

Tips for Separating Parents

1. Try to maintain a good working relationship with your ex. As you have children together your paths will continue to cross long term – you will be parents forever. Don't allow yourself to be drawn into unnecessary or damaging arguments that might have a knock on effect on the children.
2. Keep issues concerning the children separate from other issues, such as financial arrangements. Otherwise an argument about money could lead to falling out over arrangements for the children, and this is rarely in their best interests.
3. Try to break news of the separation together. Agree in advance how it's going to be handled. Make sure you have practical plans in place, and try to pre-empt any questions the children may have. Make sure you don't use the children as a go between for messages – this can create stress and tension for them.
4. There's plenty of practical advice on the web. A good starting place is the Resolution guide and the Christina McGhee website.
5. Mediation and collaborative law are alternatives to the traditional legal process. They are particularly effective ways of handling arrangements for children, as they promote effective communication between parents.
6. Be honest. Without going into detail, let the children know what's happening. Try to make sure all the adults in the children's lives give consistent information.
7. Try to view the situation through their eyes. Recognise that however difficult your relationship with the other parent may become, you must each protect the children from the fallout of the separation.
8. Never talk negatively about the other parent in front of the children. It's not fair on them.
9. If possible try and provide stability for the children, maintaining usual routines and continuing to see friends and extended family. This reassures children that separation is not the end of the world.
10. Try to be positive and focus on what you can offer your children, rather than focusing on the negative effect of the separation or your former partner's behaviour.