

## Lesson # 16: Keeping Kids Out of the Middle

Divorced Fathers Network  
Advocates Of Shared Parenting  
'Because Children Love Both Their Parents'

### Guidelines for Keeping Kids Out of the Middle

1. Go directly to the other parent for information or an answer. Keep your communications direct. Do not have your child become a messenger or spy even if he or she wants to.
2. Don't bad-mouth the other parent in their presence or where they might overhear you. Keep your frustrations for private conversations with good friends, your therapist, or a counselor.
3. Do not participate in your children's angry feelings about the other parent. Let them blow off steam, but don't add water to their boiler, even though you may want to.
4. Encourage your children to speak about their difficulties with the other parent to the other parent. Decline to get involved in lengthy advice. Suggest the names of close friends of the other parent if the need more "talking out" time. Children need adults who are safe to confide in.
5. Do not ask your children about the other parent's life or circumstances. Give the other parent's motives the benefit of the doubt.
6. Do not ask children to keep secrets about you from the other parent. If you don't want the other parent to know something, don't tell the children either.

\*From "Mom's House, Dad's House" by Isolina Ricci 1980, 1997

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