

Parenting through separation

FACT SHEET 1

What children need from their parents

1. You can make separation better for your children when you try to see things from their point of view, and when you help them as much as you can

- As long as parents handle separation carefully, kids do have every chance of being ok.
- But if separation isn't handled carefully, research shows it can be damaging.
- There are important things you can do to make things better for your children (even without their other parent's co-operation).

2. Separation is a journey for your children – it usually gets better over time

- At first most kids feel pain and insecurity, and are really upset and miserable.
- Some kids get clingy, others act aggressively.
- If your child seems ok, remember they may be protecting you from their feelings, or they may not know what to say or how to get help.
- Lots of kids keep on hoping their parents will get back together.
- Most kids eventually adapt to the changes.
- The more you help your children, the better things will be for them.

3. The journey is different for every child – watch out for their individual reactions and needs

- Things that will make a difference include your children's age, gender and personality, and your behaviour and the support you give them.
- Your children's sense of time is different from yours – for them, time goes more slowly. A week is a very long time for a baby.
- Young kids (under 12) often blame themselves for their parents' break up, and need lots of reassurance that it's not their fault.



