

## helping your children to cope

There are a number of ways that you can help your children feel more secure during family separation. These are some of the key things to think about:

### **Keep out of conflict**

The most upsetting thing for children is to witness conflict between their mum and dad. Find ways to protect your children from any conflict and deal with the things that are causing it.

### **Establish good routines**

Try not to change all of your child's familiar routines. Keeping your child at the same school and established visits to grandparents, for example, will help your child to feel secure.

### **Be consistent and reliable**

Do what you say you are going to do when you say you are going to do it and be in a fit state to do it well.

### **Accept your child has another parent**

Whatever you think about your child's other parent, your child just sees you as mum and dad. This means that you must:

- allow your child to talk about the other parent
- speak respectfully about them in your child's presence
- accept their role in your child's life
- ensure that you exchange important information about your child with them

### **Show them that you're OK**

Even when you are at your lowest point, do everything you can to stay strong and be there for your children. If you need to cry, do it after they have gone to bed. If you need to talk, find a friend or counsellor. If you are angry, find somewhere away from them to get it out. Your children look to you to make the world OK for them.