

Coping with changes after your parents separate

It's normal for things to change after separation – and it's normal to find those changes hard.

You've probably had to deal with a lot of changes since your parents separated. Some changes are little and some are really big... and hard to get used to.

Maybe you've had to deal with some of these changes (maybe tick the relevant ones):

- ☐ Having 2 homes
- ☐ Moving to a new house
- ☐ Getting used to a bigger or smaller home
- ☐ Changing schools
- ☐ Not seeing one parent for a while
- ☐ Stopping a sport or after-school activity
- ☐ Living closer or further from friends
- ☐ Living closer or further from school
- ☐ Less time to do homework with changeovers
- ☐ Having to remember to take stuff between homes
- ☐ New family members (like a step-parent or step-brothers and sisters)
- ☐ Losing a bedroom you loved
- ☐ Not seeing extended family like grandparents or cousins
- ☐ Missing a pet.



It's ok to feel sad.

“We always had big family Christmases up at my Nan’s with my cousins and uncles and...just lots of people. Now, it’s just Mum and me and Santa Claus. He still knows where we live.”

CHRISTIAN, 6

If you're feeling sad about the changes that have happened after your parents separated, that's totally normal.

Sometimes it can help if you also think about the things you still have – the things that didn't change.

These might be:

- The sport or activities you did before
- Your friends
- Your school community
- Time with your grandparents and cousins.

It's ok to have mixed feelings, too.

It's normal to have a lot of feelings about the changes that come with separation. The good, bad and in-between.

Some changes might feel like a good thing – and you might feel a bit relieved.

Maybe your parents have stopped shouting at each other like they did when you lived together. Or one or both of them might seem a lot happier.

Those changes might feel good, but **some changes can feel sad.**

Maybe you're missing your 'old life', old school, or having both of your parents at home together.

While parents separating and having two homes can be really tough, some kids find **there are some perks along the way.** These might be:

- More one-on-one time with parents
- More pressies at Christmas and your birthday
- Less fighting between parents – they seem happier and calmer
- Other people have come into your life such as new siblings



What can I do if I feel upset about the changes?

Talking about your feelings helps. Find someone to talk to about it like a family friend, your parents, or a counsellor.

They might help you feel okay about what's happening – or even make some changes so you feel a bit better!

Activity time

What changed for you?

What do you like and dislike about your parents living separately? What changed for you?

Divide a piece of paper into 3 columns.

- On one side, list all the changes in your life you dislike.
- On the other side, list all of the changes in your life you like.
- For any you have mixed feelings about, you could put them in the middle.

You might like to use the lists above to get you started.

What I don't like	Mixed feelings	What I like



If you want to talk about what has happened in your family – or why your parents separated – it can be helpful to chat with a trusted adult, a school counsellor or even one of our Anchor counsellors. **Find people who listen.**

You can call this free kids helpline any time day or night:
Kids Helpline 24/7 1800 55 1800

