



Supporting Children after Separation Program

The Australian Government funds the Supporting Children after Separation Program to help children and young people who need support when their parents have separated.

What is the Supporting Children after Separation Program?

The Supporting Children after Separation Program provides support for children and young people of all ages who need some help coping with and understanding their parents' separation.

The Program helps children and young people deal with issues arising from the disruption of their parents' relationship and the situation in which they find themselves. It helps them to adjust to the changes that arise from separation and to express their feelings and thoughts about separation.

The Supporting Children after Separation Program offers opportunities for children and young people to participate in decisions that impact on them in relation to the separation of their parents. When children can talk about the issues affecting decisions about their lives, their ability to manage the stress of parental separation improves.

Children and young people can come to the Program at any time during or after the separation process.

How do I know if my child needs some help?

Sometimes it's hard to tell if your child needs help. If your child continues feeling distressed, angry or sad, you might like to find someone they can talk to. If your child's behaviour changes a lot during or after the separation process, they might need a bit of extra support to help them understand what is happening.

All children and young people need time to adjust to the new situation, but if you are worried that something is not quite right, you can ask for help.

What if I feel unsafe, or I think my child is unsafe?

If you are worried about your safety or the safety of your child, you should let staff know as soon as possible. The organisations running the Program have arrangements in place to keep clients and staff safe.

What will it cost?

You may be charged a fee for the Supporting Children after Separation Program. The fee will depend on your financial circumstances. You can tell staff if you are on a low income or experiencing money problems so they can make sure your child can use the Program.

What happens at the Supporting Children after Separation Program?

The Program can help children and young people in a number of ways, including provide support to understand what is happening to them and their family, during and after separation of their parents. This might include one-on-one counselling or group work with children of similar ages.

This type of peer support helps children and young people to understand the changes to their family arrangements and supports them through those changes. It also helps them understand that other children experience similar difficult situations and provides comfort for them in their situation. Peer support can provide helpful strategies for children and young people to manage the pain and stress that come with their parents separating.

Your child might also get some help to share their ideas and feelings with you or they might be given some useful information. The Supporting Children after Separation Program helps children and young people gain life and social skills that will help them with other challenges in their lives.

The Program is designed to support a variety of family situations. It is likely that no one program is the same for each child as children may need different support services that are available throughout the Program.

Who is the Supporting Children after Separation Program for?

Anyone under 18 can use this Program. Activities have been designed to suit different ages and stages from young children through to teenagers. Teenagers won't usually be doing the same things as young children, or working in groups with them, however brothers and sisters might go to some sessions together to share their feelings and ideas.

Separated parents should encourage children of all ages to use the Program to help them be heard during family separation.

What help is there for me and the rest of my family?

Other programs are available for adults. If you need some help for yourself, the staff at the Program can refer you to the right service. Other family members, like grandparents or carers, can also be referred to support services.

You can also visit Family Relationships Online at www.familyrelationships.gov.au to find out more.

Are the things my child says at the Supporting Children after Separation Program confidential?

Yes. Everything your child says at a counselling session is confidential.

If your child wishes to tell you anything they discuss during the Program, then a counsellor will help them to do so. The Family Law Act states that anything said in family counselling is confidential. You can talk about any issues of privacy or consent with the people who run the Program.

A counsellor might have to tell someone about what your child says if they believe there is a danger to someone's health or safety.

A counsellor must report any child abuse, or if there is any risk of abuse, to the authorities.

How do I contact the Supporting Children after Separation Program?

You can call the Family Relationship Advice Line on **1800 050 321** between **8am and 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 4pm Saturdays** (except for national public holidays). They can help you find the nearest Program to help your child. If there is no Supporting Children after Separation Program near you, then the Advice Line can tell you what other helpful services there may be nearby.

You can also visit Family Relationships Online at www.familyrelationships.gov.au to find out about other Family Relationship Services. This website has lots of helpful information about families and other issues.