

A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

1. The Right to know that the parents right to divorce is solely their decision, and that the child need not feel any responsibility for this decision.
2. The Right to have a relaxed, secure relationship with both parents without feeling a need to manipulate one parent against the other.
3. The Right to have the issue of custody truly and honestly decided without sexual prejudice or bias (permitting a continued parent/ child relationship through joint custody equal to that prior to divorce), with the best interest of the child and BOTH parents as the only consideration.
4. The Right to continuing care, guidance, and support from both parents, and freedom to receive and express love for both without guilt.
5. The Right to honest answers to questions about the changing family relationship and living conditions.
6. The Right to be free from physical and mental abuse and pressure from both parents and from judicial abuse by the state.
7. The Right to know that expressions of love from one parent in no way will detract from the love for the other parent. And, the Right to express love and affection for each parent without having to suppress that because of fear or disapproval by the other parent.
8. The Right to a secure relationship during scheduled times with the non-custodial parent, and to know in advance when these specified times are to be canceled by either parent for any reason.
9. The Right to know and be able to visit with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and other relatives on both sides of the family so that the family heritage may be maintained.
10. The Right to be free from any new social class forced upon the child by State Courts which order and decree single parent custody, denying one parent an equal, legal, and personal relationship with the child, and producing a family model which has not been proven to be either psychologically healthier or constitutionally sound.
11. The Right to privacy and protection, justice, and fairness in both the custodial and non-custodial homes.
12. The Right to know and appreciate what is good in each parent without one parent degrading the other.
13. The Right to request an increase in the time specified for interaction with the non-custodial parent.
14. The Right to express a preference to live with either of the parents most of the time.
15. The Right to mature to adulthood, secure in the love and respect of both parents, and with confidence in the ability to love and nurture a stable family.

BEGINNING VOCABULARY

INSTEAD OF SAYING

Visiting

I have children, but they live with their mother/father

The children's mother/father left us

The children are seeing (or visiting their mom/dad

Motherless, fatherless, split home, broken home, incomplete home

The children have one home and their mother/father visits

The marriage broke up, failed

Wife, husband, ex-husband, ex-wife

Custody and visitation agreement

Remarriage, reconstituted family, blended family, combination family

TRY SAYING

Living with

I have a family

I have a family

The children are at Mom's house or Dad's house, at their other house with their other family

The home, the family

The children have two homes

The marriage ended

Children's mother/father

Parenting agreement

Family (or second family, third family, etc.)

INSTEAD OF ASKING CHILDREN

Where do you live?
(Questioner knows only that parents are separated)

Where do you live?
(Questioner knows one of the parents)

TRY ASKING

Where do your mother and father live?

Where is your other home? Where does your other family live?

50 PHRASES TO ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD

1. You're so much fun to be around!
2. You get better at that every time I see you. Way to go!
3. Hang on a second while I call Sports Illustrated - they'll want a picture of this!
4. I'm going to brag about this. That's great!
5. I look up to you!
6. That's the best I've ever seen!
7. You are so thoughtful!
8. This is a tremendous improvement!
9. Good for you!
10. You're such a joy to us!
11. I never did that well when I was your age!
12. Can I put this on the bulletin board at the office so I can see it every day?
13. You handled that beautifully!
14. That's incredible!
15. You're always teaching me something wonderful!
16. They just didn't make kids as good as you when I was growing up!
17. You're really special to me - and getting more special every day!
18. Could you help with this?
19. I really enjoy being with you!
20. What a super effort!
21. The person who marries you will be so lucky!
22. That's worth a trophy ten feet high!
22. Your mom and I are so grateful to be your parents!
24. I really enjoy your smile!
25. I need to get word to the White House about this - the President will want to know about it!
26. That's fabulous!
27. There you go! That's it!
28. You're so helpful! Thank you!
29. You're going to make it!
30. God is truly a miracle worker - to produce a kid as great as you from ordinary parents like us!
31. I wish I could have done it that well!
32. You'll always be in my hall of fame!
33. I'm impressed!
34. I know you worked very hard on that. Wonderful job!
35. You're the best!
36. You sure know how to do it right! Outstanding!
37. I love to hear you laugh!
38. That's amazing! How did you do that?
39. You're something else!
40. You take my breath away!
41. You never cease to amaze me!
42. I really like that!
43. Sensational!
44. Absolutely superb!
45. I believe in you!
46. Excellent! That's the way to do it!
47. Can I have your autograph!
48. Fantastic!
49. You make me so happy!
50. I love you!

A CHILD'S TEN COMMANDMENTS TO PARENTS

The following was taken from the book, **PARENTHOOD WITHOUT HASSLES-WELL ALMOST**, by Dr. Kevin Leman.

1. **MY HANDS ARE SMALL**; please don't expect perfection whenever I make a bed, draw a picture or throw a ball. My legs are short; please slow down so that I can keep up with you.
2. **MY EYES HAVE NOT SEEN THE WORLD AS YOURS HAVE**; please let me explore safely. Don't restrict me unnecessarily.
3. **HOUSEWORK WILL ALWAYS BE THERE**. I'm only little for a short time--please take time to explain things to me about this wonderful world, and do so willingly.
4. **MY FEELINGS ARE TENDER**; please be sensitive to my needs; don't nag me all day long. (You wouldn't want to be nagged for your inquisitiveness). Treat me as you would like to be treated.
5. **I AM A SPECIAL GIFT FROM GOD**; please treasure me as God intended you to do, holding me accountable for my actions, giving me guidelines to live by, and disciplining me in a loving manner.
6. **I NEED YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT TO GROW**. Please go easy on the criticism; remember, you can criticize the things I do without criticizing me.
7. **PLEASE GIVE ME THE FREEDOM TO MAKE DECISIONS CONCERNING MY-SELF**. Permit me to fail, so that I can learn from my mistakes. Then someday I'll be prepared to make the kind of decisions life requires of me.
8. **PLEASE DON'T DO THINGS OVER FOR ME**. Somehow that makes me feel that my efforts didn't quite measure up to your expectations. I know it's hard, but please don't try to compare me with my brother or my sister.
9. **PLEASE DON'T BE AFRAID TO LEAVE FOR A WEEKEND TOGETHER**. Kids need vacations from parents (this applies primarily to intact families), just as parents need vacations from kids. Besides, it's a great way to show us kids that your marriage is very special.
10. **PLEASE TAKE ME TO SUNDAY SCHOOL AND CHURCH REGULARLY**, setting a good example for me to follow. I enjoy learning about God.

THE TEN DO'S OF DISCIPLINING A CHILD

1. PRAISE MORE THAN PUNISH:

More positive results will come from praise of a child's acts and this in turn will help limit the child's acting out to get attention. Inappropriate punishment can result in loss of a child's self-confidence and self-esteem.

2. STRESS THE ACT ITSELF:

When praising or reprimanding a child, focus on the act rather than scolding a child for "being bad". Rather, talk about the harm in the act, not in the child.

3. ACKNOWLEDGE FEELINGS:

Listen to the child and hear how and what he is feeling. Acknowledge these feelings as being O.K. Underscore the importance of the child's point of view.

4. DON'T ATTACK A CHILD'S ATTITUDE:

Children need to bump up against limits set by his parents to develop autonomy. This is healthy (try to remember this).

5. BE EXPLICIT:

When explaining anything to a child, do not assume anything. Be very specific with what you expect and do not want the child to do.

6. BE A ROLE MODEL:

Behavior is caught more than it is taught. Children will follow your example, be it good or bad. They will do as you do, rather than do as you say to do.

7. BE CONSISTENT:

Whatever discipline you use, or example you set, make sure it is consistent and that you stay "within character." Inconsistencies produce anxious children adrift in the sea of behavior.

8. BE REASONABLE:

Disciplinary measures should be reasonable in degree and easily repeatable.

9. EXPLAIN RIGHT FROM WRONG:

Clearly explain what is right or wrong about a particular behavior.

10. ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBILITY:

Encourage children to take responsibility for themselves, according to their age and maturity.

Using these TEN DO'S of DISCIPLINE in your daily life will strengthen both your PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP and your case for custody of your child(ren).