

☀ How Are Your Young School Age Children Doing? (6-8 years)

Things to Consider

Issues

- missing absent parent
- dreaming about parents getting back together
- feeling the need to take the “side” of one parent
- concern about parents’ well-being
- guilt that they are responsible for the separation

Changes to watch for

- sadness, grief, crying, sobbing, withdrawal
- fear of losing relationship with parent
- fear of losing order in their lives
- difficulties interacting with their peers
- anger and increased aggression
- difficulty playing and having fun
- difficulties with schoolwork or obvious change in school performance

Problem

No problem

How you can help

- assure them verbally (Mom and Dad will continue to take care of them)
- assure them they will continue to see both parents (if this is the case)
- don’t criticize the other parent to the child
- give child permission to love other parent
- don’t put the child “in the middle”

Children's Worst Fears

- I did something wrong and that is why Mom and Dad are separating; it's my fault.
- If Mom and Dad loved each other before and now they don't, they might stop loving me too.

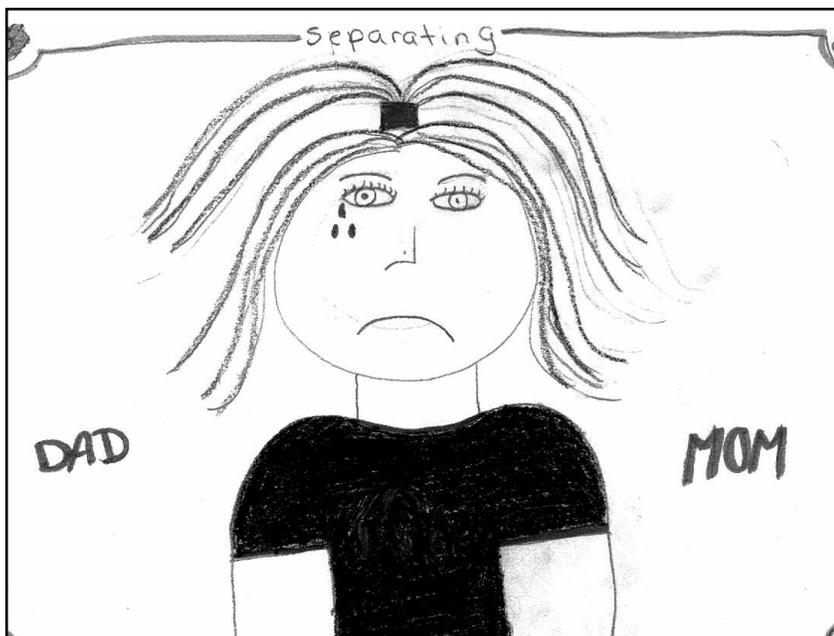
What Children Most Want to Know

- Mom and Dad will continue to love me.
- Mom and Dad will stop fighting.
- BOTH Mom and Dad will be here in my life.
- If I can't have that, at least one of my parents will be here in my life.

How Children Often Respond

In general:

- Children of all ages experience insecurity and anxiety when parents separate
- Pre-schoolers focus on security "who will take care of me"?
- Elementary school children show depression and/or anger.
- Junior high school students ask "why", "what is going on"?
- High school students question whether long-term commitment exists in relationships.



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