ALL CHILDREN NEED IS LOVE

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Each year in the UK it is estimated that up to 240,000 children experience their parents separating. That is about 20% more than in the early 1980's.

If you have recently separated from your partner you may be feeling angry, shocked or even depressed. It may be difficult for you to appreciate just how your child or children are feeling. They are probably suffering with a sense of bereavement. Children respond in different ways; They may pretend that nothing has happened, they may not discuss the matter with anyone outside of your home hoping that to avoid talking about the situation may mean that it is simply not happening. Many children think that they have caused the break up because they were naughty, very young children can become very angry as they don't have the words to express how they feel.

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILDREN?

In the first instance, despite the fact that you may be shell shocked, you should always try to view the situation through their eyes. You should avoid blaming your ex- partner in front of your children.

If you are able to, then explain the situation to your children together, before you actually separate. Explain that the break up is not their fault. You should always try to explain, if they are going to be able to see both parents, when and how this will happen.

If you are the parent who has decided to leave the family home then you should ensure that the needs of your children are uppermost in your mind. If you have started a new relationship then do not overlook the fact that your child is unlikely to share your enthusiasm for the new situation. Therefore think about planning ahead with your child (including your ex partner in the process) and stick to the plan. Children can be affected for life by a parent who repeatedly promises to visit and then doesn't turn up. This can feel like rejection all over again.

Children have a right to love and see both of their parents and other relatives. Can they still see their cousins, their grandparents, their aunts and uncles?

You should not treat your children as possessions. Consider Phil; his parents had agreed that they would each see him on a fifty fifty basis. The poor guy put up with this for years, all the way through his A levels and during his degree. This had a huge impact upon his social life. He often couldn't see his friends because his parents continued to enforce their own rights to see him. They were both inflexible. Therefore he missed out on parties, trips to other cities and he sometimes had to give up parts in drama performances to fit around his parents. Needless to say they were shocked when he had a breakdown in his twenties.

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At Emmersons Solicitors Family Law Department, we encourage couples to meet at our offices with both solicitors present. We can then help our clients to reach an early or even temporary agreement as to how often they will see their children. From experience I can tell you that the most common issues tend to revolve around the introduction of a new partner to a child, how often a child will stay overnight with each parent, travelling away with a parent for a holiday and CHRISTMAS.

Hopefully by the time you read this, you will have made arrangements to see your children at Christmas.

Sometimes it is not possible for a child to see both parents. There is nothing one parent can do legally to force the other parent to see their child or children. On the other hand, you have a duty to protect your children from violence, drug abuse or worse.

If you are being denied the chance to see your child or grandchild, or if you feel that you need to prevent contact between your child and their other parent then contact us at Emmersons Solicitors. We have helped thousands of people just like you. We pride ourselves on reaching a speedy resolution whilst avoiding, in most cases, the nessecity to attend court.

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