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Listening, learning, and living together: it's the science of life.

Helping Children Cope with Divorce¹

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All children feel a strong sense of loss when parents separate or divorce. It is not unusual for children of any age to rebel, misbehave, or become withdrawn. They cannot understand all the issues involved in a divorce, and may feel confused, frightened, and worried.

If you are going through a divorce, be aware of your child's losses and offer them the emotional support they need. Divorce is a transition that usually lasts one to two years before, during, and after the divorce.

Whether you are the residential or nonresidential parent, start by reassuring your children that you love them and that they are not to blame for the divorce. Encourage them to share their questions and any feelings they may have about the divorce. Listen, and be patient. Sometimes it may be difficult to focus on your children as you go through your own transition, but parenting in a loving, attentive way is one of the most important things you can do.

In addition, provide a safe, warm and loving environment in the homes of both parents, if possible. Have children keep personal items in both places so they have a sense of be-

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longing and don't need to pack a suitcase or backpack every time they transfer from one home to the other.

Don't depend on your children for emotional support. Seek out help from adults, whether friends, family, or a professional counselor. Children are counting on a parent to take care of him or herself as well as the child.

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http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/hcd.mp3

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