

# in the heart of the child

what the child *actually* cares about

In most divorce cases involving children, there is a complete lack of agreement that commences once the divorce begins. At some point in your relationship, you were able to agree on having a child and maybe even more (for our purposes here we will consider a concession as an agreement). You were able to agree on the theme for the nursery and even on a name. You agreed that you would both be in the child's life forever and managed to co-parent all the years you were together. What happened in this child's world that makes parenting with the other parent now impossible?

In the midst of all the turmoil in the grown-up relationship, parents forget that they are the grown-ups and tend to overlook what truly matters. What matters is not that the other parent is keeping the "good clothes" or that the other parent consistently calls during dinner or that the other parent does not provide any of the transportation for the after school activities, it is the heart of the child that matters.

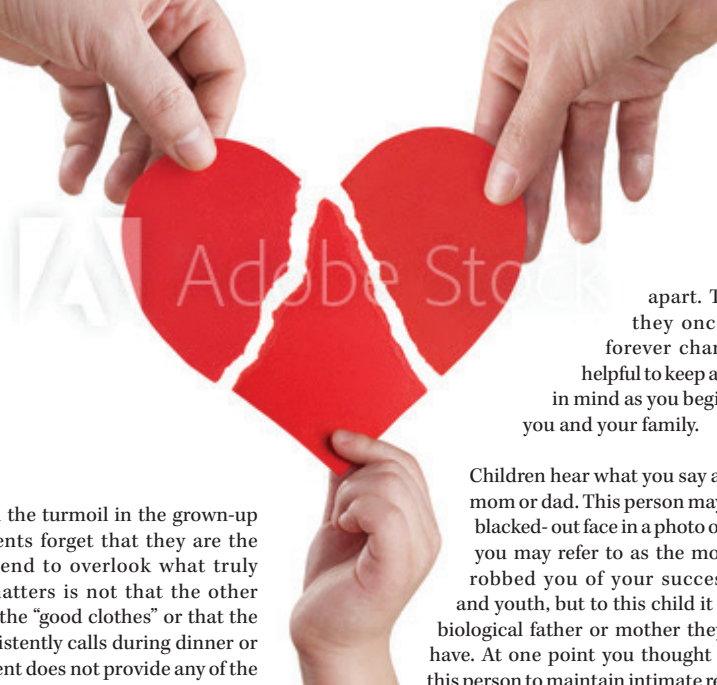
When parents are dealing with the prospect of having to start all over again, it is easy to forget that for these children their worlds too have fallen



## Meet the Attorney

Amanda Salcido is an attorney practicing in family, juvenile, dependency, military & criminal law and United States Army JAG Corps. She takes a personal, hands-on approach in representing her clients.

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apart. The family they once knew is forever changed. It is helpful to keep a few things in mind as you begin to mend you and your family.

Children hear what you say about their mom or dad. This person may soon be a blacked-out face in a photo or someone you may refer to as the monster that robbed you of your success, money and youth, but to this child it is the only biological father or mother they will ever have. At one point you thought enough of this person to maintain intimate relations, so there is still at least one redeeming quality you can exaggerate. That child is equally part you and the other parent. While you might think it is the worst part, it's still your child. You can vent about the other party and express all the regrets and anger you have to your closest friends, just don't do it in front of the kids and never, ever (I hope it goes without saying) to the kids.

Children don't care who pays child support. Often parents get tied up about what the child support is used for and expect the receiving to parent to cover all of the needs of the children with the child support. Some parents will refuse to buy the child even a pair of shoes because "that's what child support is for." Child support is for the support of the children to include, but not limited to, a roof over their heads, running water, food on the table. Child support does not relieve the other parent of all other financial obligations.

Children don't care about the schedule. Often parents will try to minimize the time the other parent spends with the children because it is "not their day." If the other parent was present every day until the parents' separation, how fair is it to the child that they can now only see the other parent on a limited basis? Allowing extra time only strengthens the relationship and encourages more normalcy. Most of the time, their dream is that their parents would reconcile. What if they could just try to get along?



FAMILY LAW ATTORNEY

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- **Divorce and Family Law**, focusing on all aspects of the divorce process, from the strategic initial filing through negotiations and pretrial hearings through trial.
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