



## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS WHEN PARENTS DIVORCE

### Your child is entitled to the right:

1. To be treated as an important human being, with unique feelings, ideas and desires and not as a source of argument between parents.
2. To a sense of security and belonging derived from a loving and nurturing environment which shelters them from harm.
3. To a continuing relationship with both parents and the freedom to receive love from and express love for both.
4. To parents who will listen to and show respect for what their child has to say.
5. To express love and affection for each parent without having to stifle that love because of fear of disapproval by the other parent.
6. To grow and flourish in an atmosphere free of exploitation, abuse, and neglect.
7. To know their parents' decision to divorce is not their responsibility and they will still be able to live with each parent.
8. To continuing care and guidance from both parents where they can be educated in mind, nourished in spirit, and developed in body, in an environment of unconditional love.
9. To receive developmentally appropriate answers to questions about changing family relationships.
10. To know and appreciate what is good in each parent without one parent degrading the other.
11. To have a relaxed, secure relationship with both parents without being placed in a position to manipulate one parent against the other.
12. To be with both parents and not have one parent suggest tempting alternatives or threaten to withhold activities with their other parent as a punishment for their child's misbehavior.
13. To be able to experience regular and consistent parental contact and the right to know, in a developmentally appropriate manner, the reason for not having regular contact.
14. To be a child and to be insulated from the conflict and problems of parents.
15. To be taught, according to developmental levels, to understand values, to assume responsibility for their actions, and to cope with appropriate consequences of their choices.
16. To participate in their own destiny.
17. To not be used as a messenger between parents.
18. To a promise from their parents to give them better protection than any law could ever provide.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *Putting Kids First: Walking Away From a Marriage Without Walking Over the Kids* by Michael Oddenino, Family Connections Publishing, 1995. Reprinted with permission.