

Single Parenting

Parenting in a single or sole parent household is different from parenting in a two parent household. Some people choose single parenting, others have it thrust upon them.

How is single parenting different?

- ◆ you may miss someone to share the workload and the feelings of parenting with
- ◆ single parents are more likely to involve their children in the day-to-day running of the family
- ◆ children from single parent households often have a lot of say in the way things are done at home. This can create difficulties at school when teachers don't give them the same level of responsibility
- ◆ parenting a baby alone can be very stressful. Babies need 24-hour care but parents need breaks and someone to talk to, who can provide help and support.

What parents need to think about:

- ◆ children need to be 'children'. Sharing the load shouldn't take over. They need time to do children's things
- ◆ children need to know that the parent is the grown-up and will look after them



Note: If your child takes days to settle after separation and this doesn't seem to improve over time, you may need to get professional help for your child.

- ◆ children need to know that parents need adult company too
- ◆ talk to family members and friends about what is worrying you rather than your children
- ◆ children are often torn between loving parents who live apart
- ◆ it is important to keep children out of issues between parents
- ◆ children are more likely to misbehave for the parent who has them most of the time, does most of the disciplining and routine day-to-day things.

Visiting the other parent:

- ◆ children want to be able to love each parent without feeling guilty. Let your child plan and enjoy time with the other parent if you can
- ◆ make changeovers as natural and friendly as possible
- ◆ allow time for your children to 'fit back into home' when they return. This can take minutes, hours or days

- ◆ don't use children to carry messages between parents, or to find out what your ex-partner is doing.

Growing up in a single parent household

Growing up in this type of home can be a very positive experience for children, who often have a close and special relationship with the parent.

After the loss of a parent and the family unit as they knew it, children need time to grieve.

Remember to take new relationships slowly and if you decide to have a partner, it could create problems for your children. Talk to them, listen to how they feel and let them know they are still just as important to you.