

## How to tell the children

Children of all ages need to be told slowly and repeatedly what is happening. Telling the children about marriage breakdown will not be a one-off discussion.

They need to be told in ways that are appropriate to their age – in ways that they can understand.

- A very young child cannot take in much detail.
- Older children, between about six and eleven years old, need more detail and more practical explanations as to what is happening.
- Adolescent children will need the fullest explanation, so that they have an understanding of what is happening on an emotional level.
- If it is possible, and appropriate, tell the children what is going to happen together.

How you tell the children is almost as important as what you tell them.

If your child can see both parents breaking the news, and giving an agreed explanation, then it may be possible to avoid some of the anxieties. The explanation will not be undermined by the child's concerns about whether the other parent shares that view.