Do these first

Selected passages / pages 12–15 and 21

You should NOT know how to get divorced. Unless you're in the divorce business, it makes sense that you don't know what to do first. Start here.

Start with what you know and what you can legitimately access.

Talk to a family law attorney

- ☐ Book a few consultations. Ask about fees when you schedule. See Your First Family Law Visit for what to prepare and what to ask.
- ☐ Before moving out, ask how it could affect your parenting arrangements and your options for the family home.
- ☐ Before moving money from a joint account, ask what you can do to cover expenses and what records to keep.

Find out what's there

- ☐ Copy three years of tax returns. They can help identify accounts and sources of income.
- ☐ Collect recent statements: bank, brokerage, retirement, mortgage, loans, and credit cards.
- ☐ List insurance policies: life, health, home, auto, and who the beneficiaries are.
- ☐ List missing records or accounts you cannot access. Ask your lawyer how to obtain them.

Only take documents you have a right to see. Ask your lawyer if you're unsure.



IN THE JOURNAL

Start with Before the First Bell for the practical checklists. Start with what you need now.

View the journal

© 2026 Nicole McKenney | Selected passages from Single Mom School | 1

Do these first

Continued / selected passages from pages 14, 15, 21 and 23

Build your own footing

- ☐ Track what it actually costs to run the house each month for at least 60 days.
- ☐ Keep a running list of every recurring bill and when it's due. Include annual and seasonal costs, such as insurance, school expenses, and camp.
- ☐ Ask how household bills will be paid while the divorce is pending and what temporary support may be available.

Document the life you've been running

- ☐ Keep a calendar of school runs, appointments, activities, and who handled them.
- ☐ List teachers, doctors, coaches, and caregivers, with contact information.
- ☐ Write down the kids' routines: bedtime, homework, meals, and comfort rituals. Include medications, accommodations, and any extra care they need. Bring this to your lawyer so the parenting plan reflects real life.

What to Prepare

- ☐ A one-page timeline: when you married, when things changed, and your children's names and ages.
- ☐ Any papers you have already been served or sent.
- ☐ Your questions and your three biggest concerns, written down.

This is general information, not legal advice. Laws vary by state. Use these pages to prepare for a conversation with your attorney.

IN THE JOURNAL



Start with Before the First Bell for the practical checklists. Start with what you need now.

View the journal