



A Message for Parents

A referral has been made for your child/children to have contact at a NACCC accredited contact centre. A contact centre is a safe, friendly, and neutral place where children of separated families can spend time with the non-resident parent and sometimes other family members. They are child-friendly environments that put the needs of the children first and the NACCC website will tell you more about the work of contact centres.

Most children and young people say that they still want to see both parents after the separation. Children who keep in contact with both parents after a divorce or separation can adapt better than those children who lose contact with the parent they do not live with. This does not mean that contact is safe for all children but in most cases, it will be, and the contact centre will help you to work this out. If you would like some help with this, a good place to start is the Parenting Plan, which includes links to other helping services.

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/grown-ups/parenting-plan.aspx>

At first it may seem impossible to put aside the strong feelings you might have about your ex-partner so you can both cooperate over your children. The important thing to remember is that you don't have to be friends; you just need to be able to develop a relationship so that you can sensibly discuss your children.

Your children will be shaped very much by how their parents behave towards them about the loss and how they behave towards each other. Important decisions such as where your child or children will live and how often they see each parent will of course affect them and so will the level of conflict between you and your ex-partner.

It is important that parent(s) take responsibility for preparing your children to engage in contact. We know that this will not be easy, but your child will feel much safer if you do this well. There is lots of information to help you with this on the NACCC Website - <https://naccc.org.uk/for-children/>

Children need...

- To be told what is happening and how their lives will change.
- To know that the breakup is not their fault.
- To know that it is OK to feel angry and sad.
- To know that it's fine to talk and ask questions.
- To be listened to
- To know that their parents understand how they feel and still love them.
- To feel good about loving both parents
- To know that it is all right to have different family rules in different houses.

Children do not need...

- To hear or see their parents complaining about or blaming each other.
- To hear adult information about the reasons for the separation or details about child support.
- To feel that they may be asked to choose one parent over the other.



- To pass messages from one parent to the other.
- To feel like an outsider in one parent's home.

Your local Contact Centre is accredited by NACCC (the National Association of Child Contact Centres) and all staff and volunteers are DBS (Police Record) checked and undergo vigorous training to create a safe and positive environment whilst they rebuild relationships with the parent they no longer live with.

Our website (for more info on child contact centres) www.naccc.org.uk