

## 0-3 years

This is an age where children are learning to trust and form attachments. Part of how they learn this is consistency. Changes to routine and environment will cause confusion and babies will feel unsettled. Your child's sleep pattern may change, they may cry more or cling to the available parent. You can help your baby by keeping routines as consistent as possible, lots of attention and quality time.

## 3-6 years

Children at this age begin to develop independent thought and form rigid 'black' and 'white' views. This can mean they feel responsibility for the separation. The changes can sometimes mean children revert back to younger behaviours like bed wetting. They will also ask lots of questions about why you have separated but will struggle to understand the explanation. Make it clear that the separation was a grown up decision and show them lots of love.



## Children's Reactions to Separation

## 6-12 years

Children will be able to understand most explanations parents provide about the separation. They will experience a mixture of feelings towards their parents from empathetic to angry. While they are working through these feelings school performance, interest in hobbies and energy may decline. It's important parents allow multiple opportunities for children to talk about their feelings.

## 12+ years

Teenagers and older children will shift between feeling 'independent' and feeling 'dependent' on parents. By this age young people will talk to their friends about how they are feeling and their worries, that's normal! Teens will feel a mixture of isolated, misunderstood, grief and anger. Parents need to be caring but provide firm boundaries when their child is feeling more 'independent'; of them. But also provide comfort and support when they shift back to feeling 'dependent' on Mum and Dad.