HELPING CHILDREN THROUGH SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

Children experience a range of emotions following their parents’ separation and divorce including; anger, shock, sadness and anxiety.

The way parents communicate to children during and following the separation can make a difference to how they cope. Children often blame themselves for the relationship breakdown of their parents so let them know that the separation is not their fault and they have done nothing to cause the separation.

Many difficulties can be avoided or minimised if parents adopt a business-like approach to parenting and keep parenting arrangements separate from relationship issues, legal issues and financial arrangements.

The following ground rules are useful to help you maintain a successful business like approach to parenting after separation and divorce:

- Avoid putting the other parent down in front of children as their identity is often strongly linked to their parents.
- Avoid conflict during hand-over times. If you can’t avoid arguing, arrange a pick-up at a neutral place.
- Never ask children to take sides or choose one parent over another. This leads to confusion and feelings of disloyalty.
- Be considerate of the other parent when you contact them.
- Never mix relationship issues with parenting issues when talking to the other parent about children. Choose another time to discuss personal issues with your ex-partner.

Adopting a business-like approach to parenting takes enormous good will on both sides, which is often difficult to garner. However research is overwhelming that outcomes are always better for children when both partners can act in the best of interests of children and keep personal relationship issues aside.

Blessings

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