

The Divorce Rules for Parents

Dear Mom and Dad,

I'm just a kid, so please...

1. Do not talk badly about my other parent. *(This makes me feel torn apart! It also makes me feel bad about myself!)*
2. Do not talk badly about my other parent's friends or relatives. *(Let me care for someone even if you don't.)*
3. Do not talk about the divorce, child support, or other grown-up stuff. *(This makes me feel guilty and sick to my stomach. Please leave me out of it!)*
4. Do not make me feel bad when I enjoy my time with my other parent. *(This makes me afraid to tell you things.)*
5. Do not block my visits or prevent me from speaking to my other parent on the phone. *(This makes me very upset.)*
6. Do not interrupt my time with my other parent by calling too much or by planning my activities during our time together. *(I feel frustrated because my time with both of you is special.)*
7. Do not argue in front of me or on the phone when I can hear you. *(This turns my stomach inside out!)*
8. Do not ask me to spy for you when I am at my other parent's home. *(This makes me feel disloyal and dishonest.)*
9. Do not ask me to keep secrets from my other parent. *(Secrets make me feel anxious.)*
10. Do not ask me questions about my other parent's life or about our time together. *(This makes me uncomfortable. So just let me tell you.)*
11. Do not give me verbal or written messages to deliver to my other parent. *(I end up feeling anxious about their reaction. So please just call, text, e-mail, or leave my other parent a message at work.)*
12. Do not blame my other parent for the divorce or for things that go wrong in your life. *(This really feels terrible! I end up wanting to defend them from your attack. Sometimes it makes me feel sorry for you and makes me want to protect you. I just want to be a kid, so please, please, stop putting me into the middle!)*
13. Do not lean on me for your emotional needs or treat me like an adult. *(This causes way too much stress for me. Please find a friend or therapist with whom to talk.)*
14. Do not ignore my other parent or sit on opposite sides of the room during my school or sports activities. *(This makes me very sad and embarrassed. Please act like parents and be friendly, even if it is just for me.)*
15. Do not use guilt to pressure me to love you more, and do not ask where I want to live. *(I should never have to choose between my parents! I love both of you!)*
16. Do let me take items to my other home as long as I can carry them back and forth. *(Otherwise, it feels like you are treating me like a possession.)*
17. Do talk to each other weekly so things will go smoother for me. *(When you don't, I feel confused.)*
18. Do help me make or purchase a card for my other parent on special occasions. *(Until I am old older, I will forget, and that makes me feel ashamed. Please help.)*

19. Do realize that I have two homes, not just one. *(It doesn't matter how much time I spend there.)*
20. Do let me love both of you and see each of you as much as possible! Be flexible even when it is not part of our regular schedule.

Love, Your Child

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