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*We want you to know...*

## Telling Your Children about a Separation or Divorce

One of the most painful moments during separation occurs when children are told their parents will no longer be together. Even when children are aware their parents have been struggling they are often shocked, angered and deeply, deeply sad. Your child may remember this conversation for many years; it's important to choose your words carefully. Since every family situation is different, this general information may not apply to everyone; we suggest you consult a child therapist or other expert if you need help deciding how to break the news.

- If at all possible, both parents should be present when the children are told
- Keep the message short and simple, even if the issues are complicated
- Emphasize that the family is changing, but both parents still love them and will continue to be their parents
- Tell the children it's okay to be sad or angry and that both parents will be there for them if they need to talk
- Refrain from providing the details of "why"
- Remember that children of different ages have different levels of understanding and different needs for assurance
- Be sure to end the conversation with a positive statement about the family and children
- After you have told the children, return to normal routines as quickly as you can
- The more you know about the impact of separation on children, the better equipped you'll be to help them through this difficult time