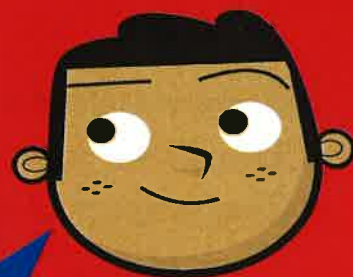


read
my story
inside



what will
happen next?



My family's changing



why is
this happening?



look inside
for advice
from other
young people



Putting children first
in family courts

If you want more help, see the contact details on the back page

Why is this happening?

There are lots of reasons why some parents split up. Usually it's because one or both of them is unhappy. They might think they need to be apart to make things better.

Your parents may argue and shout, but you must remember it's not your fault that this is happening.

This booklet can help you work out how you are feeling. You might want to show it to your mum or dad, or other adults.



**never blame
yourself**



It can be very confusing when parents split up.
You could talk to an adult, like a parent or
teacher, about any questions you have.

what about
Ben, my dog?



where
will I live?



do they
still love
me?

why are
mum and
dad angry?

who can
I talk to?



What do you want for the future?

Use this page to write down what you want to happen. If you want, you could show it to your parents. You might not get what you want, but it might help to write it all down.

where would you like to live?
who would you like to see?
where would you like to go to school?
what activities would you like to do?



When mum and dad split up I moved to a new place with my mum. I was worried that I wouldn't get to see my friends any more, but when I visit my dad I get to see my friends too. Plus I have new friends where I'm living now.



When my family changed I thought my life was ruined. But I found lots of different ways to help me cope - try to look for the positives!



Me and my sister are still together with mum. I still live in the same house and go to the same school. I wasn't sure how often I would see my dad, but it turned out ok and I see him at weekends.



I thought that when it was just dad and me living together I wouldn't get to see my nana and her cat Betty and this upset me. I still get to see them at weekends and holidays though.



What happens next?

When parents split up, they have to think about lots of different things, like where you will live and when you will see the parent that you don't live with.

Sometimes parents find it difficult to agree on plans for their children. They may talk to mediators (people who are trained in helping parents agree) or get advice from lawyers.

If parents can't agree, a judge or magistrate from a family court might be asked to help. A family court is very different to a criminal court where people go when they might have done something wrong.



The judge may ask a Cafcass worker to talk to you and your parents. The Cafcass worker will tell the court what they think will be best for you.

The judge will listen carefully to what everyone has to say, and then try to help everyone agree. If this still isn't possible, the judge will make a decision on what's best for you.



How do you feel?

You might feel sad, lonely, angry or confused. It's normal to feel all these things. Sometimes you might feel lots of different things all at once. It's ok to have mixed feelings, like feeling happy and sad at the same time.

How do you feel? You can write down other feelings here too.



Sometimes we talk about feelings and sometimes we keep them hidden.

There are lots of feelings to find in this word search. Which of these feelings are you keeping hidden?

There are ten more feelings in this word search – can you find them?

c w s r e t y h i o p
a c d c g h s a d z x
j v o a a q w p r h y
e h i n l r j p g o k
a f z g f v e y m p s
l w e r e u y d i e p
o s d y g h s k l f x
u v w o r r i e d u y
s y i a f r a i d l d
l o n e l y b n m a s
c v b n m q w e r t y

afraid

hopeful

sad

angry

jealous

scared

confused

lonely

worried ✓

happy

ok



Feelings: let them out!

If you're angry, sad or worried, you might want to keep your feelings hidden. But sometimes it helps to talk to someone.

Talk to people who are close to you:

- your family
- friends and their families. Some of them might have been through the same thing
- teachers and youth workers.

If you don't want to talk to someone you know, you could call one of the numbers on the back page.

**don't bottle up
your feelings
- let them out!**



Quick tips

Buy a pad to scribble on when you get angry.

Do something that makes you happy – watch one of your favourite films or read a favourite book.

Do some sport – football, swimming or dancing can make you feel better.

If you feel really angry, hit a big, soft cushion.

These things won't make things go back to the way they were, but they might make you feel better.



play music!



see your
friends!



email
your
friends



Dealing with change

Change is not always easy. It might take some time for everyone to get used to new ways. But most children find that things get better over time.

Some children live with their mum or dad most of the time, and visit the other parent at weekends or over the holidays.

Some children spend the same amount of time with each of their parents.

Some children spend time with other people, like grandparents.

Some children have stepfamilies. A stepfamily is when one or both of your parents live with someone who isn't your mum or dad. They may have children too.

Remember, families come in all shapes and sizes!



When my dad got remarried I was really upset but now I realise it's great because I have two families and I get to spend time with them all.



My mum and dad have split up and I'm sorry to say it's for the better. They couldn't get on together and just argued.

My friend's parents are getting a divorce. He tries to be ok with it but he just ends up being spiteful to cover up his feelings.



My mum and dad are divorced but I got lots of help from my school and the rest of my family.



Help!

Childline

A special help line
for children

0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

Divorce Aid

Advice for children
and families going
through divorce

www.divorceaid.co.uk

It's not your fault

Advice for children whose
parents are splitting up

www.itsnotyourfault.org

National Youth Advocacy Service

Information and advice

0800 61 61 01

www.nyas.net

Voice

You can call this number
if you are unhappy with
decisions that have been
made about your care

0808 800 5792

www.voiceyp.org

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