Support for Divorce and Separation

Guidance for Parents and Care Givers

Divorce and separation can be a tricky and emotional time for all involved, it may involve bad feelings between the parents and their families. Children can pick up on this, which may make them confused or unhappy – or even blame themselves for a break-up. Getting the right support for you and your children can help make this turbulent time smoother and easier to manage.

Suggestions to help when having conversations with your child/children about the divorce or separation -

·remind them that they're loved by both parents

·be honest when talking about it but keep in mind the child's age and understanding

·avoid blame and don't share any negative feelings the adults have about each other

·keep up routines such as going to school and specific meal times

·let them know they can talk about their feelings with you – explain that it's okay to be sad, confused or angry

·listen more than you speak – answering questions will help them to open up.

For advice on how to discuss more difficult topics The NSPCC has a very helpful guide found here - https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/talking-about-difficult-topics/

Here are some other helpful links -

https://fnf.org.uk/ - To champion the child's relationship with both parents during and after family separation

https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/ Provides support for single parents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland with has fact sheets on issues such as money, separation, housing and work.

https://www.relate.org.uk Provides family counselling and advice on understanding children's feelings and behaviours during separation.

https://www.familylives.org.uk/ Provide professional, non-judgmental advice to all family members to help achieve the best for everyone.

https://family-law-advice.org/ Gives advice to families in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and offers support with associated financial or child arrangement issues.

Guidance for Teachers

Schools play an important role in helping children make a positive adjustment to their parents' divorce. By working together, families and schools can build a stronger network of support that helps children through these challenging times.

Communication with parents/ caregivers – We must ensure that two-way communication is used. This means that parents keep teachers informed about important events in their child's home life, and teachers keep parents informed about their child's school activities.

If parents have recently experienced stressful life transitions, such as divorce or remarriage, their attention may be focused on the events in their lives. It may take extra initiative from the school to obtain information.

All families have their strengths and working together to ascertain where a particular family's strength lies can help them and the children build their new routines. E.g. Having multiple role models and a larger kin-network through extended/stepfamilies.

We can help children adapt to flexible living arrangements with different boundaries and expectations. By ensuring that they know they have a safe space with consistent routines within school.

We must be mindful that our attitudes are often shaped by our own experiences, professional and personal, in childhood and adulthood, and to recognise any bias we may have and ensure it does not interfere with the quality of care and support we offer the children and their families.

There are ways we can shape our classroom activities to support children with divorced parents into our teaching. Such as:

- ·Encourage understanding of different types of families
- ·Help children communicate about their family
- ·Increase self-esteem
- ·Help children appropriately express feelings
- ·Support positive parent-child relationships