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ways to support your children through your divorce

- 1 Plan how you will tell your children**

This is the BIG one! Deciding to leave isn't easy. Neither is being left. Perhaps this has already happened, but it's important to plan how you will tell your children that your relationship is over.
- 2 If possible, tell them together**

Ok so you may not want to spend time with each other, but if at all possible, tell your children together. This helps your children to feel secure, knowing that you are both saying the same things. It prevents confusion and shows your children that you are both **still their parents.**
- 3 Tell all your children at the same time**

This can be tricky. You might have children of various ages but it's important that you have an initial chat altogether as a family. Even very young children can feel lost and confused if its clear older children know something that they don't. Tell your children in the most age appropriate way for the youngest child.
- 4 Be open and honest (age appropriate)**

Being honest and open in an age appropriate way is important. This doesn't mean sharing intimate details with teens. If you or your partner has cheated, your children do not need to know this however old they are. If they are old enough to know that this has happened, explain that it isn't anything to do with them and its a private matter between you an the other parent.
- 5 Talk additionally to older children**

Once you have spoken to all your children together, find time to speak with the older ones alone. Depending on their ages, it's likely that they'll have lots of questions. Ranging from where they will live, where they will go to school to when will they see the other parent or grandparents, your children will want answer!

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6 Reassure younger children

Younger children have just as many worries as older ones. They are just different. Younger children need to know basic things like when will they see the other parent, and does the other parent still love them. They may even think that your divorce is their fault.

7 Watch out for changes in behaviour

Remember, your divorce is difficult for your children however old they are. If your relationship has been breaking down for a while, your children might even be pleased that you are getting divorced as children hate their parents arguing. Even if they are pleased, they may still be troubled by your separation which may result in them acting out, being disruptive, not eating, not sleeping or bedwetting.

8 Let your children's school know

Let your child's school know as soon as you have told your children. This can be immensely helpful for their teachers who have notice changes in your child's behaviour. If appropriate, they will be able to arrange additional emotional support as your child comes to terms with the changes at home

9 Keep talking with your children

Once you have told your children that you are getting divorced, keep talking with them. This can take many different forms. It might be that your children will ask you questions. Answer them as openly and honestly as possible. If your children don't readily ask questions, let them know in a gentle way of how things are changing. It might be for example that their house will be put on the market. Let them know ahead of time so they are prepared. It's ok to keep conversations casual, so long as your children understand what is happening.

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10 Let your children know they are loved

Let your children know that they are loved by you and the other parent and their family. This can be hard if you are feeling angry and upset but it is crucial for the emotional well-being of your children. Whether younger or older, your child's attachment to the other parent is part of what makes them feel safe. Knowing that that attachment is still there will help them through changing times.

Bonus Tip!

11 Let your children know it's ok to love the other parent

The last BIG one! Let your children know that it is ok to love the other parent! Children often feel divided loyalties when their parents separate and it can cause deep emotional distress that can impact your child's life into adulthood and affect their ability to form their own adult relationships.

It is important to reassure all your children that your divorce is nothing to do with them, their behaviour, exam results, messy bedroom or bad school report. Your divorce is about the relationship between you and their other parent, and the fact that it has broken down doesn't mean that that parent isn't worthy of the love of their children. Encouraging your children to openly express their love for the other parent is not a reflection on their lack of love for you. As hard s=as it may be, embrace the fact that the two of you created well rounded children who love both their parents,