

TOGETHER in the kitchen

Rebonding is an important part of divorce recovery. In some cases that bond has been severely damaged or even destroyed. Whatever your circumstances and the demands on your time the kitchen is a good place to start getting things and people back together. Everybody has to eat. In fact all through history and around the world meal preparation is the heart of family life. Preparing a meal together is also a great way to help your children reconnect to each other.

For very young children your secret weapon is the banana. You mark the banana with a magic marker so the child can slice it (skin on) with a sturdy plastic knife with serrated edge (or go to the hardware store and purchase a child safe "cutnspread"). Once the banana slices are peeled they can become a variety of deserts; add fruit cocktail or yogurt and chocolate chips, or chunky peanut butter with just enough milk to make it syrupy...or add chocolate syrup or a bit of mayonnaise and chopped nuts. For kids bananas mixed with a teaspoon of any type of jam or jelly can be a treat. The point is that even the youngest child can contribute and be kept busy. After cutting bananas comes cheese and bread, then oranges and cucumbers and finally apples and potatoes. A child who can cut and pour can prepare anything.

For older children your secret weapon is a little notebook (recipe book). Each child gets his own and is allowed to add a recipe after he or she has made the dish twice. Boys who think cooking is not masculine can go to the internet and search for recipes for men etc. Older boys can even learn to cook a special romantic recipe or two. Something to make their sweetheart swoon. Avoid children's cookbooks. Almost all of them underestimate a child's amazing ability to learn. The miracle of cooking together is that making any dish the second time is so much easier and quicker. Younger children will actually thrive on repetition. Older children will become expert. The kitchen is also a great place to get your children involved in their own health. You don't actually have to count calories. My personal choice for healthy eating is: avoid flour, avoid sugar, trim the fat, blot the grease and control your portion size. You might even put up pictures of the most dangerous foods in the world...the donut, the potato chip, the soft drink. Just avoiding these worst of all foods can make a lifetime of difference. Fruit is probably the best snack of all and if you must add some munchies make it little cheese crackers or pretzels.

If divorce is like hitting your thumb with a hammer cooking together is like a band aid. It is your first best response. Make it an every day thing, a teamwork thing. Whistle while you work (or play happy music) and nobody leaves till the dishes are done. **For more great resources for the children of divorce visit**

www.childrenafterdivorce.com.