often children feel the loss of family and can blame you or the other parent - or both - for what is happening in their lives. So you will need to be ready to answer the questions your children might ask or answer their concerns. Let talking about divorce and how it affects your children be an ongoing process. As they age and become more mature, children may have questions or concerns they have not thought of before. Even if you feel like you've gotten over the same topics before, keep the dialogue open. If possible, sit down with another parent and plan how you will talk about what is happening. If you feel like you might get too upset, ask someone else (cousin, maybe) to talk to your kids. It's ok and it's healthy for children to see their parents feel sad or upset, but being very emotional can make them feel responsible for their parents' feelings. If your children see that you are struggling with a difficult emotion, model healthy coping as much as possible. Try: Mark your emotions for them (I feel sad at the moment, >). Declare that you know it's ok to feel that way sometimes (It's ok and normal for me to feel sad). Talk about how you will cope with your difficult feelings (Something that always helps me feel better when I am sad is baking cookies with you or playing outside. Let's do it). It's only natural for children to have a lot of emotions about divorce. They might feel guilty and imagine they caused the problem. This is especially true if the children hear their parents arguing about them. Children and teenagers may feel angry or frightened or worried about their future. If they express these emotions, convince them that this is not the case while reminding them that this is a normal feeling. Although children can struggle with divorce for a while, the real impact is usually felt over a period of 2 to 3 years. During this time, some may express their feelings. But depending on their age and development, other children simply will not have them. They can instead act or be depressed. For children of school age, age, may mean that their ratings are falling or losing interest in activities. For younger children, these feelings are often expressed during the game. Be aware of the sleeper effect with young children: they could initially take major changes in steps, but disruptive behaviors or challenging emotions can occur years later. Open communication with children and modelling healthy coping, even if they seem ok with big changes, can reduce problems down the road. It may be tempting to tell a child not to feel a certain way, but children (and adults, for that matter) are entitled to their feelings. And if you try to force a happy face, your children may be less likely to share their true feelings with you. Group programs for divorce children run by schools or religious organizations are an excellent resource for children and families who need help to get through these early stages. Thousands of children experience the stress of divorce every year. How they react depends on their age, personality and circumstances of the divorce and divorce process. Any divorce will affect the children involved - and many times the initial reaction is shock, sadness, frustration, anger or worry. But children can also get out of it better able to cope with stress, and many become more flexible, tolerant young adults. The most important things both parents can do to help children through this difficult time are: Keep visible conflicts, heated discussions, and legal conversations away from children. Minimize disruptions in children's daily routines. Limit negativity and guilt to private therapies or conversations with friends outside the home. Let every parent be involved in the lives of children. Adults going through separation and divorce need support - from friends, professionals, clergy and family. But don't seek support from your children, even if you seem to want it. Breaking the news As soon as you are confident in your plans, talk to your children about your decision to live apart. While there's no easy way to break the news, if possible, they have both parents there for this conversation. It's important to try to leave the feeling of anger, guilt or guilt out of it. Practice how you manage to tell your children so you don't get upset or angry during conversations. The discussion should correspond to the age, maturity and temperament of the child. But it should always include this message: What happened is between mom and dad and it's not the child's fault. Most children will feel guilty even after parents say they are not. That is why it is vital for parents to continue to give this encouragement. Tell your children that sometimes adults change the way they love each other or can't agree on things and so have to live apart. But remind them that children and parents are bound to life, birth or adoption. Parents and children often disagree on things, but it's part of the circle of life parents and children do not cease to love each other or divorce each other. Give the children enough information to prepare them for the coming changes in their lives. Try to answer their questions as honestly as possible. Remember that children do not need to know all the reasons for divorce (especially if it involves blaming the other parent). It is enough for them to understand what will change in their daily routine - and, just as importantly, what they will not. With younger children, it's best to keep it simple. You could say something like, Mom and Dad are going to live in different houses so they don't fight so much, but we both love you so much. Older children and teenagers may be more attuned to what parents have been going through and may have more questions based on what they've heard and picked up from conversations and arguments. Handling children's reactions Tell children who are upset about the news that you recognize and care about their feelings and convince them that all their upset feelings are perfectly fine and understandable. You could say, I know this is very upsetting for you. Can we try to imagine something that would make you feel better? or We both love you and we regret having to live apart. Not all children respond immediately. Let me know that's fine, too, and you can talk when they're ready. Some children try to please their parents by acting as if everything is fine, or try to avoid any heavy feelings by denying that they feel any anger or sadness on the news. Sometimes stress comes out in other ways - in school, or with friends, or in changes in their appetite, behavior or sleep patterns. Whether your children express fear, worry or relief about your separation and divorce, they will want to know how their daily lives might change. Be prepared to answer these and other questions: Who will I live with? Where am I going to go to school? Am I going to move? Where will every parent live? Where are we going to spend the holidays? Will I still be seeing my friends? Can I still go to camp this summer? Can I still do my favorite activities? Being honest isn't always easy when you don't have all the answers or when kids feel scared or wrong about what's going on. But telling them what they need to know at that point is always the right thing to do. Helping children cope Many children - and parents - mourn the loss of family as they had hoped, and children in particular lack the presence of both parents and the family life they had. That is why it is common and very natural for some children to express hope that their parents will one day reunite - even after the finality of the divorce has been explained to them. Mourning the loss of family is normal, but in time both you and your children will accept the new situation. So convince them it's okay to wish mom and dad could reunite, but also explain the finality Decisions: Here are some ways to help children cope with divorce agitation: Encourage honesty. Children need to know that their feelings are important to parents and will be taken seriously. Help them put their feelings into words. Children's behavior can often lead you to their feelings of sadness or anger. You could say, It feels like you're feeling sad right now. Do you know what makes you feel so sad? Be a good listener, even if it's hard for you to hear what they have to say. Legitimize their feelings. Saying I know you feel sad now or I know I feel lonely here without my dad letting the kids know their feelings are valid. It's important to encourage children to bring it all out before you start offering ways to make it better. Let the children know that it is also ok to feel happy or unburied or excited about the future. Offer support. Ask: What do you think will help you feel better? They may not be able to name something, but you can suggest a few ideas - maybe just sit down together, take a walk or hold your favorite stuffed animal. Younger children in particular might appreciate the offer to call dad on the phone or take a picture to give mom when he comes in at the end of the day. Beware of healthy. For adults, divorce and divorce is very stressful. This pressure can be heightened by custody, property and financial matters, which can bring out the worst in people. Finding ways to manage your own stress is key for you and your entire family. Keeping as physically and emotionally healthy as possible can help combat the effects of stress, and making sure you take care of your own needs, you can ensure that you will be in the best possible shape to take care of your children. Keep the details under control. When discussing divorce details with friends, family, or a lawyer, take care of your privacy. Try to keep your interactions with your ex as civilized as possible, especially when you are interacting in front of children. Walk the high way - do not resort to blaming or calling out inside your children's ears, regardless of the circumstances of separation. This is especially important in a crooked divorce where there have been particularly damaging events, such as infidelity. Take care to keep letters, emails and text messages in a safe location as children will be naturally curious if a situation with high conflicts is happening at home. Get help. This is not the time to go alone. Find a support group, talk to others who have been through it, use online resources, or ask your doctor or religious leaders to refer you to other resources. Getting help gives yourself a good example for your children on how to make a healthy adjustment to this great change. The help of a counsellor, therapist or friend will also maintain healthy boundaries with your children. It is very important not to rely on your children for Older children and those who are eager to please can try to make you feel better by offering a shoulder to cry on. No matter how tempting it is, it's best not to let them be a provider of your emotional support. Let your children know how touched you are by their caring nature and kindness, but give vent to a friend or therapist. The importance of consistency of consistency and routine can go a long way towards providing comfort and familiarity that can help your family during this great life change. When possible, minimize unpredictable schedules, transitions, or abrupt separations. Especially during divorce, children will benefit from one-on-one time with each parent. No matter how inconvenient, try to accommodate your ex-partner until you understand the schedule of visits. It is natural that you will be concerned about how the child copes with this change. The best thing you can do is trust your instincts and rely on what you know about your children. Are they acting differently than usual? Does a child do things like regress to younger behaviors, like thumb-down or moaning in bed? Do emotions seem to slip into the way of daily routines, such as school and social life? Behavioral changes are important to look out for -- any new or variable signs of insifiability, sadness, anxiety, school problems, or difficulties with friends, appetite, and sleep can be a sign of problems. Older children and teenagers may be vulnerable to risky behaviors such as alcohol and drugs, skipping school and defiant acts. Regardless of whether such troubles are related to divorce, these are serious problems that affect the well-being of teenagers and indicate the need for external assistance. Fighting in front of children Although the occasional quarrel of parents is expected in any family, life on the battlefield of continued hostility and unresolved conflict can place a heavy burden on the child. Screaming, fighting, arguing or violence can make children feel worried and scared. Parents in open conflict are a bad example to their children, who are still learning how to form their own relationships. Children whose parents express anger and hostility are much more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems that continue even after childhood. Talking to an intermediary or divorce counselor can help couples air their grievances and hurt each other in a way that doesn't harm their children. Although it can be difficult, working together in this way will spare children the pain caused by continued bitterness and anger. Adapting to the new life situation Because divorce can be such a big change, adjustments in living arrangements need to be addressed gradually. Several types of life situations should be considered: one parent may have exclusive joint custody in which both legal and physical guardianship in joint custody where one parent has tie-breaking authority in certain specific or educational settings What is the right one for your children? This is a difficult question and often one around which couples spend most of their time disagreeing. While some children can thrive by spending half their time with each parent, the other seems to need the stability of one home and a visit to another parent. Some parents choose to both stay in the same home - but this only works in the rarest of circumstances and should generally be avoided. Whatever arrangement you choose, your child's needs should come first. Avoid getting involved in a tug of war as a way to win. When deciding how to deal with holidays, birthdays and vacations, stay focused on what's best for children. It is important that parents solve these problems themselves and do not ask children to choose. During the pre-nuptial years, when children become more involved in activities other than their parents, they may need different schedules to adapt to their changing priorities. Ideally, children benefit the most from consistent support from both parents, but they can resist sharing time equally if it interrupts school or their social life. Be prepared for your time-sharing thoughts and try to be flexible. Your child may refuse to share time with you and your spouse equally and may try to take sides. If that happens, as hard as it is, try not to take it personally. Maintain your visit schedule and stress the importance of involving both parents. Children sometimes suggest spending an entire summer, semester or school year with an uncustodial parent. But that may not mean they want to move. Listen and explore these options if they were raised. This type of agreement may work well in amicable divorces, but it is not typical of situations with higher conflicts. Parenting under pressure As much as possible, both parents should work to keep routines and discipline the same in both households. Similar expectations about sleep time, rules and homework will reduce anxiety, especially in younger children. While you can't enforce the rules at your ex-partner's home, keep them in yours. Relaxing boundaries, especially in times of change, tend to make children unsafe and less likely to recognize your parental authority later on. And buying things that will replace love or let children act is not in their best interest, and you might struggle to get them back when the dust settles. Instead, you can have a sumptuous affection on them —children are not spoiled by too many hugs or comforting words. Divorce can be a big crisis for the family. However, if you and your ex-spouse can work together and communicate civilly for the benefit of your children, the original family unit can still be a source of strength, even if the stepfathers enter the picture. So don't forget: Get help coping with your own painful feelings about if you can adapt, your children will be will probably do it, too. Be patient with yourself and with your child. Emotional worries, loss and pain after divorce take time to heal and this often happens in stages. Recognize the signs of stress. Consult with teachers, a doctor or a child therapist for guidance on how to deal with certain issues you are concerned about. Changes of any kind are difficult - know that you and your children can and will adapt to this one. Finding inner strength and getting help learning new coping skills is hard work, but it can make a big difference in helping your family get through this difficult time. Reviewed by: D'Arcy Lyness, PhD Date review: January 2015 2015

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