

Supporting Children

A Resource Pack for Secondary Schools



01

Five key principles for talking to pupils

01. Be aware of the young person's privacy – they may not have told their friends about the separation so be discreet.

02. Divorce can increase anxiety and depression in adolescence – keep an eye out for significant changes in mood and behaviour (this can include increased aggression and non-compliance).

03. Motivation for schoolwork and ability to concentrate can both be impacted by divorce – be aware of the family context and be curious about the links to this when chatting with the young person about late homework, disruption in class etc.

04. Regularly check in with the young person and signpost to other pastoral support if they consent.

05. Research shows just having one adult who is constant, consistent and compassionate can help a young person get through separation.

Examples of Conversation Starters

“

Your parents have been in touch to tell us about their separation. I know this can be a tough time for young people going through it. How have you been?”

“

If you would like to talk more about this just let me know. Sometimes it can take a while for things to sink in so it could be in a few days a few weeks or a few months – I'll be here.”

“

If there's anything I can do to help let me know”

02

Useful resources

PSHE Curriculum

At KS3 the lessons cover similarities and differences between types of families, and how and why family relationships might change over time. At KS4 the lessons focus on the legal rights, responsibilities and protections that different long-term commitments have. The lessons also explore the roles, responsibilities and challenges of parenting.

[‘Modern Families’ Relationships Education lesson pack KS4-5](#)

A free-to-access two-part lesson pack created by the University of Exeter and Resolution covering the common-law marriage myth.

[The Rights Idea KS3-4](#)

Lessons produced by the University of Exeter in collaboration with The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) and The National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC).

[Loss, Separation & Divorce Lesson Plan for Year 9](#)

[KS3 lesson plan on the family course created by the Family Justice Young People's Board](#)

[PSHE resources around change loss and grief](#)

Information Sheets For Teachers

[“Help Children Navigate their Parents’ Separation”](#)

How teachers can help children navigate parental separation from Restored Lives.

[Top tips for teachers supporting children and young people experiencing family law proceedings](#)
By CAFCASS and the Family Justice Young People's Board

Third-Party Resources

Restored Lives is a great organisation supporting children, adults and teachers around divorce and separation. They offer free six-part workshops for 12-17 and 18-30 year-olds.

It is a safe space where you'll meet other young people in similar situations. No judgement, just support and practical skills. Built on real-life experiences of young people and expertise from counsellors and specialists. It's not counselling but is an ideal complement to it.



[Restored Lives One Direction workshops](#)

SeparateSpace

[Free interactive booklet](#) for children to learn ways to understand and manage their emotions around separation.



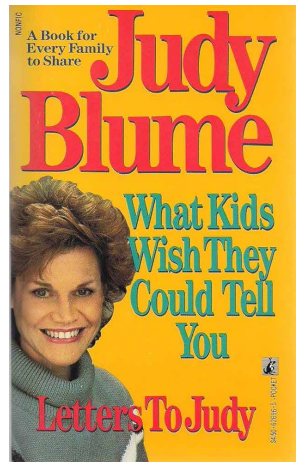
[Video resources from Amicable where grown up children reflect on their separation experiences](#)



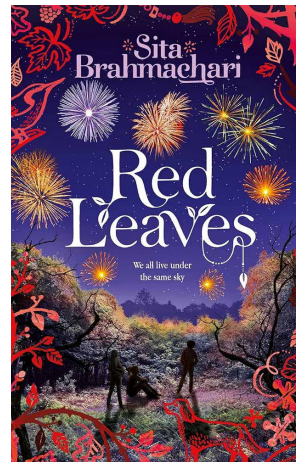
[SplitHappens](#) is a carefully-resourced chatbot for young people to use. It has been developed by Amicable in conjunction with two children's charities, Your Direction and Voices in the Middle.

Book recommendations

For 11+ years

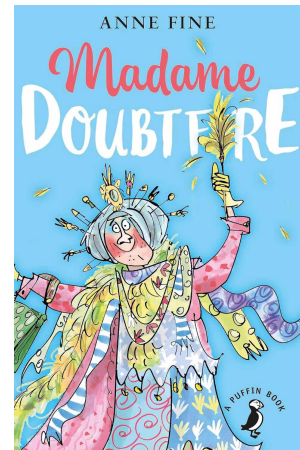


Letters to Judy, Judy Blume: A collection of letters written to Judy Blume from children about the problems they are facing including loneliness, death, drugs, relationships and depression. She responds with practical advice.

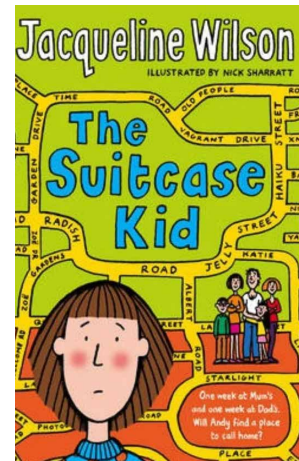


Red Leaves, Sita Brahmachari: Sita Brahmachari has created a beautiful tale of modern multicultural Britain. Her characters come from diverse backgrounds but are brought together by the common theme – they all feel they have been abandoned by someone they love.

Madame Doubtfire, Anne Fine: Christopher, Lydia and Natalie's parents are divorced. When their mother advertises for someone to care for the children, their father disguises himself as a woman and is successful in getting the job.



The Suitcase Kid, Jacqueline Wilson: The issue of divorce is presented here in a simple, and straightforward way, supported by colourful illustrations.

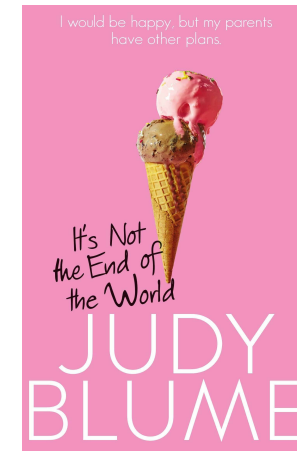


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Waterstones

[Waterstones' list of books about family break-up.](#)

 National Family Mediation

[National Family Mediation list of books about family change and separation.](#)



It's Not the End of the World – Judy Blume:

Karen's parents have always argued, and lately, they've been getting worse. But when her father announces that they're going to get divorced, it seems as if Karen's whole world will fall apart. Her brother, Jeff, blames their mum. Her kid sister, Amy, asks impossible questions and is scared that everyone she loves is going to leave. Karen just wants her parents to get back together. Gradually, she learns that this isn't going to happen – and realizes that divorce is not the end of the world.



Step by Wicked Step – Ann Fine:

Five pupils go off together on a school trip and discover they all have something in common- their parents are divorced. Each has a story to tell of their experiences. And how they have faced the strains of torn loyalty, had to accommodate new partners in their parents' lives and had to work out resolutions to parents' childish quarrels.



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



THE PARENTS PROMISE