



## Letter to Family

Family separation can be highly stressful and emotionally upsetting for children/youth as well as parents. Children who were previously coping well sometimes develop problems with anxiety, moodiness or anger. While it may be important to assess their difficulties professionally, in general children cope best if parents make their needs a top priority. Regardless of what has gone wrong in the adult relationship, both parents are still very important in a child's life. Consistency, predictability and stability are vital to help them adjust.

### **You can help by:**

- Being careful not to damage your child's affection for their other parent, or using them to help you to seek revenge or even the score.
- Not inviting your child to choose sides with questions like "Who would you like to live with?", or encouraging them to report on the actions of their other parent.
- Keeping them out of the role of go-between.
- Protecting them from hearing criticisms you, your friends or family members may have of your ex-partner.

### **Some Frequently Asked Questions and Common Concerns are**

- How do I respond when my child tells me that they have been told the divorce is all my fault?
- What do I say when my child does not want to go for their regularly scheduled visit?
- How do I respond to information from my child about my ex's new partner?
- What do I tell my child when my ex misses a visit?
- How do I handle missed support payments?
- What do I do when the rules at my house are different than the rules at my "ex's" house?
- How do I handle it when my "ex" doesn't take the kids to his/her activities (soccer, hockey, dance, etc)?
- How do I deal with "stories" or information that is shared with the kids about me? (may or may not be true)

Attending a group with other children and/or adults who are going through a similar event can be helpful in seeking support and information on how to cope with separation and divorce in the family.