

Answer Back: Children's views on family breakdown

When parents split up it can cause children enormous distress and confusion. But some young people admit it would be even worse if rowing parents stayed together for their sake.

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Ella Parry-Davies, 11, London

Divorce or separation is a terrible thing for a child to go through, but long-term insecurity in the home can be just as bad. I don't think parents should argue in front of their kids because it makes the child feel that there is no love or security in their home. If parents feel the atmosphere is so bad in their home that they would prefer to separate, they should consult the child.

Cheryl Paxton, 10, Newcastle upon Tyne

I've had to see my parents argue and I'm glad my Dad doesn't live with me any more.

I've had to see my parents argue and I'm glad my Dad doesn't live with me any more. It used to upset my Mum, and that upset me. When they do meet they still argue. I don't like it and neither does my 16-year-old brother, who has to stop them.

Carly Storey, 11, Newcastle upon Tyne

Kids should have their say about whether they want their parents to split up or not. They might want to live with their Mum and Dad like a normal child and not have to see their father just on the weekend. It takes up all your spare time having to go and see another parent over the weekend.

Christopher Singleton, 13, Birmingham

Parents who don't know whether it is best to split up should just ask the child what they want. If the child wants the parents to split up, they could organise a system. One week the child could stay with one parent, the next week the other parent.

Dell Hicks-Wilson, 15, London

Staying together for the kids is probably the worst reaction for a couple to stay together. Children should be in a happy environment, where their parents discuss problems rather than argue about them. This may lead to the child thinking this is the way a relationship/marriage should function.

Xochitl Rodrigues, 13, London

Children will not benefit from watching their parents arguing the whole time. If the parents are rowing children may think it is because of them.

Colin Moore, 18, Belfast

Children up to the age of four will adapt quite easily to their parents splitting up because they will not have built up solid memories. The effect of parents splitting up would be shattering for children between five and 13, as they will have developed a very strong bond with the parent. I believe the situation is different for those over 13 who are mature enough to deal with it even though they will be very very upset.

Sonia McAthey, 13, Newcastle upon Tyne

If parents are arguing and fighting I think they should split up. The kids should choose which parent they want to live with. I still think children should have the right to see both parents, though.

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