

Staying out of the fights

First, you should know: it's not your job to stop parents fighting.

“I’ve always talked to Mum and Dad about everything but just when I needed them most, they were the two people I couldn’t talk with.”

JULIA, 18

What is arguing?

Everyone disagrees sometimes. Arguing is when two people disagree but can't do it in a calm and respectful way.

This might include:

- Shouting or yelling
- Name calling
- Accusing each other of doing the wrong thing.

Many parents argue with each other before and after separation.

They might argue in person or over the phone.

It can be awful to see your parents arguing. Especially if they used to get along.

“When Mum and Dad have an argument about arrangements, Dad gets off the phone really angry and he stays angry for a while. He changes his mind about what we were planning to do, and we miss out. It’s not fair!

It makes the whole house unhappy and I feel sad and just want to go to my room. I wish they could just talk nicely to each other.”

IMOGEN, 9



Sometimes parents forget how upsetting it is when they fight.

“When my parents get into something that affects us kids, I just tell them, ‘This is your problem, not ours, so you should sort this stuff out on your own’. We don’t want to hear it anymore.”

JOSEPH, 17

What should I do if they’re arguing?

“My parents used to fight all the time. But then they realised it hurt my feelings and they decided to stop.”

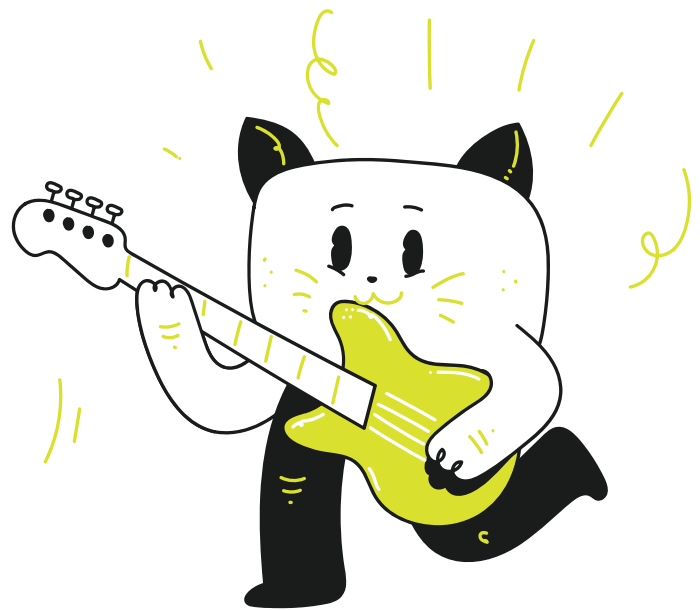
JESSIE, 8

If the arguing is affecting you, **it’s ok to tell your parents how it makes you feel.**

Wait until they have calmed down and then try saying something like:

“I feel worried and sad when you argue with each other. I love both of you and it really hurts me hearing you fight.”

Unfortunately, you can’t control if they fight. But you can go to another room and listen to music or do something that helps you feel good.



Can I stop them fighting?

“I couldn’t understand why my two best friends couldn’t find a solution. I felt like I had to try to get them to agree and it didn’t feel good.”

JESSIE, 8

Parents’ fighting can be unsafe and can make you feel scared, angry, frustrated or worried. It can be hard to know what to do. You might feel like it’s your job to make it stop.

But it is never a child or young person’s job to stop parents fighting.

What if I’m worried someone will get hurt?

If you’re worried that you, a sibling, or even your parents may get hurt, you can let a trusted adult know. This could be a neighbour, teacher, counsellor or another family member.

If someone is in danger, you can call the police on 000.

It is always okay for you to get help from other adults when you feel worried or scared.

If you want to talk about what has happened in your family – or if your parents are fighting – 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

