

☀ **How Are Your Teens Doing? (13-18 years)**

Things to Consider

Issues

- upset that parents may be unable to provide needed support and limits
- stormy relationship with parents may worsen
- very early independence
- more adult responsibilities at home pull them away from peers

Changes to watch for

Problem

No problem

- school problems; difficulty concentrating or fatigue
- acting out through sex, drugs or crime
- depression and anxiety over close/intimate relationships
- grief over loss of family and childhood
- becoming distant from family

How you can help

- provide opportunities for teens to share feelings, concerns or complaints
- discuss issues and situations honestly
- avoid relying on teens for emotional support
- don't pressure teens to choose sides
- say positive things about the other parent occasionally
- allow teens to have appropriate friendship and peer activities

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.

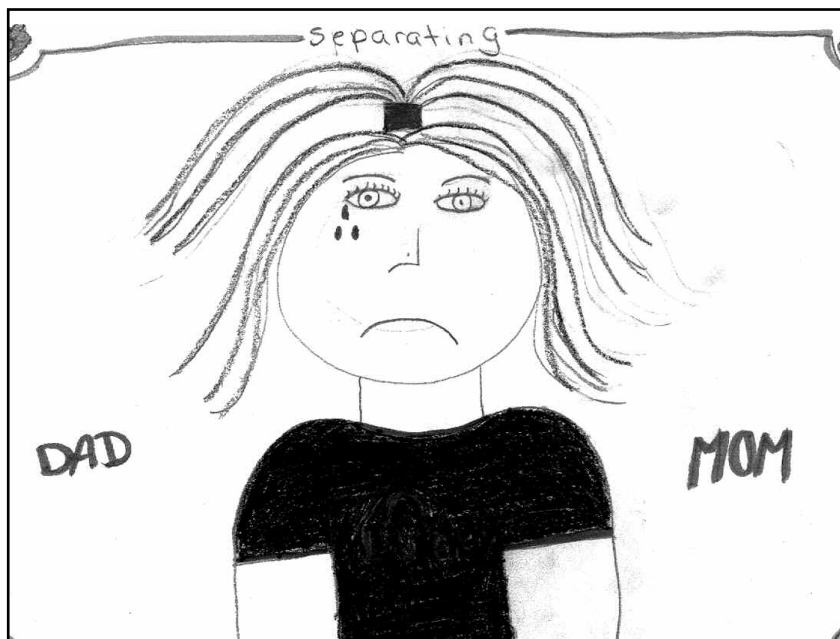
What Children Most Want to Know

- 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