

## Parents Separation

A divorce happens after a husband and wife decide not to live together anymore and that they no longer want to be married to each other. They agree to sign legal papers that make them each single again and allow them to marry other people if they want to.

In general, mothers automatically have parental responsibility for their child from birth. Fathers usually have parental responsibility for the child if they were married to the child's mother and/or are listed on the child's birth certificate. If both partners have parental responsibility, then both are responsible for the child's wellbeing until he or she reaches adulthood at age 18.

It might sound simple, but it's not easy for a husband and wife to decide to end a marriage. Often they spend a long time trying to solve problems before deciding to divorce. But sometimes they just can't fix the problems and decide that a divorce is the best solution. Change is a natural part of life, but when it happens to your family, it is sometimes really hard to deal with.

Sometimes both parents want to divorce, and sometimes one wants to and the other one doesn't. Usually, both parents are disappointed that their marriage can't last, even if one wants a divorce — and to live apart — more than the other.

Sometimes it hurts a child's feelings when one parent wants to leave the house where they live. It is hard not to take it personally. It is important to remember that divorce happens between the husband and wife, and even though it affects the whole family, it doesn't mean that a parent who leaves the house doesn't care about the child.

A separation or divorce is a highly stressful and emotional experience for everyone involved, but children often feel that their whole world has turned upside down. At any age, it can be traumatic to witness the dissolution of your parents' marriage and the breakup of the family. Children may feel shocked, uncertain, or angry. Some may even feel guilty, blaming themselves for the problems at home. Divorce is never a seamless process and, inevitably, such a transitional time doesn't happen without some measure of grief and hardship.

Many children do not want their parents to divorce. Some kids have mixed feelings about it, especially if they know their parents weren't happy together. Some kids may even feel relieved when parents' divorce, especially if there's been a lot of fighting between parents during the marriage.

Adults have their own reasons for divorce. Whatever the reasons are, one thing is for sure: children do not cause divorce. Still, many kids believe they are the reason their mum and dad got divorced. They think that if only they had behaved better, gotten better grades, or helped more around the house, the divorce wouldn't have happened but this isn't true. Divorce is between mums and dads only!

Even if you once heard your parents argue about you, or your friend next door thinks his parents broke up because he got in trouble at school, these things don't cause a husband and wife to end their marriage. You might feel you're to blame for your parents' divorce, but you are not the cause, and the fact that your parents decide not to stay married is not your fault.

### Resources:

*Parental Separation – My Family's Changing leaflet*

Parents help guide

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/parenting-family/children-and-divorce.htm>

The psychological effects of divorce on children

<https://www.verywellfamily.com/psychological-effects-of-divorce-on-kids-4140170>