

Sign up for both children and parents

You can sign up to participate in KIDS in several ways. Parents can approach a KIDS coach themselves by visiting www.kiesvoorhetkind.nl.

Depending on which KIDS program child and/or parents want(s) to participate in, this can take place at school, at a community center, a care agency, a Youth and Family Center or a divorce practice. For nearby programs, check your local organization.

More information

The Child and Divorce Expertise Center conducts research, develops care and coaching programs, provides information and provides education and training for professionals.



This leaflet is offered by the
Child and Divorce Expertise Center.

kiesvoorhetkind.nl/kids-in-divorce-situations

"Sometimes it is nice to have someone accompanying you for a while"

— Nelly Snels-Dolron
Director of the Child and Divorce Expertise Center - KIDS
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KIDS

Professional coaching in divorce situations



The divorce of parents, the **children's** narrative

Children do not choose their parents' divorce. It just happens to them. Not one child of any age has been taught how to deal with divorce situations and divorced parents.

After a divorce, both children and parents undergo a personal process. Each of them will encounter personal awkward, difficult and perhaps even pleasing aspects of the divorce. **KIDS** teaches children to handle their own process. Parents learn to look through their child's eyes, and, with additional information, they make the most viable choices that are in the best interest of their child. That is why it is good that **KIDS** exists.

What is **KIDS**?

KIDS stands for Kids in Divorce Situations. **KIDS** offers professional coaching and help for all children and young people in need thereof. This could be just after the divorce but also much later. There are **KIDS** groups, and there is individual coaching.

KIDS helps children to learn to choose for themselves. This does not mean that children will have more decision-making power but rather that they can remain children and that adult problems remain problems of grown-ups. **KIDS** offers children their own space and place to stop and reflect on everything that the divorce has caused, and possibly are still experiencing within the confinement of a safe environment, individually and/or together with other children. **KIDS** is not therapy; it is a method of coaching children. It makes them

more resilient. If there are issues that impede a child's healthy development, the **KIDS** coaches will give timely feedback.

Every child has the right to be a child

Children are naturally loyal and faithful to their parents. They want their parents to do well, they want to protect them and certainly not cause them any pain. When it comes to divorce, children often keep their deepest thoughts and feelings to themselves.

Those thoughts and feelings can interfere with a carefree and healthy development. **KIDS** teaches children to put their thoughts into words. They are better able to express their concerns, or what they do not understand. This allows children and parents to work towards the best achievable possibilities.

At first, I wanted to make sure that my parents would be happy again. Now I know I cannot make that happen.

- Tess

Dad wanted to move out of our house and thought I would also like it if we would move. **KIDS** taught me to say that it did not want that. Now we will get to continue living here for a while longer and if we do move, it will simply be near mom and school.

- Jesse

I was also finally able to tell mom that I became best friends with the daughter of dad's girlfriend. Now, she may even come over to play.

- Yara

We all go out to dinner for my birthday once a year now. I did not want anything else, just that so badly.

- Levi

My mind is calmer now, and there is much less arguing.

- Nour

I thought **KIDS** was not necessary because we were getting along pretty okay with each other. Still, I noticed that it was different for Nour.

- Nour's father

We have learned not to discuss our issues at the door, when picking up and dropping off Nour. Jasper now comes in for a cup of tea. Nour made us look at ourselves. It gives us all more peace; she simply was right, and we all have a nicer time together this way.

- Nour's mother

Tips for parents

- ✓ As parents talk in a positive way about each other, or do not talk at all about each other.
- ✓ Children may always talk about their experiences with both parents.
- ✓ Children would rather not tell their parents everything. Therefore, allow them to talk to a trustworthy person. An impartial person or neutral place is important to them and pleasant.
- ✓ Usually, children want to know why mom and dad can no longer live together. Spare them the details of the divorce. Divorce is an adult affair.
- ✓ Does your child ask a question about the divorce? If so, always answer honestly at child's level. And - if it is about the other parent - try to remain as neutral as possible.
- ✓ Do not argue in front of children.
- ✓ It is okay to say you are sad or angry. Moreover, let them know that it will pass. Children will better learn to cope with events and feelings.
- ✓ Children are never to blame for the divorce. Tell them that too.

Research by the University of Utrecht, conducted by Ed Spruijt and Inge van der Valk, shows that **KIDS** helps children to get a better understanding of a divorce. That **KIDS** helps children to learn to cope better with the divorce situation. Children come to understand that the divorce is not their fault. The relationship between the child and the parents improves. For children who participate in **KIDS**, it can reduce problems. Children, parents and professionals are very satisfied with and are positive about **KIDS**.