

About the FRC

Family Relationships Centres (**FRC**) provide information and services for those experiencing **separation** / overcoming relationship and **parenting difficulties**.

The **FRC** focuses on **children's needs** and helps parents decide what to do after separation. **FRCs** provide joint sessions with parents or family members to reach agreement on parenting arrangements **outside the Court system**.

Our centres are staffed with experienced and qualified professionals who provide high quality, **impartial** and **confidential** services for those seeking support.



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Opening hours

Monday to Friday

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Visit:

www.catholiccarecq.com



Protecting your Kids from a High Conflict Break-up



An Australian Government Initiative

Separation can be a difficult time for everyone, especially children. Here are ten useful tips for protecting your children from conflict that can come with family separation, from renown Clinical Psychologist Dr Joan B. Kelly.

1. Talk to your children about your separation

Tell them in simple terms what it means to them and their lives. When children are unsure of what is happening they can feel anxious, upset and lonely, making the separation more difficult for them.

2. Be discreet

Recognise that your children love you both and reorganise things in a way that respects the child's relationship with each parent. Don't leave important information out for children to read, or talk negatively about the other parent with your children around. Children are ill-equipped to understand these matters and might overhear something you say.

3. Keep your conflict away from the kids

Create a protective barrier for children by saving arguments for a scheduled meeting or a mediator's office. When parents put children in the middle of their conflict as messengers or spies, they can become depressed or angry and may develop behavioural problems.

4. Keep both parents in the picture

The more involved both parents are after separation, the better the result for the child. Develop a child-focused parenting plan that allows a meaningful relationship with both parents. High levels of parent involvement are linked to better academic functioning in kids, as well as better adjustment overall.

5. Deal with anger appropriately

In their anger, parents may actively try to keep their ex-partner out of the child's life - even when they are good parents. You may feel like you never want to see your ex-partner again and believe that this is also best for the kids, but children's needs during separation are very different from their parents.

6. Be a good parent

You can be forgiven for momentarily losing control in anger or grief, but not for long. Going through a separation is not a vacation from parenting.

Provide appropriate discipline, monitor your children, maintain expectations about school and be emotionally available. Competent parenting is an important protective factor for a child's adjustment to separation.

7. Manage your own mental health

If feelings of depression, anxiety or anger continue to overwhelm you, seek help. A few sessions of counselling can make a difference.

Remember, your own mental health has an impact on your children.

8. Keep the people your children care about in their lives

Encourage your children to stay connected to your ex-partner's family and important friends. If possible, use the same babysitters or childcare. A stable network helps to build the child's support system, which is an important factor in becoming a psychologically healthy adult.

9. Be thoughtful about your future love life

Ask yourself if your children should meet everyone you date. Take time before you remarry or cohabit again. Young children form attachments to your potential life partners and if the relationship ends, the loss may emotionally affect your child.

Don't expect older children to immediately take to your new relationship, as it will take time to earn their respect and affection.

10. Pay your child support

Even if you are angry or access to your children is withheld, pay child support regularly. Children of separated parents face more economic instability than those whose parents are together, even when child support is paid. Let your message be that of caring, they will appreciate it as they get older.

"Top ten ways to protect your kids from the fallout of a high conflict break-up" – Dr. Joan B Kelly 2008

