

Parenting through separation

FACT SHEET 4

Working out the arrangements for your children

1. The law requires you, and everyone else involved, to put your children's needs first when you sort out the arrangements for them

- Plan separately for each child – take into account their age and personality, their changing needs and their special relationships.
- Avoid trying to “right the wrongs” in your relationship with your ex by insisting on what you want. Be honest about what you know is best for your children.

2. Your children need both of their parents - even if they aren't both perfect!

- Parent-child relationships are for life. It's only the adults' relationship that has ended.
- It may be difficult for your children to be happy later on and to develop a full sense of identity if they don't have a relationship with both of their parents.
- You are both still legal guardians, so your children need you to co-operate in making the big decisions for them until they are 18 years old.
- Your children need your family/whānau to support them in keeping up all their important relationships, including with your ex and their family/whānau.

3. Your children need as much stability and security as possible

- Keep things the same for your children as much as you can.
- You will help your children adjust if you delay introducing new partners and step-families as long as possible.



This handout was written by Julia Maskill and Dr Kerry Gould for the Ministry of Justice (2007) and provides additional information to that provided in the free 'Parenting Through Separation' programme delivered for the Ministry of Justice. For details of programmes in your area phone 0800 211 211. There is more information available for parents who have separated from www.justice.govt.nz/family