



# Welcome to Parent Orientation

Family Court Services  
Superior Court of California,  
County of San Mateo

# Introduction

- This class will be divided into 4 parts:
  - Focus on the Children
  - Explanation of Child Custody Recommending Counseling (formerly known as Mediation).
  - Safety Concerns
  - Helpful Tips for Parents



# Introduction (continued)

- Quizzes:
  - There will be a short quiz after each section.
  - By successfully completing each quiz, you are able to move on to the next section.
- Certificate of Completion:

San Mateo County Superior Court  
Family Court Services  
Certificate of Completion

This is to certify that

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Parent

Completed Parent Orientation on

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your case number here

Once you've completed the online class, print up your certificate and bring with you to your FCS appointment

# Parent Handbook

PLEASE HAVE YOUR PARENT  
HANDBOOK HANDY AS IT  
HIGHLIGHTS MANY OF THE TOPICS  
COVERED .

You may download the  
handbook or refer to it  
online: [Parent Handbook](#)



We'd like you to consider:

# Three Important Points

1. **Children do best when parents get along.**
1. **Put aside your differences for your children's sake.**
1. **Come to Child Custody Recommending Counseling prepared to discuss a parenting plan.**





# Part I

## Focus on the Children

Parents' separation or divorce is tough on kids!



# Stages of Grief and Loss Through Separation

Stages	For Adults	For Children
<b>Denial</b>	This can't be happening. She or he will come back and we will work it out.	Mom and Dad can't be hurting me and each other. It's only temporary. They will get back together.
<b>Anger</b>	How could she or he do this to me? I'm the responsible one. He or she is not the person I knew.	How could they do this to me? If they loved me, they would stay together.
<b>Bargaining</b>	If we get counseling or I change, then we'll get back together.	If I am really good, maybe they will get back together.

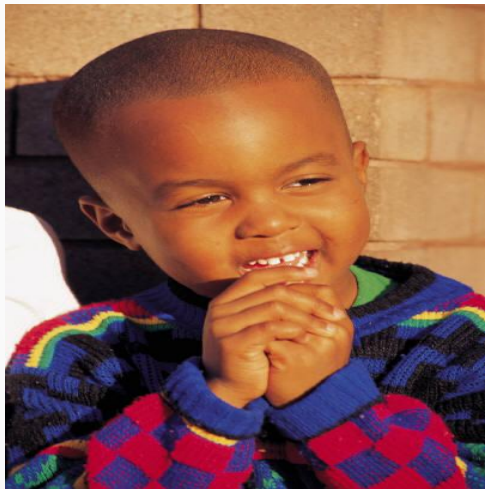
# Stages of Grief and Loss Through Separation, (cont.)

<b>Stages</b>	<b>For Adults</b>	<b>For Children</b>
<b>Depression</b>	I'm overwhelmed. I can't cope. It's all too much. No one understands.	It's my fault. I hate school. I hate my life. Nothing is okay.
<b>Acceptance</b>	It's over. I need to get on with my life and career and help our kids get their lives back to normal.	Mom and Dad are not getting back together and it's okay.
<b>Growth</b>	I've moved on. I know myself better. I'm ready for something new.	I don't have to pretend anymore.



# How Children Experience

## Separation, Divorce, and Parental Conflict



The experience of separation is different for children than it is for adults. Adults will seek relief from unhappiness, but children don't have the tools to do this.

Children tend to worry about their parents and to blame themselves for the separation and/or divorce.

- ✓ Children feel the tension in the home
  - ✓ Children worry what will happen to their parents and what will happen to them
  - ✓ Children feel anxious. They may have trouble sleeping or have problems in school.
  - ✓ Children may have problems with their behavior.
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- ✓ Children face shock and denial. They think, “This can’t be happening!”
  - ✓ Children worry that they may lose their parent’s love.
  - ✓ Children worry that they may be rejected by a parent.
  - ✓ Children worry about their future. They think, “Who will take care of me?”
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- ✓ Children still worry about who will take care of them
  - ✓ If a parent is sad and unable to care for the home or the children, the child may try to do the parent’s job.
  - ✓ It can be hard for children to go back and forth between the parents’ homes, especially if there is conflict between the parents.
  - ✓ Children can feel deep sadness.

# How can you help?

Listen to Your Children



[View this short video](#)

Don't put your kids  
in the middle



## Things that help children adjust to parents' separation

Working out the parenting plan with the other parent

Encouraging the children's relationship with the other parent (thereby helping the children avoid loyalty conflicts.)

Communicating with the other parent in person (by telephone, text or email, and not in front of the children)

## Things that prevent children from adjusting to parents' separation

Involving children in the details of the divorce or separation

Asking children to choose between the parents

Using children to carry messages to the other parent

Quiz Part I-

[Click here to move  
forward](#)