



Cafcass Family Forum top tips: for parents on the impact of parental separation and court proceedings on children.

The Family Forum is a group of parents, carers and extended family members who have had direct experience of private law or public law proceedings. Cafcass established this group in September 2021 to listen to adults with experience of proceedings and to use their feedback to improve its work. These Top Tips are based on the experiences of Family Forum members, who have devised them to help separating parents think about how they can minimise the damaging effects of separation and court proceedings on their child/ren.

- 1 Court proceedings should be the last resort. Court can be expensive and you may not get the desired outcome. Think of other ways to resolve the issues, such as mediation, before going to court.
- 2 Court proceedings can take a long time and the length in time can damage your child's emotional wellbeing and their relationship with both parents.
- 3 If your child is struggling emotionally, speak to professionals and seek support from their school or GP.
- 4 The court process is traumatic for everyone involved. Remember to take care of your own wellbeing during this process.
- 5 When the important adults have good communication with each other, the child can see that they have their best interests at heart.
- 6 Both parents love their child and want the best for them. Arguing and criticising each other in front of your child may make them think otherwise.
- 7 Avoid sharing your current difficulties on social media as your child may become aware, causing them upset and embarrassment.
- 8 Please encourage and support your child's relationship with all of their grandparents and other family members. They love your child too and want to maintain a relationship with them.

Please also see the [Family Justice Young People's Board Top Tips for parents who are separated](#), which were devised to help parents think about these matters from a child's perspective.