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# Keeping The Kids Out Of Your Divorce

Monday, February 18, 2008 3:27:15 PM

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*Emily Lampa Generation To Generation*

**Additional Information**  
[Total Life Counseling](#)

It is not a commonly known fact, but the divorce rate in this country is actually going down.

The National Center for Health Statistics show numbers steadily dropping from 1979, when rates were at their highest.

But the effects of divorce are still a major problem and News 13's Emily Lampa has expert advice that can help both parents and children cope with this tough transition.

"There's a spirit of retribution in a divorce, and in that spirit of retribution, the kids get lost," said Evelyn Wenzel, a clinical social worker.

Pantaleon is in the process of getting a divorce, which has been hard on her family.

"I was just hoping that we were going to be able to go through this as friends and putting the children's best interests first, and it didn't turn out that way. It's gotten to, I guess, what you would term to be a nasty divorce," Pantaleon said.

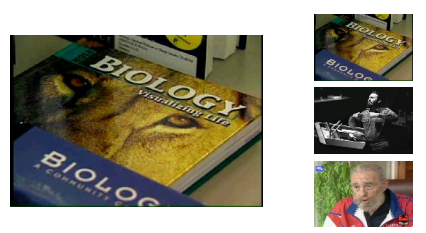
That is why she and her husband looked for professional help and found [Total Life Counseling Services](#) in Metrowest.

Counselors asked the kids to draw pictures or play video games in an effort to get them to open up about the divorce.

"A lot of this is about helping children feel safe and secure and be a kid, still," Wenzel said.

Total Life Counselors said there are 10 mistakes parents typically make when going through a divorce, and avoiding them can make a big difference in this tough transition.

- Don't fight in front of the children
- Avoid using children as messengers
- Don't put children in "parent roles" --- like referring to a son as the man of the house...experts say it puts unnecessary stress on children
- Don't destroy support systems. Continue to allow your children to see grandparents, family, and friends
- Don't spoil your kids by giving your child everything they want because you think it will ease tension



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- Avoid making the child feel one parent is the "good" parent and the other the "bad" parent
- Experts say dating in front of children in the first year after the divorce is a no-no
- Don't make promises you can't keep
- Don't have different rules at each house --- what happens at mom's house should also happen at dad's house
- Never discuss money matters with the children

Pantaleon admitted that it is sometimes hard to stick to the list, but she said it has had a positive effect on her family.

"You just have to make a choice. You have to choose to be happy. You have to choose to be kind and you have to choose to take the higher road,"

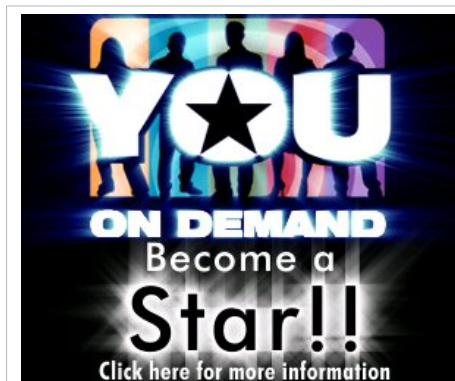
Total Life Counseling offers services for children and adults.

Counseling sessions may be covered by insurance.



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