

3 CO-PARENTING BEST PRACTICES EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW

1 Focus on Child(ren) Development. According to Wallerstein & Blakeslee, parents can take the following steps to aid in the child(ren)'s adjustment:

- Tell children together – both parents (if possible)
- Tell all the children while they are together rather than separately
- Inform in advance when decision is firm – within a few days to two weeks before one parent's intention to leave the home
- Give age-appropriate explanation and understanding of what is occurring (what will take place and divorce as a solution to turmoil)
- Expression of sadness is important because it gives children permission to cry and mourn
- Clearly indicate that the children will not be encouraged to undertake any efforts at reconciliation
- Reluctance: parents should tell children they are sorry for all the hurt they are causing
- Prepare children for the changes that lie ahead
- Assure them that they will be kept informed of major developments
- Repeatedly inform them that divorce does not weaken the parent-child bond
- Children need to be given permission to love both parents

2 Avoid Parenting Business in Front of the Kids. According to Co-Parenting International, it's best to avoid conducting parenting discussions/business in front of the kids, including during pick-up/drop-off. Keep discussions about discipline, money, schedule/calendar, extended family visits, and parental decisions out of view of the children – especially if there is anxiety/conflict around the discussion.

3 Know When Your Child(ren) Need Professional Help. According to the National Family Resiliency Center, the following may indicate its time to seek professional help:

- Their moods or behaviors change significantly
- They exhibit behaviors that indicate they lack goals or feel like they have no family and friends for support or help
- They indicate that they feel as though they don't have family they can trust
- They appear to be "stuck" in thoughts or beliefs
- They exhibit signs that indicate they do not know how to appropriately process or express anger
- They ask questions or make statements that indicate they worry a lot