HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD THROUGH YOUR DIVORCE
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- In explaining the separation and divorce, you and your ex-spouse should state explicitly that your relationship has no bearing on the relationship between each of you and the children. Reassure them that neither one of you will abandon them, and encourage them to discuss their fears with you.

- A divorce can be disruptive to your child's normal activities. Whether it's playing basketball or going to Brownies, encourage your child to resume his or her hobbies and activities as soon as possible.

- Children often feel ashamed of their parents' divorce. If you feel shame, your kids will probably feel it too, and then they'll worry about facing their friends. Divorce isn't a failure; make sure your kids know this by example.

- Parents should never make remarks such as "maybe Dad wouldn't have justify if you hadn't gotten into trouble at school" -- they confirm the children's darkest suspicions and tell them that the guilt they're feeling is appropriate. It's important to choose words with care and sensitivity.

- Give the children permission to express their feelings freely. Don't ignore their fear, sadness, guilt, or anger, or hope that those feelings will eventually fade on their own. Acknowledge and empathize with their feelings -- don't judge, deny, or make light of them. It's also a good idea to share your feelings with your children too. But be appropriate: don't tell them that "Mommy's so sad she just want's to die!" for instance.

- Children's reactions to separation and divorce are greatly influenced by their parents' reactions. The better the parents are able to handle their lives, the calmer their children will be. You shouldn't try to shield all your feelings about the divorce from your children, but you must balance your present sadness with reassurance and hope for the future. Try to calmly explain your feelings without resorting to name calling, blaming your ex -- or your kids -- for everything, or unreasonably losing your temper.