

**E. Your parenting.** Perhaps the most important element in how well your children might adapt to divorce is the quality of the parenting you provide them during the difficult changes of a divorce. The stresses of divorce and your own emotions can affect your parenting. Of course, maybe you are already feeling greater stress and emotions due to challenges you are facing in your marriage. Still, think about the following questions.

- Would you be more or less stressed if you got a divorce? How would stress affect your ability to be a good parent? Do you think you might be harsher in disciplining your children? More lenient or soft? How could you keep stress from making you less effective as a parent? Write your thoughts here:

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• What aspects of parenting would change if you got a divorce? For instance, are there things your spouse usually does as a parent that you would need to take on? How would a divorce affect the amount of time and attention you give your children? Write down your thoughts here:

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• How might a divorce affect the way you see and treat your children? For instance, would you need your children to be more mature and independent? Would your children need to take on more responsibilities in the home or be alone in the home more often? Would you need your children to be an emotional support to you? (Sometimes after a divorce, parents go to their children for support or sympathy or even advice. While a little of this is understandable, too much of this can place children in the uncomfortable role of acting like a parent to their parent.) Write down your thoughts here:

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• Usually, the amount of time parents can care directly for their children decreases after a divorce. A divorce often requires different circumstances for caring for children, such as daycare, family care, more babysitting, etc. What kind of changes would you anticipate for caring for your children when you are not able to be there? How do you think your children will react to such changes?