

# WE CAN'T AGREE ABOUT WHO OUR CHILD SHOULD LIVE WITH OR HOW THEY WE SHOULD SHARE THEIR TIME



**AGREEING PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN AFTER A SEPARATION CAN BE DIFFICULT; THINKING ABOUT THESE AGREEMENTS CAN OFTEN FEEL IMPOSSIBLE, ESPECIALLY WHEN THERE IS STILL A LOT OF CONFLICT BETWEEN PARENTS.**

If you and your ex-partner can't agree about the arrangements for your children after your separation try to think about:

## **YOUR CHILDREN**

- Having a positive and healthy relationship with both parents is important for children
- Seeing their parents solve problems together, treating each other with respect and working together is very good for children's wellbeing and development.
- Seeing and hearing parents argue can be upsetting for children. Avoid having arguments in front of children, it may be difficult but agree to talk about it later when children are not present.
- Feeling caught in the middle of arguments, or feeling pressured to take sides can also be very upsetting for children. Avoid asking them to make decisions about what they want – it is the job of parents to make the decisions.
- It is good for children to feel understood and listened to about what they think and feel about what happens after parents have separated. Try to find out how they feel about the situation rather than asking them to decide what they want.

## YOU AND YOUR EX-PARTNER

- Although it can sometimes feel impossible after a separation, working together with your ex about what is best for the children is much better than working against each other.
- You and your child's other parent know your children best, being able to reach agreement between you about separation is less stressful and costly and gives you more control than having a family court decide what should happen.
- Try not to assume you know what your ex-partner is thinking, and don't assume that they know what you are thinking. I can help if you both understand where the other person is coming from when arrangements are suggested.
- Making decisions about what happens with who they children see and when they see them after separation is a job for parents, not for children. Don't ask children to decide.
- Remember that you and your ex-partner will both want the best for their child even though you might not agree on how to achieve what is best.



## WHERE CAN YOU GO FOR SUPPORT?

- Organisations and programmes supporting families going through separation and divorce in Hartlepool include Changing Futures North East, Tees Valley Mediation, Parents as Partners and Relate. More information about these organisations including their contact details can be found on our website.