

CHILDREN'S DIVORCE RULES

- #1 DON'T talk badly about my other parent. (This makes me feel torn apart! AND makes me feel bad about myself!)
- #2 DON'T talk badly about my other parent's friends and relatives. (Let me care for someone, even if you don't.)
- #3 DON'T talk about the divorce process or other grown-up stuff. (This makes me uncomfortable. Please be the adult, and leave me out of it!)
- #4 DON'T talk about child support. (This makes me feel guilty.)
- #5 DON'T make me feel bad when I enjoy my other parent. (This makes me afraid to tell you things, including sharing my joy.)
- #6 DON'T block my visits or prevent me from speaking to my other parent on the phone. (This makes me not trust you to avoid using me as a weapon.)
- #7 DON'T interrupt my time with my other parent by calling too much, or planning activities during my time with that parent. (This makes me feel torn and controlled.)
- #8 DON'T argue in front of me on the phone when I can hear you! (This turns my stomach inside out. I can't trust you to care enough to protect me from your distress.)
- #9 DON'T use me to spy for you when I'm at my other parent's house. (This makes me feel disloyal and dishonest. You are alienating me from my other parent. I need you both.)
- #10 DON'T ask me to keep secrets. (Secrets make me anxious. When you ask me to keep secrets, you are making me too responsible for your well-being. YOU are the adult.)
- #11 DON'T ask me questions about my other parent's life or our time together. (This is another kind of spying. I feel disloyal. Just let me tell you.)
- #12 DON'T give me messages to deliver to my other parent. (You are putting me in the middle. I get anxious wondering how s/he'll react to ME. Leave a message or email.)
- #13 DON'T blame my other parent for the divorce or things that go wrong in your life. (Again, you are putting me in the middle. My other parent will react to ME instead of to you.)
- #14 DON'T treat me like an adult! Please find an adult friend or therapist to talk to. (I can't carry your adult distress about the divorce on top of my own!)
- #15 DON'T ignore my other parent or sit on opposite sides of the room during my activities. (I feel sad, anxious, and embarrassed. Please act friendly, even if it is just for me.)
- #16 DO let me take items to my other home, as long as I can carry them back and forth. (This makes me more comfortable in both homes.)
- #17 DO realize I have two homes, not just one.

Thank You!
Your child, xoxo

Adapted from:
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