

DIVORCE RULES

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 this 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 about my other parents's friends or relatives. (Let me care for someone even if you don't.)
3. Do not talk about the divorce or other grown-up stuff. (This makes me feel sick. Please leave me out of it!).
4. Do not talk about money or child support. (This makes me feel guilty or like I'm a possession instead of your kid.)
5. Do not make me feel bad when I enjoy my time with my other parent. (This makes me afraid to tell you things.)
6. Do not block my visits or prevent me from speaking to my other parent on the phone. (This makes me very upset.)
7. Do not interrupt my time with my other parent by calling too much or by planning activities during our time together.
8. Do not argue in front of me or on the phone when I can hear you! (This just turns my stomach inside out!)
9. Do not ask me to spy for you when I am at my other parents' home. (This makes me feel disloyal and dishonest.)
10. Do not ask me to keep secrets from my other parent. (Secrets make me feel anxious.)
11. Do not ask me questions about my other parent's life or about our time together. (This makes me feel uncomfortable. So just let me tell you.)
12. Do not give me verbal messages to deliver to my other parent. (I end up feeling anxious about their reaction. So please just call them, leave a message at work or put a note in the mail.)
13. Do not send written messages with me or place them in my bag. (This also makes me uncomfortable.)
14. 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 that makes me want to protect you. I just want to be a kid, so please, please...stop putting me into the middle!)
15. Do not treat me like an adult, it causes way too much stress for me. (Please find a friend or therapist to talk with.)
16. 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.)
17. 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.)
18. Do not use guilt to pressure me to love you more and do not ask me where I want to live.
19. Do realize that I have two homes, not just one. (It doesn't matter how much time I spend there.) I'd also really appreciate it if you would let my other parent come into our house every now and then, cause it's my home too!
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.

Thanks, your loving child