

CLIENT GUIDE 009

Parenting After Separation

A practical guide to supporting children, reducing conflict and building workable arrangements after separation

Separation changes family life, but children can continue to have secure and loving relationships. This guide offers practical, child-focused information for parents and carers in England and Wales.

1. Keep the focus on your child

Children generally benefit when the adults around them focus on their welfare, stability and emotional security. Try to separate adult disagreements from parenting decisions.

2. Talking to children about separation

Use age-appropriate language, reassure children that the separation is not their fault and avoid asking them to choose sides. Give them opportunities to ask questions and express feelings.

3. Building workable arrangements

Consider school, childcare, health needs, activities, travel, holidays and the child's relationship with each parent or carer. Arrangements should be realistic and capable of adapting as children grow.

4. Communicating with the other parent

Keep communication brief, respectful and focused on the child. Where direct conversation is difficult, consider an agreed written method of communication. Avoid using children to carry messages.

5. Parenting plans

A written parenting plan can record practical arrangements and reduce misunderstandings. It may cover living arrangements, time with each parent, school matters, healthcare, holidays, special occasions and how future changes will be discussed.

6. When arrangements are difficult

Mediation or another appropriate form of dispute resolution may help where it is safe and suitable. If agreement cannot be reached, or safeguarding concerns arise, legal advice or Family Court proceedings may need to be considered.

7. Domestic abuse and safeguarding

Safety takes priority. Cooperative parenting approaches may not be appropriate where there is domestic abuse, coercive control or a safeguarding risk. Seek specialist support and tailored legal advice where necessary.

8. Changes and new circumstances

New schools, house moves, work patterns, new partners and children's changing needs may require arrangements to be reviewed. Discuss proposed changes early where it is safe to do so.

9. Looking after yourself

Parenting through separation can be emotionally demanding. Support from trusted people, healthcare professionals or specialist organisations can help you remain focused on your child's needs.

10. How Kellsarr Family Practice can help

Within its professional scope, Kellsarr Family Practice can help you organise information, prepare a chronology or parenting proposals, understand procedural documents and signpost or refer you for regulated legal advice, mediation or representation where required.

Parenting-after-separation checklist

Consideration	Done	Notes
Child's weekly routine	☐	
School and childcare	☐	
Health and medication	☐	
Holidays and special occasions	☐	
Travel and handovers	☐	
Communication method	☐	
Emergency arrangements	☐	
Review date for the plan	☐	

Helpful principles

- Do not criticise the other parent in front of the child.
- Do not ask the child to act as messenger or investigator.
- Keep promises and be punctual for agreed arrangements.
- Share important child-related information appropriately.
- Listen to the child's views without placing responsibility for adult decisions on them.
- Review arrangements when the child's needs change.

Important disclaimer

This guide provides general information for families in England and Wales and is not legal advice. Every family is different. Where there are safeguarding concerns, domestic abuse, disputed legal rights or court proceedings, seek advice appropriate to your circumstances.