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

## **Arguing in Front of the Children<sup>1</sup>**

*Diana Converse<sup>2</sup>*

No family is an oasis of peace and harmony. In fact, all families have disagreements and arguments from time to time. As a parent, you may have asked yourself if it's appropriate to argue in front of the children. Some experts caution that children feel anxious when their parents disagree, which results in tension and uneasiness within the family. They contend that children need the security of feeling that their parents are a unified pair.

Dr. Gregory Ramey, child psychologist at Dayton Children's Medical Center, suggests that this protectionistic view underestimates children's resiliency. Ramey explains that children already know that their parents have different points of view and that arguing in front of children may be beneficial. He states, "Children and teens deal with disagreements all the time. Watching their parents argue and resolve issues teaches them a great lesson about how to deal with the real world" (Ramey, 2007).

A few cautions to keep in mind about arguing in front of the children: steer clear of certain topics, depending on the age of your children. Also, don't make arguing a routine or argue over and over about the same topics without ever reaching a solution.

1. This document is FAR0073, one of a series of the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. First published March 2009. In the interest of time or clarity, the broadcast version of this script may have been modified. Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. Diana Converse, Extension Agent III, Hillsborough County, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611. Reviewed by Kate Fogarty and Eboni Baugh, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, University of Florida.

and your spouse don't know how to talk with each other in a courteous manner and compromising attitude (Ramey, 2007).

Parental arguments can teach children that people who love each other can also disagree about an issue, and yet eventually come to some resolution.

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### **References**

Ramey, G. (2007). Arguing in front of children...it's not all bad! Retrieved September 19, 2007, from [http://www.cmc-dayton.org/Health\\_Topics/Parenting\\_News/2005\\_05\\_15\\_Ramey.Arguing.html](http://www.cmc-dayton.org/Health_Topics/Parenting_News/2005_05_15_Ramey.Arguing.html)