



How to Tell Your Children That You Are Separating

We know what you are going through,
and we are here to help.



When children are involved in a separation

Going through a divorce or separation is hard at the best of times but is often even harder when there are children involved in the relationship.

Depending on the age of the child, there will be different levels of understanding of the situation.

Whether the child is old enough to understand or not, they will realise something is **happening** and something is **different**, so it is always best to try and explain the separation at some level.

Children of school-age will have a greater level of understanding. It is likely that they have friends who have been through or live with a similar situation. They will be **scared** about what is going to happen, they will have lots of questions to ask mum and dad, so be prepared with some answers.

Most importantly, whatever the age of the child, reassure them that they will always be **cared for** and **loved** by both parents, no matter what.



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When to tell them

Wait until both partners have agreed that the separation is going to happen. If the separation or divorce is only a consideration, then keep it to yourselves for now. It may seem like a good idea to be totally honest with your children about the situation, but the uncertainty will only add confusion and upset.

There will never be a good time to tell a child about the separation, but waiting until you have time to deal with their questions is for the best. After hearing the news, the children will need **reassurance** and no doubt, plenty of hugs so avoid school days, busy evenings, or just before bed.



How to tell them

Even if the relationship has **broken down** and neither partner agrees on anything, the children will understand better if it comes from both parties together. Try to have a plan in place, for example, who will be moving out, what is happening and going to happen, and when the children will next see them. Allowing your children to know key details will **comfort** them, knowing they will still get to see both mum and dad.

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When it is time to tell them, try to keep everything as **simple** as possible. Don't go in to great detail as to why the relationship has broken down, just explain that mum and dad have been thinking and it has led to a separation. **Reinforce** to the children that there is a plan in place and that both parents will still be an important part of their lives. Maybe if they have friends in this situation you could use them as an example, e.g. 'just like Jane sees her mum/dad every weekend'.

If the children have seen you arguing, then explain that you are doing what is **best for the family**. Try and explain that it is better to have two happy parents living apart than two grumpy and upset parents living together. They will understand that if that is what has been happening.

Dos & Don'ts...

DO

Ensure the children know that it is not their fault. Children who are a little older may **blame** themselves for the break up, suggesting that they will behave better if the separation doesn't happen. Let them know that the **decision** is between the adults and isn't a reflection on their behaviour or them at all.

DON'T

Discuss the divorce in front of them, even on the phone, and keep any **legal paperwork** away from prying eyes.

DO

Keep them away from the proceedings where possible, even if they are **old enough** to be able to decide for themselves who they want to live with.

DON'T

Start the blame game. However **angry** either partner may be, don't blame each other in front of the children. If your children hear you calling their mum or dad a liar or worse, then they will start to believe that themselves.

DO

Make sure the children **understand** the situation and what is going to happen. Why not plan what each parent will do with the children the next time they **spend time** with them.

DO

Spare the children the **details**, they don't need to know about an affair or other issues. Avoid Facebook, particularly if you have older children with their own accounts as they may be **exposed** to details they don't need to know and friends of the family may mention things to the children which may add to any upset.

We know... you need expertise and compassion.

Our expert divorce solicitors are highly experienced and will treat each case uniquely depending on your circumstances. Our family law specialists achieve solutions through confidential settlements and are always on hand to provide support as we know going through a divorce can be a stressful time. We have worked on many family law divorce cases and we ensure each of our clients receive the utmost care and consideration throughout the case.

You know your children better than anyone else and as a parent you are best placed to make the important decisions for them, but there may be times you need advice and support regarding children and divorce. If you have children and you are getting divorced or separating, we can advise you on a wide range of issues relating to children, contact and custody.

Our team are ready to help

1

Free call with one of our team

2

Agree a fixed fee (no hidden costs)

3

Appointment with an expert solicitor

4

Receive professional and specific advice in writing

5

You decide how you would like to proceed



Kelly Parks
Head of Family Law



Shetal Gudgeon
Senior Family Law Solicitor



Lauren Mahon
Family Law Solicitor



Sarah White
Chartered Legal Executive



Our Family team have been ranked in the Legal 500 yet again for their outstanding work.

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Disclaimer

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