

Putting Your Children First: Considerations for Child-Focused Parents Who Are Approaching Divorce or Separation**

- Remember, how the two of you conduct yourselves as parents will impact how your children adjust to the family changes as well as their current and future emotional well-being
- Manage conflict between parents
 - avoid arguing in front of the children
 - demonstrate respect
- Speak positively about the other parent or avoid making judgments about the other parent altogether
- Encourage your child's relationship with the other parent; your children want to have healthy relationships with both parents
- Be emotionally and physically present for your child
- Remain consistent as a parent through the family changes
 - maintain healthy previously established routines
 - continue to balance discipline and flexibility
- Be honest with your child but protect them from adult issues (use family, friends, or a counselor for this)
- Avoid placing blame toward anyone for the family changes (even if you think someone is to blame)
- Take care of yourself emotionally and physically; this will allow you to make healthy choices and decreases the risk your child will feel the need to take care of you
- Pay attention to your child and get them help if any significant concerns arise
- Consider working with a child specialist to support a positive child-centered process and healthy outcomes for your family

You **can** help your children emerge from this unsettling time feeling loved, confident, and strong.

**Casey Holtz, PhD, LLC, Child and Family Specialist