

Divorce Rules for Parents

Directions: Post these rules on your refrigerator as a reminder of your commitment to care. Ask your child to let you know if you forget one of the rules. Never reprimand your child when he or she gives you feedback.

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 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.

Your Loving Child



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