



The Bill of Rights For Children Whose Parents are Separated

Children must always be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect.

In any custody dispute, it is important to be sensitive to the rights of children. In the "Bill of Rights for Children Whose Parents Are Divorced or Separated," the rights of children in divorce or custody include:

1. The right not to be asked to "choose sides" between their parents.
2. The right not to be told the details of bitter or nasty legal proceedings going on between their parents.
3. The right not to be told "bad things" about the other parent's personality or character.
4. The right to privacy when talking to either parent on the phone.
5. The right not to be cross-examined by one parent after spending time with the other parent.
6. The right not to be asked to be a messenger from one parent to the other.
7. The right not to be asked by one parent to tell the other parent untruths.
8. The right not to be used as a confidant regarding the legal proceedings between the parents.
9. The right to express feelings, whatever feelings those may be.
10. The right to choose not to express certain feelings.
11. The right to be protected from parental warfare.
12. The right not to be made to feel guilty for loving both parents.

Adapted from "New York State Justice James Brands (Dutchess County Family Court, NY) and Justice Ira Harkavy (Supreme Court, Kings County, NY)"