

Confusion of Mixed Messages

When you are not disengaged, you may communicate mixed messages to your child. The messages below are mixed messages. They are usually spoken in the same day by the same parent.

Directions: Circle the message you think will speak the loudest, (A) or (B). If it is difficult to determine which message your child will hear and remember, put yourself in your child's shoes. Just imagine how anxious and confused you would feel if you were your child.

Message A	Message B
"It's OK to love your dad even though I don't love him."	"I wish he'd fall off the face of the earth!"
"It's not your fault that we got a divorce."	"Your mother can't handle you!"
"You know you have to go to your dad's house. Don't worry about me. Have lots of fun!"	"I'll really miss you while you are at your dad's. I'll just stay here and wait for you to come home."
"These are grown-up matters. Don't worry yourself, your mother and I will take care of things."	"Let me know if your mother has been calling her attorney again, OK?"
"Respect your father!"	"He is such a jerk! I'm so glad I'm not married to him anymore!"
"I'll always love you."	"You make me so angry when you act just like your MOTHER!"

Remember actions (tone and body language) will always speak louder than words.