

How Are Your Pre-schoolers Doing? (3-5 years) **Things to Consider**

- Issues**
- fear of being abandoned/rejected
 - doubts he/she is loveable (did Mommy/Daddy leave because I'm not good enough?)
 - blame themselves for what happened (did I cause this because I was bad?)

Changes to watch for	Problem	No problem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • going back to younger sleeping/eating/talking behaviour (for example, wetting pants or thumb sucking) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clingy behaviour/difficulty with separation 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased anger/anxiety 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fewer emotions/withdrawal 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crying, whining and physical complaints (for example stomach ache) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- How you can help**
- give love and affection
 - assure them verbally (Mom and Dad both say "I love you")
 - maintain consistency of people and routines
 - reassure the child that he or she will be cared for
 - provide simple explanations of changes
 - allow the child to express feelings through words or play
 - avoid fighting or yelling in front of the child

Children's Worst Fears

- I did something wrong and that is why Mom and Dad are separating; it's my fault.
- If Mom and Dad loved each other before and now they don't, they might stop loving me too.

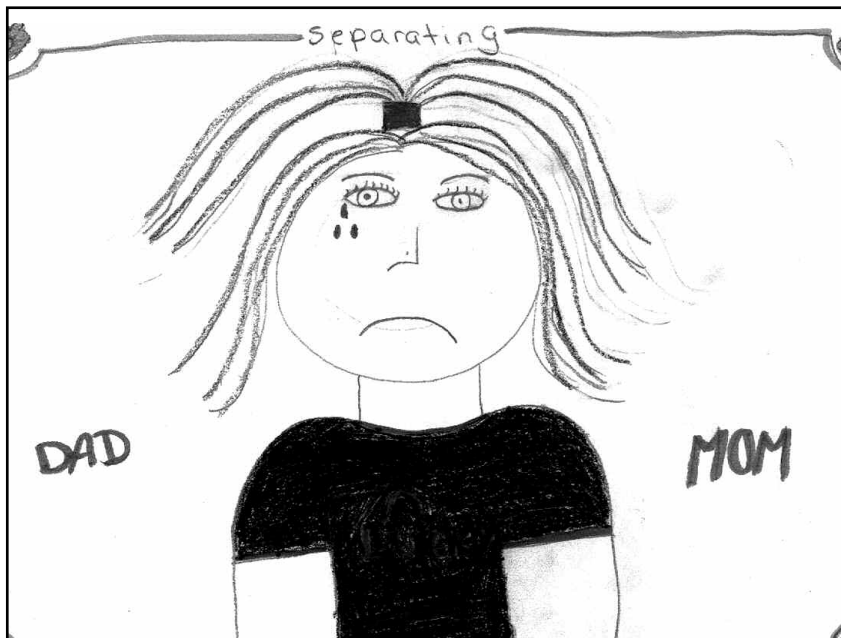
What Children Most Want to Know

- Mom and Dad will continue to love me.
- Mom and Dad will stop fighting.
- BOTH Mom and Dad will be here in my life.
- If I can't have that, at least one of my parents will be here in my life.

How Children Often Respond

In general:

- Children of all ages experience insecurity and anxiety when parents separate
- Pre-schoolers focus on security "who will take care of me"?
- Elementary school children show depression and/or anger.
- Junior high school students ask "why", "what is going on"?
- High school students question whether long-term commitment exists in relationships.



Jamie, Nipisikopahk Middle School