

Why do parents separate?

Spoiler: It's NEVER your fault.

Separation can feel very stressful – and confusing!

It can be hard to get used to all the changes that come. Some kids find that they **STILL** feel confused about their parents' separation – even years and years after it happened.

Below, we've responded to the most common questions – received from kids just like you. Including real experiences from other kids, and insights from counsellors.

Remember: **Your parents' separation was not your fault.**

1. What is separation?

Separation is when adults, who were a couple, decide they can't be together anymore. Then they live in separate places.

2. Why do adults separate?

Parents separate for many reasons. Some common reasons are:

- They stop loving each other
- They're fighting too much and can't be nice to each other anymore
- They decide it would be safer to live separately.

Mostly, adults separate because they are unhappy staying together. Sometimes they have too many adult problems that they can't solve.

"If doing this made them happy then that's positive and I think that's the most important one. If it's actually made them both happier then it's probably okay."

JUSTIN, 16



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3. Is it because of me?

Parents separate because of the relationship between them. It is NEVER a kid's fault.

“One time my parents fought about my birthday, so for a long time I thought that it was my fault that they separated, because it was my birthday, and if it wasn't my birthday then maybe they wouldn't have had a big fight. I spoke to my counsellor about, and she spoke to my parents, and then my parents told me that it wasn't my fault, and they said they were sorry about making me feel this way.”

11 YEAR OLD

Parents don't separate because of anything kids have done.

Even if they fight about stuff to do with you, it's still not your fault.

4. What is divorce?

Divorce is a legal thing that happens when two adults decide not to be married to each other anymore. Often adults separate first and then divorce a year or more later.

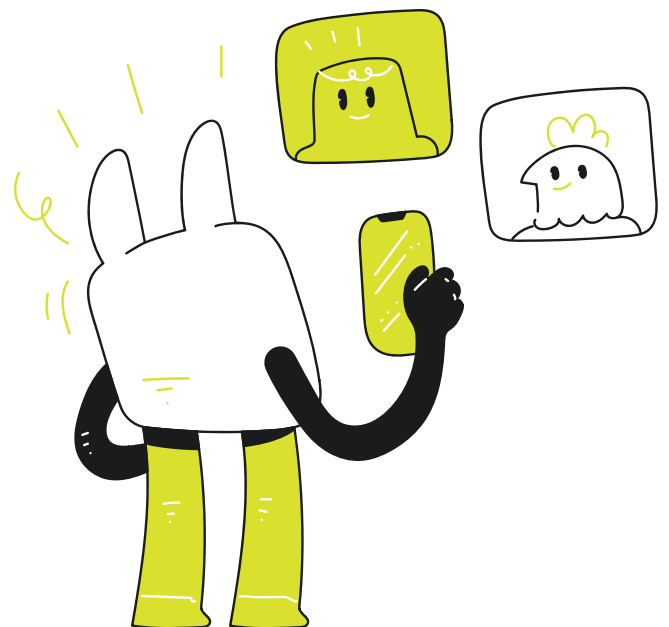
5. Are my parents telling the truth about the separation?

Your parents probably have different ideas about why they separated.

They might blame each other or tell you different versions of the story. Sometimes parents do this when they are feeling hurt or sad about the separation.

Parents will often disagree on why things have happened after a separation.

Kids don't need to decide who is telling the truth, that's not a kid's job.



6. Will my parents stop loving me like they did each other?

Adults' love for each other can change. But this is a very different type of love than the love between a parent and their kid.

Parents' love never goes away. **They will always love you.**

7. Does this mean I'll separate when I grow up?

"They were so good together. I think to myself, 'If they can't make it, who can?'"

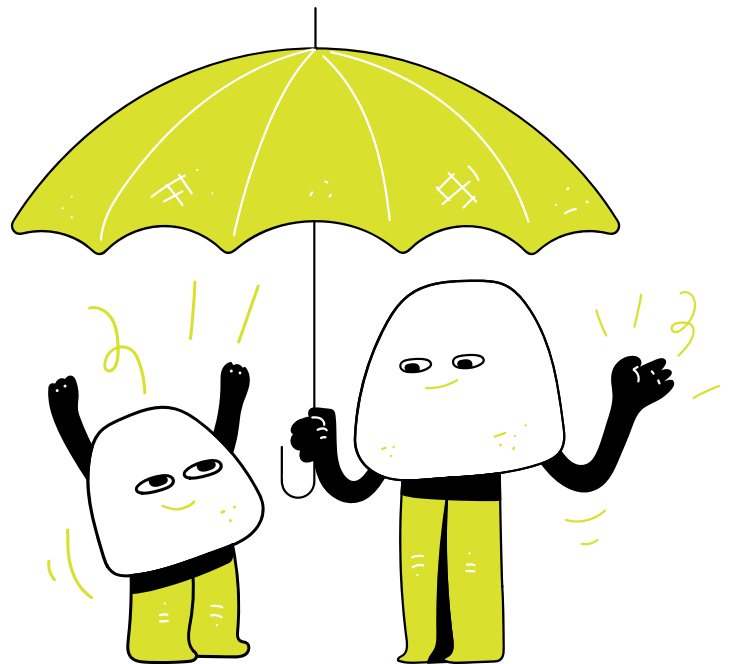
GEORGIA, 14

Even though your parents may be separated, lots of parents stay together very happily. When you are older, you can have a happy relationship too.

8. Will we be happy again?

Many kids tell us that even though separation is hard, they are much happier in the long run.

Without all the fighting, your parents will probably have more energy to focus on you when you're together.



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Here's what some of the kids we work with at The Anchor had to say about life after separation:

"I'm glad that mum and dad stopped fighting. Now, I get to spend more time with them both – and I can see they're much happier than before. The energy is just different."

ISABELLE, 15

"I'm ok with them living separately now because I get more presents on my birthday and on Christmas."

HARRISON, 9

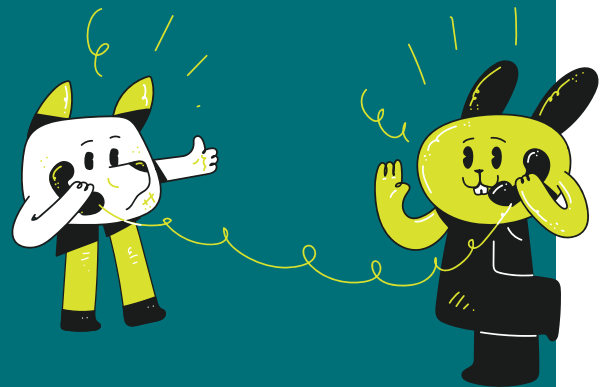
"It was tough at first, but we have all managed it okay, and we all feel better because the fighting has stopped"

12 YEAR OLD

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



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