

FREE PRINTABLE

Helping Your Child Feel Safe During Family Change

A parent guide for supporting your child through separation, divorce, or a major family transition.

PREDICTABLE ROUTINES

- ☐ Keep wake-up, meals, and bedtime consistent
- ☐ Maintain school and activity schedules where possible
- ☐ Create a simple visual schedule your child can see
- ☐ Announce transitions in advance

AGE-APPROPRIATE CONVERSATIONS

- ☐ Use simple, honest language without adult detail
- ☐ Reassure them the divorce is not their fault
- ☐ Answer questions calmly and briefly
- ☐ It is okay to say: I don't know yet, but we'll figure it out together

REASSURANCE

- ☐ Say I love you and You are safe often
- ☐ Physical comfort: hugs, proximity, calm presence
- ☐ Remind them both parents love them
- ☐ Let them know their feelings are normal and okay

LISTENING TO FEELINGS

- ☐ Create space for them to talk without fixing
- ☐ Validate: That makes sense. It is okay to feel that way.
- ☐ Watch for behavior changes (withdrawal, regression, anger)
- ☐ Ask open questions: How are you feeling about things?

MANAGING CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO HOMES

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| ☐ Never use children as messengers | ☐ Keep transition-day calm and low-pressure |
| ☐ Don't share adult legal or financial details | ☐ Let them bring comfort items |
| ☐ Avoid speaking negatively about the other parent | ☐ Avoid interrogating after visits |
| ☐ Handle conflict away from children | ☐ Celebrate both homes as safe places |

WHEN ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MAY HELP

- ☐ Prolonged sadness, anxiety, or withdrawal
- ☐ Significant changes in school performance
- ☐ Sleep disturbances lasting more than a few weeks
- ☐ Regression in younger children (bedwetting, clinginess)
- ☐ Your instinct says something more is needed

WORDS THAT CAN HELP

This is not your fault. · Both of us love you very much. · You are safe. · It is okay to feel sad or angry. ·
You can always talk to me. · We are going to be okay.



