



# Divorce and Custody

*A social story to help explain the  
divorce and custody process*

# How to Use a Social Story

Social stories are visual ways to help explain complex processes and ideas to children and to people who benefit from concrete, visual explanations. The social stories can be modified to fit any situation.

## *Tips for using the social story:*

Introduce the story early to help prepare the person for what is going to happen.

If possible, modify the story to fit the needs of the individual. Including specific people or places may be helpful.

Read the social story to the person several times, on several occasions before the event in order to allow the person time to become familiar and process the information.

*This social story is for informational purposes only and not for the purpose of providing legal advice.*

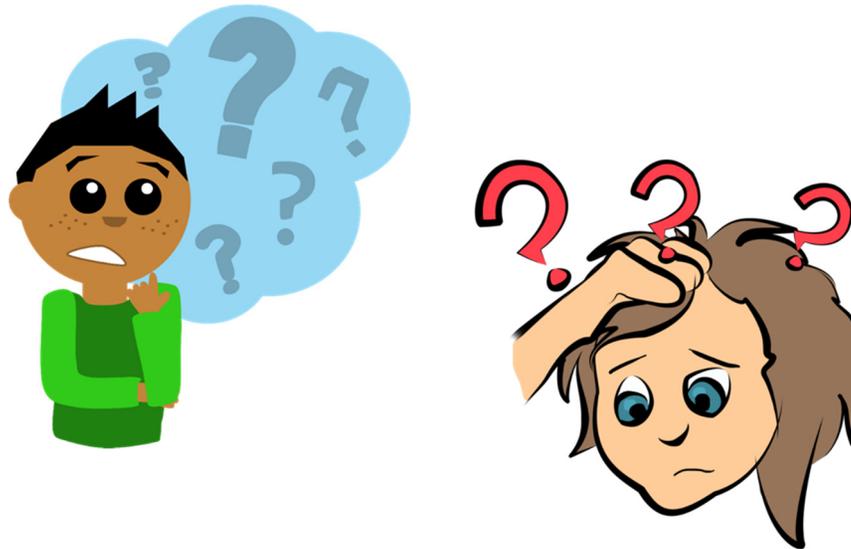
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A divorce is when parents decide to live separately from each other and not be married anymore.



This can happen because of adult problems, and nothing I said or did made this happen.

Divorce can be a sad and confusing situation. My parents might cry, or seem sad or angry. It is OK if I cry, or feel sad or angry too. Whatever I am feeling is normal and OK.



My parents still love me no matter what,  
and want me to be healthy, safe  
and happy.

Divorce means that my parents need lawyers, a judge, and sometimes a special problem-solver called a mediator, to help them decide how to share their time with me.



The time that each parent spends with me is called “custody.”

I might meet with a person called a guardian *ad litem*. This person helps the court by talking to children and giving recommendations to the judge.



The guardian *ad litem*'s job is to help the judge decide what is in a child's best interest. It is important that I tell the guardian *ad litem* the truth and what I am feeling.

I might meet with a therapist.  
The therapist's job is to help me  
work through feelings or any  
problems I have.



It may seem strange to talk to a therapist  
or guardian *ad litem*, but I remember they  
are here to help me be healthy, safe and  
happy. If I have any questions or worries, I  
can talk to these people. I can, of course,  
also talk to my parents.

Sometimes, parents and children might need to have “supervised visitations.” This means that another adult will be present during the time that I spend with one of my parents.



It may seem strange to have another person with me when I’m spending time with my parent, but I remember that they are there to help me be healthy, safe and happy.

The judge overseeing the divorce process may want to talk to me. The judge may ask me questions in the courtroom, or privately in the judge's office, called the "chambers."



It is important that I tell the judge the truth.

At the end of the divorce, my parents will have a “separation agreement.” The separation agreement is a court order that sets rules for my parents. It sets rules about custody, and also tells my parents how to share property and other belongings.



It is a grown-up, complex document that I do not need to see or be worried about. It is important for my parents to follow the rules that are in the separation agreement.

It's important to remember that while some things will change – like when and how much time I spend with each parent – my parents both still love me very much.





Materials available online at

[www.indianadisabilityrights.org](http://www.indianadisabilityrights.org)