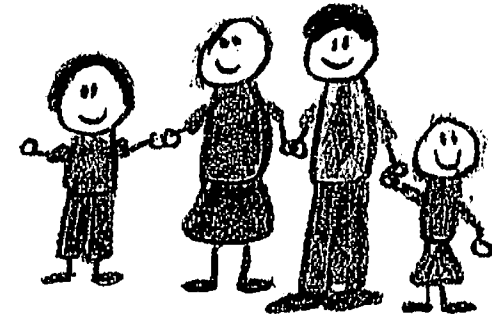


# Kids in the Crossfire

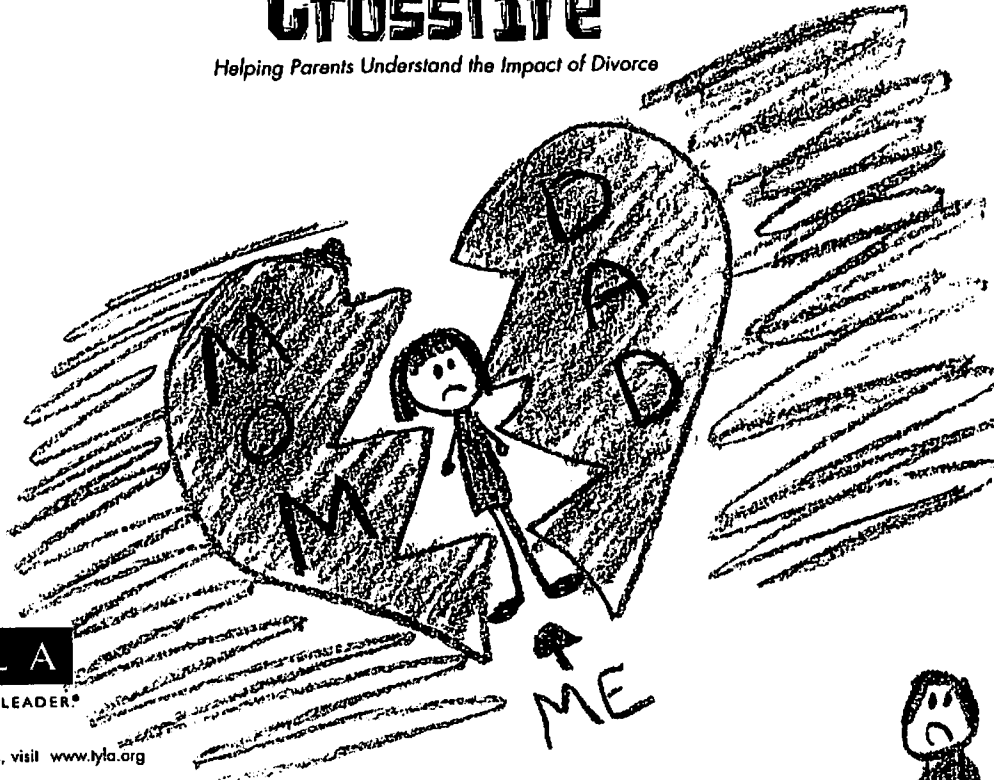
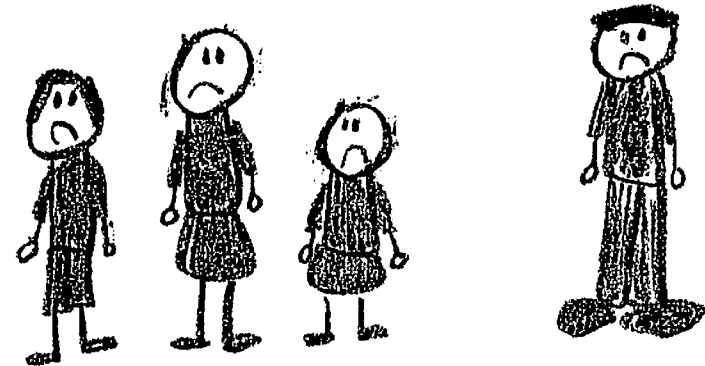
Helping Parents Understand the Impact of Divorce

"The greatest gift you can give your child is a  
mentally healthy parent."

— Carol Lane  
National Program Coordinator  
Practical Parent Education



"Kids in the Crossfire" is a short video designed to emphasize the impact of parents' behavior during divorce. Through dramatizations and interviews with children, parents, judges, and counselors who have been impacted by divorce or work in the family law field, the video gives parents a road map of behaviors to avoid and suggestions for improving communication and minimizing stress on children.



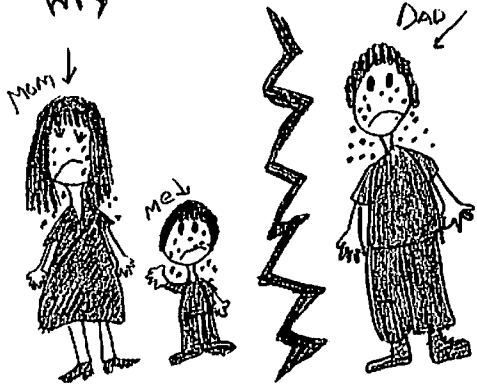
For additional family law resources, visit [www.tyla.org](http://www.tyla.org)

For a copy of the  
"Kids in the Crossfire" video contact:

Texas Young Lawyers Association  
P.O. Box 12487, Capital Station  
Austin, TX 78711-2487  
(800) 204-2222 Ext. 6429

Produced as a public service by the  
Texas Young Lawyers Association  
with a grant from the Texas Bar Foundation

I feel torn between my mom and my dad.



"More than anything else, kids want their parents to get along."

— Judge Curt Henderson  
219<sup>th</sup> District Court



## Ten Tips for Divorcing Parents

by Mike McCurley and the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers

- 1 **Never criticize your former spouse in front of your children.** Because children know they are "part mom" and "part dad," the criticism can batter the child's self-esteem.
- 2 **Do not use your children as messengers between you and your former spouse.** The less the children feel a part of the battle between their parents, the better.
- 3 **Reassure your children that they are loved and that the divorce is not their fault.** Many children assume that they are to blame for their parents' hostility.
- 4 **Encourage your children to see your former spouse frequently.** Do everything within your power to accommodate the visitation.
- 5 **At every step during your divorce, remind yourself that your children's interests—not yours—are paramount, and act accordingly.** Lavish them with love at each opportunity.
- 6 **Your children may be tempted to act as your caretaker. Resist the temptation to let them.** Let your peers, adult family members, and mental health professionals be your counselors and sounding board. Let your children be children.
- 7 **If you have a drinking or drug problem, get counseling right away.** An impairment inhibits your ability to reassure your children and give them the attention they need at this difficult time.
- 8 **If you are the non-custodial parent, pay your child support.** The loss of income facing many children after divorce puts them at a financial disadvantage that has a pervasive effect on the rest of their lives.
- 9 **If you are the custodial parent and you are not receiving child support, do not tell your children.** It feeds into the child's sense of abandonment and further erodes his or her stability.
- 10 **If at all possible, do not uproot your children.** Stability in their residence and school life helps buffer children from the trauma of their parents' divorce.

"No matter what you are feeling, the most important thing for your child is to be in a place where they can continue to grow, feel safe, and have the benefit of both parents in their life."

— Judge Chris Oldner  
416<sup>th</sup> District Court



Why do you guys have to keep fighting?

