

We're Still A Family



A Guide for Children

Sometimes, parents split up from each other. It can be a very sad situation and it can happen for a number of reasons.

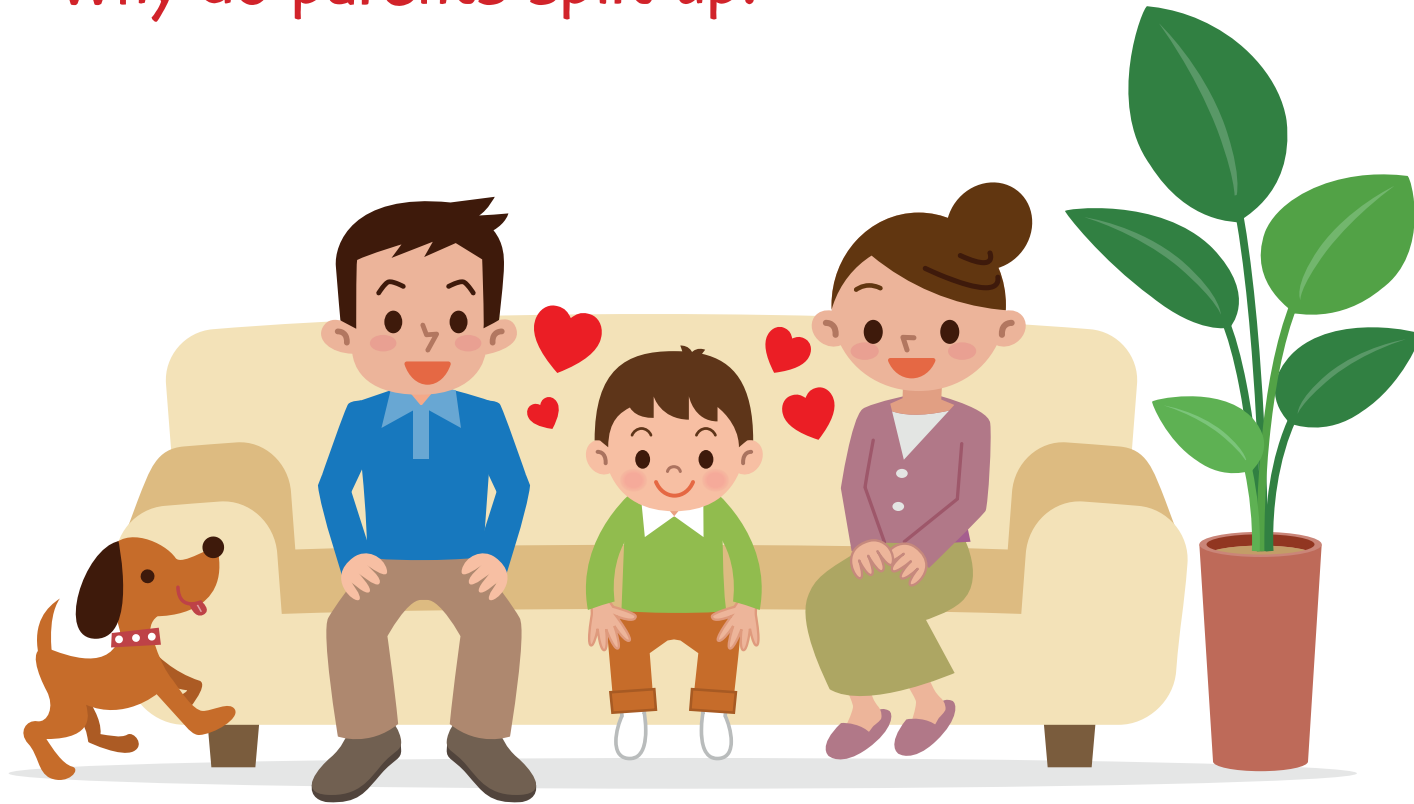


The most important thing to remember is: it's not your fault.



You will probably have a lot of questions about what is happening, and that's normal. There are lots of people you can talk to, like your parents or teachers, and they will be able to help you.

Why do parents split up?



There are different reasons why parents may split up. Sometimes, it's because they may not love each other anymore. But it is very important to remember that they still love you. It may also not be anything bad that has caused your parents to split up - they may just feel it is better for them to live apart.

One thing is for sure, and it's that it is absolutely not your fault - it's about issues between the two of them. It's not an easy decision for them to make - a lot of thought goes into it.

It's not my fault



Questions

It's normal to have lots of questions about what's happening, and we'll try and answer them for you here.

What happens to me?

Your parents will work out who you will live with most of the time - you may live with your mum and visit your dad, or it may be the other way round. Whatever the decision is, it is made with you in mind. Your happiness is at the top of everybody's list.



Will everything change?

Some things may change, but thousands of children in this situation have normal lives. Remember, both parents want you to be as happy as possible.

You may live with one parent most of the time, and the other parent some of the time, but it will be made as easy as possible for you.



Who can I talk to?

You can talk to any adult that you trust. That could be a teacher, a relative like an aunt, uncle, grandmother or grandfather, or an adult at your place of worship. They will listen to what you're feeling and offer their help and advice.



What happens to my house?

Your parents will have to work out which one of them stays in the house and who will move out. Again, the most important thing is your happiness, which is what they will be thinking about when they make their decision.



What about my pets?

Your parents will decide who is able to look after the pet best, and the pet will live with them. If the pet lives in a different house to you, you can still visit them!



Feelings

It can be a very confusing time when your parents get divorced, and you may feel a number of ways:



These are all totally normal ways to feel, but you won't feel like that forever. By talking to adults you trust, or friends that have gone through the same thing, you will start to feel better and smile again. One thing to remember is not to feel guilty. You have done nothing wrong and none of this is your fault.

You might also feel:



That you have to choose sides between parents




That you miss the parent you're not with




There are no right or wrong feelings. You don't have to choose sides with your parents - they both love you and they just want you to be happy.

Other children's stories


Thousands of children have been in the same situation as you, and they know exactly how you feel. Here are some stories from other children whose parents have split up.




"Even though me and my dad moved to a different place, I still get to see my mum at weekends and holidays, as well as my pets and friends."



"When my mum and dad split up I was really sad, but they are much happier now and they don't argue anymore."



"Try and look for the positives in the situation. I was sad too, but now I have two families who I love to spend time with."



"When my parents split up I was worried I wouldn't see my friends anymore. But I can see them whenever I visit my dad, and when me and Mum moved to a new place I made friends there, too."

Where can I get help?

You can get friendly help and advice at a number of places:

Childline

(A special helpline for children)

0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

National Youth Advocacy Service

(Information and advice)

0808 808 1001

help@nyas.net

www.nyas.net

Voice

(A number to call if you are unhappy with decisions that have been made about your care)

0808 800 5792

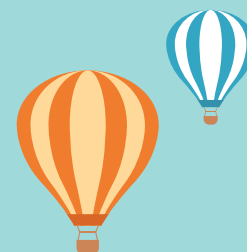
help@voiceyp.org

www.voiceyp.org



The most important things to remember if your parents are splitting up are that they still love you just as much as they always have, and you are not alone. There are always people willing to help. Use these email addresses and phone numbers on the opposite page, or talk to an adult that you know and trust.

You will be fine and you will be able to live a normal life with parents, family and friends that love you, just as you always have.



For parents:

T: 020 7887 2072 F: 020 8423 7383 www.goodwinsfamilylaw.co.uk

