



## **Children's Needs During Divorce**

**Acceptance:** A child's greatest need because their sense of self is very fragile at this time. They will try to gain approval at this time. A child will also tend to personalize things and blame themselves. They need to know they are a priority and not at fault for the divorce.

**Assurance of Safety:** Children need to know that although the family is no longer the same their protection is solid. Maintain normal boundaries, schedules, and routines. Children need to know their world is predictable.

**Freedom from Guilt or Blame for Divorce:** Children personalize their part in the divorce because they know they misbehaved. They feel they are being punished for their behavior with the divorce. Reassure your children that they are blameless.

**Need for Structure:** As life changes with the divorce, children will test for structure. Give it to them. Enforce discipline consistently and reward good behavior. They need to know their world still has consistent rules and consequences.

**Need for Stable Parent:** Whether you feel it, your children are counting on you to be strong and in control. You have to be the best you can be for your children. Show yourself to be a person of strength and resilience and your children will be able to relax and be their best.

**Need to be Kids:** Children are not responsible for taking care of you. They do not need to be dealing with adult issues and should not know too much about what is going on between you and your spouse. Remember, your spouse is also their other parent and part of them.

### **PRIMARY RULES:**

Do not burden your children with situations they cannot control. It will promote helplessness and insecurity.

Do not ask your children to deal with adult issues. They are not equipped to understand adult problems.