

## Co-Parenting After a Divorce

Dr. Ann Buscho

Dr. Ann Buscho ([www.DrAnnBuscho.com](http://www.DrAnnBuscho.com)) was kind enough to offer *Childhood Matters* a list of some basic tips for successful co-parenting after divorce. Visit her website to learn more about her work!

1. Kids benefit from warm, involved, and authoritative (not authoritarian!) parenting. Get to know their teachers, schoolwork, and friends.
2. Develop a “business-relationship” with your ex. The kids are your “business.”
3. Don’t keep bringing up the past – focus on the present and future. Keep your marriage “baggage” stowed away.
4. You know what triggers an emotional reaction in your ex, so don’t pull those triggers! Keep communication formal and direct.
5. Put agreements in writing.
6. Keep your agreements. Be reliable. This will build trust in your relationship.
7. Keep conflict far away from the children. Use professionals if necessary (lawyers, mediators, therapists, etc.).
8. Don’t speak negatively of your ex. It creates a loyalty bind in the children and tears them apart.
9. Don’t use the kids as messengers, spies, or confidantes. Find friends your own age if you need to talk about your ex.
10. Don’t ask the children to keep secrets.
11. Try to say something nice about your ex now and then!
12. Focus on your relationship with the children, and let your ex parent in his or her own way. Reassure them that they are loved.
13. Have a consistent, predictable schedule so the kids know where they will be. But be flexible when you need to – this will build cooperation.
14. Share holidays, birthdays, and other special or milestone events.
15. Remember that your kids won’t adjust to the divorce in the same way that you might. They may feel grief, worry, fear, ambivalence, or relief for a long time.
16. Give your kids permission to love both you and your ex, as well as all the grandparents, cousins, and other extended family.

To learn more, you can hear Dr. Ann Buscho on our December 6, 2008 episode of *Childhood Matters, Children of Divorce*. Visit our Past Shows page on-line, [www.childhoodmatters.org/2008](http://www.childhoodmatters.org/2008).

