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South West Herts Partnership Tips & Advice: Parental Separation

INTRODUCTION

Telling young children about parental separation is one of the hardest conversations a parent can have. Handling it in the right way can have a significant impact in how secure children feel afterwards. The key is to be honest, simple and reassuring.

TOP TIPS/TOOLS

- If possible **tell them together**—this shows them you are still working together as parents
- **Use simple, age appropriate language**—young children don't need details
- **Reassure** them—children need to know its not their fault
- **Explain** the things that will stay the same—e.g. their bedroom, school and seeing both parents
- **Give them simple, practical details** such as when they will see the parent moving out
- **Keep routines stable**—e.g. bedtimes, hobbies, school—this creates a sense of safety
- **Don't criticise the other parent**
- **Allow** them to ask questions and be honest if you don't know the answer

IMPORTANT FACTS

Things to consider:

- However your child reacts is normal—they may be very emotional or angry or they might not react at all
- Children may want to come back to the conversation—reassure them they can talk to you at any time

Key messages:

- We both love you and this is not your fault
- Its ok to feel _____ we are here to help you and you can ask us anything
- Families can live in 2 different homes but you still have parents who love you very much

SIGNPOSTING LINKS

Relate—www.relate.org.uk NSPCC— www.nspcc.org.uk Cafcass—www.cafcass.gov.uk

Relationship Support in Hertfordshire: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/childcare-and-advice-for-parents/parents-and-family-support/relationships/relationship-support-for-parents.aspx?searchInput=&page=1&resultsPerPage=10&view=card>



<https://www.southwesthertspartnership.org.uk/>



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