

Family Law Services

Tips for Young People

My parents are splitting up, but what about me?

Your parents separating can be hard on you, it is normal to feel angry, sad and/or confused. You are experiencing a lot of changes and it is important that you look after yourself and talk to your parents about how you feel.

Here are some questions you might have:

Why are my parents splitting up?

It's not your fault. Your parents were unhappy and decided they did not want to live with each other anymore.

What is visitation?

It's like a timetable to show when you will stay with each parent.

What is child support?

The money one parent gives the other parent to help cover the expenses for you and your siblings.

Who can you talk to?

- You can talk to a teacher, counsellor or school chaplain to help unpack what is going on
- If you feel comfortable, you can talk to a good friend or cousin
- Ask an adult your family trusts to help you decide what to say to your parents - what questions to ask
- You can write your parents an email or text message if it's easier for you to communicate this way
- Phone Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800 or headspace on 1800 650 890 – you may find it is easier to talk to someone you do not know

Your feelings and expression

Sometimes it is hard to express yourself. You cannot always put into words how or what you are feeling. Here are some other ways you can express yourself:

- It's ok to feel sad and cry, it can help you to feel lighter
- Write a journal about how you feel, why you feel this way and what your hopes are
- Physical exercise can help you release tension and anger - play a sport or start a hobby

- Draw or listen to music
- Spend time with a good friend, it can help you feel less lonely

Moving between homes can be hard so it's good to be organised

- Leave frequently used stuff at each parents' home so you don't have to carry too much back and forth
- Personal calendar - note when you'll be with each parent, who is doing school pick ups, events and regular activities (remember to tell your parents about key events so they can be there)
- Create your own space at both homes where you have pictures of your friends, favourite artist, pet or things to make you feel more comfortable

You may feel concerned about the situation, remember:

- It's not your role to deliver messages for one parent to the other
- You have the right to feel safe and comfortable at both of your parents' homes
- You can love both parents at the same time, there is no need to 'take sides'
- You can be there for your parents, but you do not have to counsel them
- It can feel overwhelming if your parents talk to you about their stressful issues, it's ok to tell them you do not want to listen to it
- Focus on the things you have to do and enjoy doing
- Separation can be very stressful and it takes time for everyone to adjust to the situation
- It is important you look after yourself – eat, sleep well and exercise regularly
- If you are in danger, call the police on 000

You may also find these websites useful:

[headspace](https://www.headspace.org.au)

access information and support about your mental health and wellbeing

[yla.org.au](https://www.yla.org.au) - Youth Law Australia

Info about your rights at school and home

[beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/young-people](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/young-people)

Do you often feel sad and anxious? You can find some info and help on this website

[kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind](https://www.kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind)

How to cope better with a range of changes in your life

Contact us

Metro services
1300 11 44 46

info
[@anglicarewa.org.au](https://www.anglicarewa.org.au)

East Perth
23 Adelaide Tce

Albany
St John's Centre
44 Collie St
T 08 9845 6666

Gosnells
Gosnells Community
Lotteries House
Suite 9, 1st Flr
Cnr Astley St & Albany Hwy

Broome
2 Weld St
T 08 9193 8100

Joondalup
Sanori House
Suite 9, 1st Floor
126 Grand Blvd

Bunbury
1/67 Spencer St
T 08 9720 9200

Mandurah
2/331 Pinjarra Rd

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