Unmarried Parents

Parenting Through and After Divorce is different than parenting when both adults are in the home. Normal parenting challenges become harder during this time. Life is thrown out of balance. Parents and children may experience feelings of stress, loss, guilt and/or anger. Most family members overcome this stressful event, but the process takes time.

Parenting Behaviors After Divorce that Help or Hurt

Making the transition through divorce is easier for the child when parents look at things through the child’s eyes. It’s important to remember that the child is now a member of two families. Children do better when they are able to maintain their relationships with both parents (when it is safe for them to do so).

Children whose parents have a lot of conflict after the breakup may have the hardest time. Parents can support their children best by keeping their arguments private, away from where children can hear them. This includes phone conversations. Experiencing negative emotions about the other parent is normal. But it’s important to avoid making negative comments about the other parent in front or in the presence of a child. Parents might consider whether negative comment about the other parent reflects on them. After all, half of their DNA is from that parent! If a parent has legitimate concerns, a good strategy is to seek support from another understanding adult.

Divorce Creates Two Single Parents

Successful single-parent families share some common parenting behaviors. These include:
1. Taking care of your own health.
2. Making parenting your first priority.

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Parenting the Positive Way

The purpose of using positive statements is to build self-esteem and good behavior. Research says that children need seven positive statements for every one negative that is directed towards them. In other words, for every negative statement which is directed toward a child, you need to give them seven positives.

The challenge for us as parents is to use positive statements in everyday communication with our children. For this week, write down all the positive as well as negative statements you make. The goal is to increase the number of positive statements which you make on a routine basis. The result is your children will start communicating more with you, have higher self-esteem and their behavior will improve.

The technique works. A father realized that he was giving more negative than positive statements. In a one week period of time, he went from totally negative statements to one or two positive statements each day. Within one week’s period of time, the father and son had a conversation after dinner, which lasted an hour. The father said that they had not shared this much in over two years.

Instructions:
1. Each day think about using positive statements.
2. Track positive statements each day for a week.
3. Track negative statements each day for a week.

Parenting App from UNL

“U R Parent” is an app for iPhones, iPads, and Android phones which provides user-friendly information on parenting and child development. It is geared to the specific age of your child. Currently, the app covers a child’s first year — in the near future it will cover up to five years old. University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Educators partnered with “Just in Time Parenting” (a division of eXtension) to develop the app using research-based information.

Features include:
1. Information about children’s ages and stages
2. A baby book to record your baby’s firsts along with keeping the immunization dates in a handy place.

You can download the app free from the Apple iTunes app store and Google Play. Links available at http://iawhome.unl.edu/mobileapps/urparent.