

# Supporting Children

## A Resource Pack for Primary Schools



# 01

## Five key principles for talking to pupils

**01.** Acknowledge the separation with the child and let them know you (or another named person) are there if they would like to chat about it.

**02.** Try hard not to get drawn into conversations with parents in front of the child – children take it all in.

**03.** Be aware of the pattern of arrangements for the child so that you can better understand any changes in the child's behaviour, mood, organisation at different times of the week.

**04.** The child may not have told their friends about the separation – ask about this and encourage them when appropriate to talk to their friends about it. Until then, don't mention it to their classmates.

**05.** Don't avoid conversations/answering questions about family differences, change, loss and separation – you are an important part of how that child will understand all of this – but be sensitive to their needs.

### Examples of Conversation Starters

“

Your mum/dad have told us that they are splitting up. It sounds like there's a lot of changes you're having to deal with. How are you feeling?”

“

If ever you want to talk about your parents separation just let me know. It can be quite tough for children and I'd like you to know we are here to help”

“

I've noticed you've not quite been yourself recently. What's been going on for you?”

# 02

## Useful resources

### PSHE Lessons Available

PSHE lesson plans about:

#### [Families \(KS1 & 2\)](#)

Support pupils to learn about different family structures and explore the positive features of family life as well as how to manage change and conflict within families when it arises.

#### [Loss and Change](#)

According to Grief UK, most children experience fifteen significant losses, on average, before they reach adulthood.

#### [Children's Experiences and Rights](#)

'Rosie's Story' sets out two lesson plans, based around a child called Rosie. The focus is to acknowledge children's experiences of family separation, and to help children understand their rights for information and consultation.

#### [Family Justice Young People's Board \(KS3\)](#)

Information from the Family Justice Youth Parliament Board (FJYB) on family courts for SHE.

### NACCC Lessons Plans

Further information about these lesson plans on the NACCC website: [Parental Separation on the National Curriculum](#)

#### [Dealing with Divorce Year 3 and 4](#)

Lesson guiding students through the possible causes of separation, how to respond to feeling responsible or caught in the middle, and how to view separation more positively. Discussion questions, a walk-through scenario, video learning, and group activities are used to explore these topics.

#### [Dealing with Divorce Year 5 and 6](#)

Lesson discusses why relationships (including marriages) might end in separation and how children can communicate how they feel and what they would like to happen. The lesson uses a range of activities including a role-play task, video learning, and a worksheet.

#### [What is Marriage?](#)

Lesson explores marriage and the law, including the different reasons people choose to marry, types of marriage, and the legal rights involved. It concludes with activities that test children's understanding of various marriage traditions and legal marriage types.

#### [What is Forced Marriage?](#)

Lesson explores what a 'Forced Marriage' involves and the possible consequences of forced marriages for both the parents and their children. Their knowledge is tested through a poster design exercise and PowerPoint presentation.

#### [Children's Rights in Divorce](#)

This lesson explores how children might feel during their parents' divorce, their rights in the situation, and where to find information about available support.

### Third-Party Resources

#### [My Parents are Divorcing](#)

A free interactive book from SeparateSpace for children to learn ways to understand and manage their emotions around separation.

[Split Survival Kit: 10 Steps for Coping with your Parents' Separation – Dr Angharad Rudkin & Ruth Fitzgerald](#): A book for 8-13 year olds giving evidence-based advice on coping with separation.

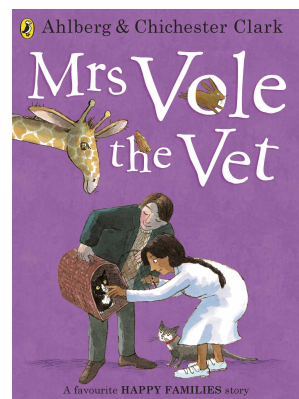
#### [Family Justice Young People's Board Top Tips](#)

CAFCASS' top tips for teachers supporting children and young people experiencing family law proceedings.

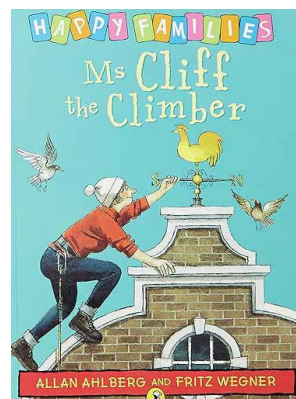


# Book recommendations

## For Under 7s



**Mrs Vole The Vet**  
– Allan Ahlberg & Chichester Clark: Mrs Vole is a lone parent who looks after her family and a busy vet's surgery. Her children think she needs a partner and begin looking for the ideal candidate.

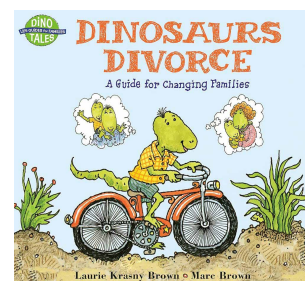
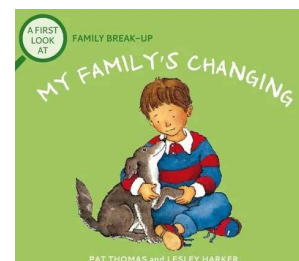


**Ms Cliff the Climber** – Allan Ahlberg & Fritz Wegner: Clara Cliff marries and has children, then divorces, remarries and has more children. The story follows the family adventures.

**Living with Mum and Living with Dad** – Melanie Walsh: A reassuring and simple story about separation for the very youngest children.



**My Family's Changing** – Pat Thomas & Lesley Harker: The issue of divorce is presented here in a simple, and straightforward way, supported by colourful illustrations.

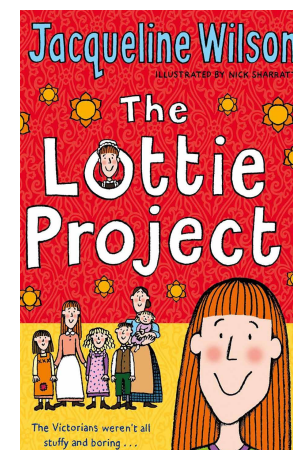


**Dinosaurs Divorce: A Guide for Changing Families** – Laurie Krasny Brown & Marc Brown: This book follows a dinosaur family going through a divorce, the upsetting feelings and changing homes-living with one parent, visiting the other and living with step parents, brothers and sisters.

## For 7-11s

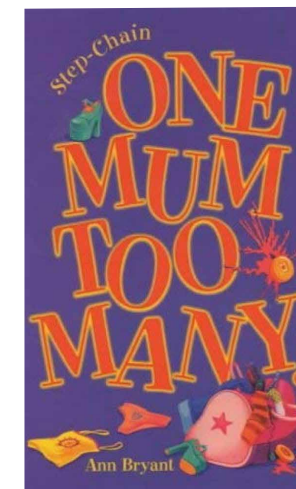


**Starring Sally J. Freedman as Herself** – Judy Blume: Sally's family move to Florida because of her brother's health but her father stays behind. Sally keeps her relationship with her father alive through letters and thoughts.



**The Lottie Project** – Jacqueline Wilson: At odds with her strict new teacher, and concerned that her unmarried mother is falling for the divorced father of the little boy she childminds, Charlie's life becomes increasingly stressful.

**One Mum Too Many** – Anne Bryant: STOLEN. She's taken my dad and wrecked our family. TENSION. To see Dad, we have to stay at her place with her "perfect" daughters. BETRAYED. I've already got a mum and anyway my parents are going to get back together, you'll see...



**I, Cosmo** – Carlie Sorosiak: Cosmo is a dog with a passion for dance. When his family no longer have enough love to stay together, can he save them? This charming story brings together the fun of canine freestyle dance and the heartbreak of divorce into a single, moving story about families.



## Information and Recommendations on Books for Primary School Children:

### Family Solutions™

[Reading list for children](#) aged from 2 up to 12+.

### Family Separation Hub

[Recommended books for children](#) List of 6 recommended books on separation and where to buy them online.

### BookTrust

Getting children reading

[Top tips for using books to talk to children about separation or divorce](#)

[Five fantastic books about separated families](#)

We Need to Talk About Divorce –  
[Kate Scharff & Annika Le Large](#)



THE PARENTS PROMISE