



## Children's advice to parents

**We conducted some interviews with children on their perspectives of Divorce and Separation, below are some quotes from the interviews which offer some useful advice and information to parents.**

### **How to tell the children:**

'If the parents are nice and calm to each other then it helps the children to hear it in a calmer way.'

'The two parents should tell them together' (Female, 15, White)

### **What to tell the children:**

'That they still love them, they just don't love each other' (Male, 16, Black)

'The children need to know they'll still see all the family'

'Say like you'll still be the same and still be able to see whatever parent it is...still love them the same' (Female, 14, White)

'they shouldn't say like it was mum's fault or dad's fault, or mum and dad are breaking up 'cos he's done this and that, you should say we are going through a hard time, ups and downs and you shouldn't go straight to the problem 'cos it's just gonna give a negative approach to the whole thing' (Female, 14, Black)

'It should be explained to them some of the basic choices depending on how old the child is. They should say that it's not their fault and about access to both parents and they shouldn't worry about it' (Female, 15, White)

'I think it's good to reassure them that it's not got to do with the children, because when they are like going through a stage were they weren't getting on they mostly take it out on the child. So the child might feel like if I be good, if I put these away, if I did this, if I did that, you know what I mean' (Female, 19, Asian)

'Explain to them that it's not their fault' (Female, 16, Mixed race)

'Tell the truth'

**Things that need to be discussed:**

'Like what's gonna happen to them, why they're getting divorced, when they're getting divorced, where their parents are moving after and if they can see their parents on the weekends and stuff like that.' (Male, 15, White)

'Who will have custody of them and who will bring them up, that kind of thing. Who is going to look after them' (Male, 16, Mixed race)

**Things children might not want to know:**

'If the reason for the divorce was an affair or if the husband was doing off key things to the mother like beating her. If they know that, they will hate one of their parents. It is better not to know those sort of things' (Male, 16, Black)

'If one of your parents is cheating then you wouldn't want to know about it.' (Female, 11, White)

'As long as they don't talk about their sex life and stuff like that' (Female, 15, White)

'Erm I think if it is anything personal to the parents, unless it's something major that's causing the break-up. They shouldn't be put against one parent, a parent might put them against the other one, you know' (Female, 19, Asian)

**Something children and young people feel is very important – listen!**

'Listen to your child, this child might have something really important to say'

'One word – listen'

**Things to bear in mind:**

'They've gotta know that it's not only parents that go through it, sometimes the child is going through something as well' (Female, 14, Black)

'They should think about the children's feelings long-term. Not just about how they are feeling right now, but about how it will affect them in the future too' (Female, 19, Asian)

'The children are right in the middle of it all so they should be careful' (Female, 13, Asian)

'They don't take it as well as you think they do' (Female, White)

**Feelings about going to court:**

'If they go to court they'll be nervous and they probably won't talk, they'll be nervous of their parents looking at them' (Male, 16, Black)

'The children would be frightened; they might have stage fright'

**How children and young people would like their views shown in court:**

'The children should be asked that question before by the solicitors, they should be given the options for how their views can be represented. It depends on the child really but they should be asked so that they feel in full control of what is going on.' (Female, 17, Mixed race)

'Privately and personally'

*What do you mean by that?*

'Just the judge' (Female, 19, Asian)

'I don't think they would want to go to court because it's scary. It's where all the decisions are made' (Female, 13, Asian)

'On a tape or a letter, I don't think they'll want to go to the court' (Female, 14, White)

