

# 10 Questions Kids Have About Divorce – and How to Answer Them

By Michela Montgomery

If you're a mother and considering/going through a divorce, this topic ranks right up there on the most dreaded conversations to have. "How to tell the kids" is bad, but what's worse is what will they will say after you tell them. I've asked a few divorced moms to help me and here are the ten most commonly asked questions — and some really great ways to respond.

1. **"Why?"** This is the hardest question to answer because — mainly — we're still likely wondering why it's happening ourselves and so explaining it to our child is painful and challenging. The best response I heard was simply this. "Because all of us want to be happy, and daddy and I can't be happy together."
2. **"Can we all still live together?"** As odd as this may sound, it was the most common question my girlfriends said their kids asked them. So many families have different arrangements in their homes, in some cases, it can work. But if it isn't for you, the best response is a gentle, "No, we are going to have two homes for you now instead of one."
3. **"Will you and Daddy maybe get back together?"** I was amazed that so many of my friend's kids asked this question, but it's only natural to ask if this is a temporary phase that mommy and daddy are going through... or not. I loved the response that a fellow mom gave to her sons. "We won't get back together, but we will both always be there for you."
4. **"What's going to happen to me?"** The first question on our children's minds is how this affects their world. After all, let's face it — that's where our minds went when we first started contemplating divorce. I found that most of the responses offered comfort and stability without giving details of the future that might not be available. "Everything is going to be okay. What won't change is how much we love you, and that we are here for you."
5. **"Am I going to be able to go to my same school/daycare/nanny?"** In some cases, a divorce created the need for some of my girlfriends to move out of their homes... and the cities that they lived in. Tough on kids who now are faced with not only a divorce, but being the new kid in school/daycare. I loved the response of, "Yes, we get to go on an adventure and meet new friends. So we must be brave together!" The

answer showed solidarity against the obstacle, without putting the move in a negative light.

6. **“When is this happening?”** Every mom I surveyed told me that they waited until they knew the timing of everything before telling their kids. It eliminated the fear of the unknown and a cloud looming above them on when their life is going to change. Best response I heard was a little unconventional, but the more I thought about it, the better I liked it. “Two weeks. We get to pack and ride in a big moving truck so I’ve got a calendar here to mark off the days until our adventure begins.”
7. **“Did I do anything wrong?”** Of course, we expect this one, but it breaks our hearts to hear our little darlings utter it out loud. However, most kids fear that they’ve done something that could have contributed to the disaster that now befalls them. Best response by far was a gentle, “Absolutely not. You are the best and most perfect thing your daddy and I ever did together.”
8. **“Can we still live in our house?”** Most of the moms I chatted with said that they lost their homes in their divorce and they had to move. It’s difficult for us as adults, but even harder as a child, who may attach safety to the place they’ve lived for most (or all) of their lives. Once again, I heard responses that offered comfort and tried to gain support behind such a horrendous change. “No, we can’t, but you get to help find somewhere new to live. And you can help me think about all the ways we can decorate your new room.” I talked to one mother who cut out pastel paper butterflies with her daughter in the weeks before they moved and taped them to her bedroom walls in their new apartment.
9. **“What about my brother/sister?”** The notion that one sibling might go one place and be separated from the other sounded silly, and I was amazed at how many times it was asked. A sibling creates a built in ally in the face of sudden and irrevocable change, and it’s a powerful tool for the newly divorced. Best response I heard reinforced that sibling bond. “Your brother will be with you; always. Through this and anything else that comes our way.”
10. **“What if I don’t want you to get a divorce?”** I heard this from every single mom I asked. The notion that, by simple belligerence, they might be able to change what’s happening in their lives is quite common. By far, the best response I heard was, “It’s really hard for all of us. But it is happening and together we can make the best of it.”

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