

Who are the programme leaders?

The leaders are all experienced in working with families. Some of them are independent professionals and others work for organisations. They have all been approved by, and work under a contract to, the Ministry of Justice.

How much time does the programme take?

The programme takes about four hours, usually over two sessions of about two hours.

When is the right time to go to the programme?

The earlier in your separation you can get to a programme, the better for you and your children. Remember, you can go to a programme even if you are just thinking of separating.

Even when people have been separated for some time, many still learn things that help make things better for their children.

How do I get to a programme?

The programme is run throughout the country, and in most areas there are programmes running each month.

All you need to do is ring up and book.

The programme and all the resources you take home are free.

Need more help?

To find programme providers in your area:

- visit justice.govt.nz/family-justice
- or call us on 0800 2 AGREE (0800 224 733).

You can also contact the family and social services directory on 0800 211 211.

Parenting Through Separation

A free information programme about children when you separate



New Zealand Government



MORE INFORMATION justice.govt.nz/family-justice
0800 2 AGREE (0800 224 733)
family@justice.govt.nz

MOJ0502AUG14

Parenting Through Separation

Sorting out your own parenting arrangements is usually better for you and your children. This is what most people do, and it can be quicker and less stressful for everyone than having to go to court.

If you are able to agree on care arrangements and you're both happy with what you have agreed, then you don't have to do anything else (unless you want the court to 'formalise' your agreement).

If you need help to reach agreement, new mediation services have been set up to help you.

The free Parenting Through Separation course may also help you manage your children's needs.

'Looking back, I wasn't making good decisions for my kids ... I needed some help.'

When you separate, your children should be the most important focus.

Parenting Through Separation is a free information programme to help you and your ex-partner focus on your kids and make good parenting decisions.

What happens at the programme?

You will be in a small group with up to 20 people, and a programme leader will manage the session. They're there to help you with useful information. It's not a support group or counselling session but does provide you with opportunities to ask questions and talk about parenting issues, if you wish.

What information is in the programme?

'The information was great – it helped me find the best possible answers for my kids.'

The programme has been written by professionals who specialise in helping families through separation.

People who have attended say the information and tips are very helpful. The content includes:

- how separation affects children
- what children need during separation
- talking with children during separation
- talking with ex-partners about arrangements for the children
- keeping children away from arguments.

As part of the programme, you'll also be given free material to take home that will help you and your children deal with the separation.



Who else will be at the programme?

Some people who attend the programme have just separated and others have been apart for longer. Some people who are thinking about separating attend as well.

For some who have attended, separation has been straightforward while for others, there's been a lot of arguments. Some people decide themselves to attend, or they may have been referred to the programme by professionals or by the Family Court. You usually have to do the programme before a parenting dispute can go to court.

The programme is for adults only, not children, but may include other family members, such as grandparents.

The programme leader makes sure the programme is welcoming and relaxed.

Will my ex-partner be there?

No. It is best for both parents to attend the programme but at different sessions. Let the programme provider know when you book in if you have a different family name from your ex-partner, so the provider can make sure you are not both at the same session.

The programme is designed to help you help your children deal with separation issues. It is not the place for sorting out other relationship disagreements.

Family Dispute Resolution can be organised if you and your ex-partner need help reaching agreement about how your children will be cared for. This may be free if you are eligible for government funding.