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# Parenthood During Divorce



## Parenthood and divorce

- A divorce is a difficult situation for the entire family.
- It arouses powerful emotions in parents and children alike.
- A divorce makes it necessary to rearrange the family's living arrangements as well as many other things.
- It is the best interests of the child to maintain their relationship with both their parents, both during the divorce and thereafter.

Even though the adults' relationship ends, their shared parenthood will continue!



## Facing the divorce together with the child

- Both parents should be present when the child is told about the divorce for the first time.
- It is good to have the discussion with the child at once when the decision to divorce has been made but the parents still share a home.
- Parents will know their child best and know what tack to take in talking about the matter with the child.
- It is important to tell the child what a divorce means and what will happen in practice as a result.



## The impact of the parents' divorce on the child

- Every child will have an individual reaction to their parents' divorce.
- The child's reaction is mediated by e.g. their age and character, as well as the quality of the family life before the divorce and the parents' ability to cooperate after it has taken place.
- The child may experience nightmares, a fear of abandonment, or a sense of guilt.
- The child's behavioural patterns may also change, and they may be more defiant than before, more aloof, or something else.

Let the child express their own opinion of the divorce.

Let them talk about the divorce whenever they want, with whoever they want.

Listen to the child's ideas and hopes about the life after the divorce.

What is most meaningful to the child?



## It takes time to adapt to the divorce

- A child will encounter many new experiences when the family's structure changes.
- Often, they will move to a new home and will have to make new friends. They may have to move to a new kindergarten or school as well.
- During holidays, birthdays, and other moments that are special to the child, their feeling of loss may be intensified.
- A child cannot yet understand the divorce is permanent, so they may ask after the absent parent again and again.
- But a divorce may also be a relief to the child, if the parents' relationship has been fraught with conflict.



## Parenthood after a divorce

- The parents will agree on the child's future care, living arrangements, meetings, as well as maintenance payments.
- It is best for the child for the parents to agree on these things together.
- If the parents are unable to agree on matters, the decision will be made by the wellbeing services county's child supervision officer or by the district court.
- When co-parenting, the parents will decide on the child's affairs together.
- A sole custodian decides on the child's affairs alone.
- The child may reside either permanently at one of the parents' home or intermittently with both parents, taking turns.
- It is important to focus on maintaining as ordinary and safe a daily life as possible in the midst of the upheavals

Remember that a child will ALWAYS have the right to meet both of their parents.



## Parenthood after a divorce

- Issues and emotions having to do with the divorce are best not processed in the presence of the child.
- A child must not end up in the middle of the parents' quarrelling or feel pressure they must side with one of the parents against the other.
- The child also must not feel they need to take up the mantle of a parent or feel the need to protect their parent.
- It is important for the child to feel the parent continues to see to the child's needs and remains a safe person even though the parents' mutual relationship comes to an end.
- The parents must be able to discuss the child's affairs and upbringing with one another in a positive and flexible manner.





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