

# #TheDrFs: Modern Divorce Etiquette & Kids



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THE DRS FRY & FERRARI TALK MODERN DIVORCE

Our overloaded family court systems have historically doled out separation agreements that were of the one size fits all variety. Regardless of the uniqueness of family circumstances, a cookie cutter approach was often the best way to manage the demands put on overworked judges.

But today, if you are planning on joining the ranks of the **40% of marriages that end in divorce**, be assured that there is a newer, kinder and more collaborative way through this painful process.

The majority of today's divorces are settled out of court, with couples finding alternate dispute resolution methods that include mediation, arbitration, and other collaborative approaches.

The foundation of this "modern" divorce etiquette is that parents are working together with lawyers and mental health professionals to decrease conflict and to create tailored parenting plans that put the needs of the children at the forefront of all decision-making.



Talking about Divorce | popsugar.com

Here is a look at how Divorce Etiquette has evolved.

## **Telling the Children about the Divorce Etiquette**

### ***Old School Divorce***

Parents often laid everything out on the table all at once, with sudden pronouncements like, “Daddy is moving out” and half the furniture is gone. Children

were told mom and dad would live in separate homes and they are to come visit. Parents did not tell the kids why they were divorcing or they blamed the other parent for the break-up.

### ***Modern Divorce***

Parents consult with professionals or read up on how to best tell the children about the divorce before having the discussion. They share well-scripted explanations that tell a unified story to their children and they stay together until an agreed-upon plan is in place. What kids want to know is how these changes are going to impact them and parents are ready with answers.

The modern way emphasizes security and consistency. For example, parents might say, “Mom and dad going work together working together to parent you. Here are all the things that will stay the same: your activities will stay the same, your school will stay the same,” etc.

## **Co-Parenting Post-Divorce Etiquette**

### ***Old School Divorce***

Parenting rules differed at each house, and one house’s schedule had very little correlation to the other house. For example, bedtimes could be 8:30 pm at one house and 10 pm at another. Unlimited screen time could be the law of the land at Mom’s, and a 30-minute time-limit could be the rule at Dad’s.



Talking to the Kids | DatingAfterDivorce.com

## ***Modern Divorce***

Co-parenting is emphasized, and decisions are made jointly, so there is consistency in both homes. Parents have joint calendars to organize themselves and their children. They also check with each other before making major decisions.



*Healthy Relationships Post-Divorce | ExpertBeacon.com*

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## **Parenting Schedules Etiquette**

### ***Old School Divorce***

Mothers typically had the primary residence. The tooth-flossing and homework happened in the primary residence. Fathers were generally weekend dads. The fun, the adventures, and the playground visits occurred on the weekends. Historically, “Disneyland Dads” were more prevalent.

### ***Modern Divorce***

Mother and father share parenting 50/50 (or close to) and kids get the benefit of both parents’ involvement in their day-to-day activities. Opportunities for guidance, fun, homework, and socialization are more balanced so that the kids can take advantage of both parents’ perspectives and experiences.

## **Parent Communication Style and Etiquette**

### ***Old School Divorce***

The ex-spouse was rarely mentioned at all, or statements were made with a negative or

disparaging tone. Common comments included “Your father did this...” or “Your mother did that...”

### ***Modern Divorce***

There is the acknowledgement that disrespect or unkindness toward the ex-spouse hurts the children. When talking to or about the other parent, consideration is made that the other parent is, and always will be, an important and valued individual to the child.

Here are some more examples of how communication has evolved:

Old: Mom’s House. Dad’s House.

*New: The Kitsilano Home. The Blue Apartment*

Old: Referring to the previous spouse as “My ex.”

*New: Referring to the previous spouse as “My kids’ father.”*

Old: Talking negatively about the previous spouse in front of the kids or to other family members or friends.

*New: Talking with respect or at the least in a neutral tone about the previous spouse in public and in front of the kids.*

### **The Positive Effects of Modern Divorce Etiquette**

When parents co-operate and keep interactions respectful, they can mitigate the negative impact of divorce and give their children the best chance at a successful future. Sharing experiences like watching the kids sporting events and extracurricular activities together, as well as spending some holidays and special occasions together, give kids the comfort that they come first.

We are seeing kids ask for these changes themselves, and we have witnessed first-hand that families that embrace modern divorce etiquette weather the divorce storm more effectively.

And, new research is showing that when the rules of modern divorce etiquette are followed, children do better in school and with peers, and they are happier, less stressed, and have more functional relationships in the future.

A very heartening trend indeed!