A Message for Separating Parents

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Most children and young people say that they still want to see both parents after the separation. Children who keep in contact with both parents after a divorce or separation can adapt better than those children who lose contact with the parent they do not live with. This does not mean that contact is safe for all children but in most cases, it will be, and the NACCC Accredited Child Contact Service will help you to work this out. If you would like some help with this, a good place to start is the Parenting Plan.

At first it may seem impossible to put aside the strong feelings you might have about your ex-partner so you can both cooperate over your children. The important thing to remember is that you don't have to be friends; you just need to be able to develop a relationship so that you can sensibly discuss your children.

Your children will be shaped very much by how their parents behave towards them about the loss and how they behave towards each other. Important decisions such as where your child or children will live and how often they see each parent will of course affect them and so will the level of conflict between you and your ex-partner.

Children need…

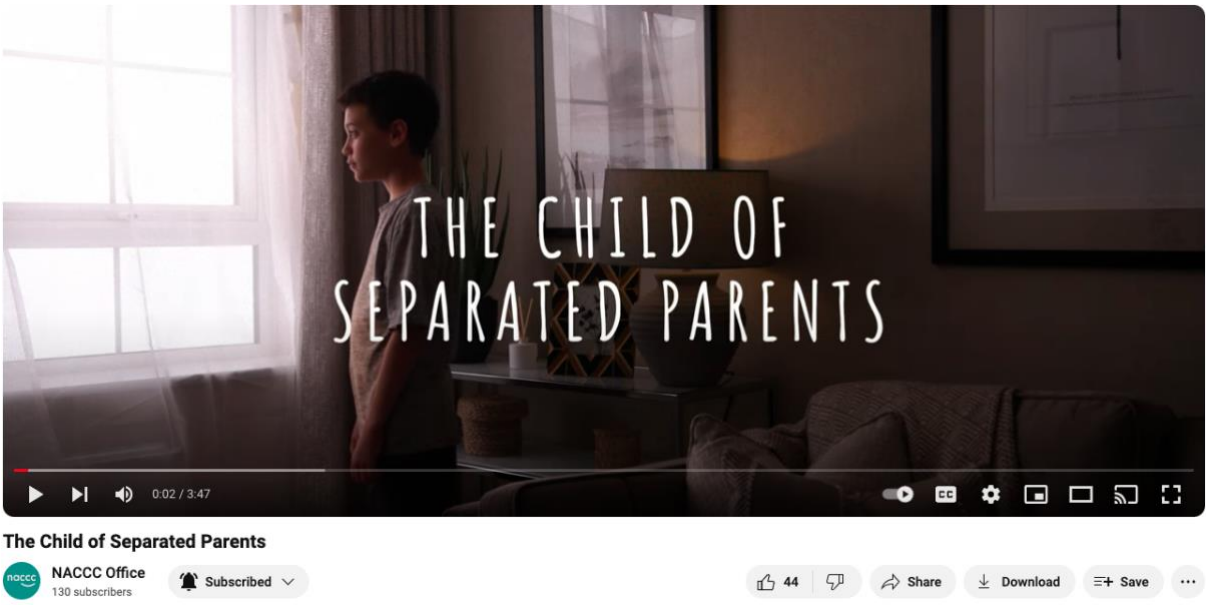
- To be told what is happening and how their lives will change.
- To know that the break up is not their fault.
- To know that it is OK to feel angry and sad.
- To know that it's fine to talk and ask questions.
- To be listened to.
- To know that their parents understand how they feel and still love them.
- To feel good about loving both parents.
- To know that it is all right to have different family rules in different houses.

Children do not need…

- To hear or see their parents complaining about or blaming each other.
- To hear adult information about the reasons for the separation or details about child support.
- To feel that they may be asked to choose one parent over the other.
- To pass messages from one parent to the other.
- To feel like an outsider in one parent's home.

The NACCC Website provides a range to tools and resources to help your children to understand the changes that are happening in their lives, regardless of whether you plan to use a Family Time Service.

Click the image below to hear some important messages from a child.



If you are planning to use a Family Time Service, the best thing you can do is to seek to prepare your children for this change. Working with them to make it ok to talk about their wishes, feelings, worries, or concerns and making space for them to be open and honest with you is probably the best way to do this. Otherwise, your local service will be able to give you some ideas about ways to support your children to prepare to use the service.

If you cannot or will not prepare your child for engaging in Family Time, there is a chance that this will make it difficult for them to adapt to the changes, this is also likely to be emotionally harmful to them. The effects of this can shape your children's lives in several different ways, particularly where they are continually exposed to parental conflict.

You might not like the children's other parent at the moment, but your children need you to do what is best for them.