

# HOW DO WE TELL THE KIDS?

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***A parent's guide to  
successfully navigating the  
first 8 weeks of separation***

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I'm Dr. Christy Kane, founder of Dr. Christy Kane LLC, where we're dedicated to helping families navigate the complexities of separation with care and compassion. With years of experience supporting parents through separation and divorce, I understand how challenging it can be to create a peaceful, cooperative co-parenting relationship, especially when children are involved.

I've seen firsthand how difficult and draining legal systems can be for families, emotionally and financially.

That's why my team and I are committed to providing practical tools and empathetic support to help you reduce conflict, build stability, and ensure your children's well-being throughout this transition.

# WELCOME

# CONTENTS

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## THE FIRST 8 WEEKS

- 1 Getting Started
- 2 How to Prepare
- 3 When and Where
- 4 Talking to Your Kids
- 5 Managing Emotional Responses
- 6 Planning for the Future
- 7 Long-term Planning
- 8 After All is Said and Done



01

PART ONE

**Getting Started**

01



# YOU'VE GOT THIS

Breaking the news of your separation to your children can feel overwhelming, and it's normal to worry about how it will affect them emotionally. You might fear saying the wrong thing or causing them pain.

As a parent, **you're likely doing your best** to shield them during this challenging time.

**Take a moment to breathe deeply and relax.** With the right approach, everything will be okay.

Ending a relationship that no longer serves both of you is a courageous decision. It can lead to a healthier two-home family where everyone, including your children, can thrive.

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## IN THIS GUIDE

- **Step-by-step guidance** on how to talk to your children about separation with confidence and compassion.
- **Practical tips** to minimize emotional impact and create a positive transition for your family.
- **Support** in building a healthy two-home family dynamic that fosters stability for your children.

# GLOSSARY

In this guide, you may encounter some terms that are new to you.

Don't worry – we've included a handy glossary at the end to make everything clear. Feel free to refer to it whenever needed.

We hope this guide provides support and clear actionable steps to help you create a peaceful two-home family moving forward.

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## **Remember, you don't have to navigate this alone.**

We offer personalized support to help you through every stage of your co-parenting journey. We have over 12 therapists ready to assist you.

If you ever need extra guidance, our services are here to help you every step of the way.

## 3 WAYS TO SCHEDULE

We offer 3 convenient ways to book your session

**Text.** Send a message 385-223-0777 and we'll respond promptly during business hours.

**Call.** We are able to assist you during business hours 385-223-0777

**Book Online.** Visit our [client portal](#) to book anytime!

02

P A R T T W O

**How to Prepare**

03

# PREPARING TO TALK

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## YOU AND YOUR CO-PARENT SHARE A GOAL: A LOVING, SUPPORTIVE FUTURE FOR YOUR CHILDREN

At the point of separation, most parents genuinely want what's best for their children—even if you don't yet agree on what that looks like. This time can feel overwhelming, but small, manageable steps can help you prepare for the conversation you never wanted to have.

Your children will look to you for reassurance that, **while life is changing, their world isn't falling apart.** You are their anchor through this process. On the other side of the uncertainty and grief lies an opportunity to create a secure two-home family where your children feel safe, loved, and supported.

### STEPS TO PREPARE

#### **Focus on temporary plans**

- You don't need to have everything figured out yet. Just focus on the next eight weeks.

#### **Provide stability**

- Let your children know what will stay the same and what might temporarily change.

#### **Reassure them**

- Highlight that although things are different, both parents are committed to their well-being and love them deeply.





# MAKING PLANS

| KEY QUESTION                          | WHAT TO PLAN?                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Where will everyone live?</b>      | Decide temporary living arrangements for the next eight weeks.                        |
| <b>What will routines look like?</b>  | Prepare a basic plan for school, activities, and daily schedules.                     |
| <b>What questions might they ask?</b> | Anticipate their concerns (e.g., “Will we still see both parents?”) and plan answers. |
| <b>How will we handle emotions?</b>   | Be ready to validate their feelings and provide comforting reassurance.               |

## PRO TIP:

If you don't have every detail worked out yet, that's okay. What matters most is providing your children with a sense of stability and love while showing them you're here to guide them through this change.

**Remember, your bravery and commitment to their well-being will set the tone for this transition.**

## GET PROFESSIONAL HELP

If this process ever feels overwhelming, don't forget we are here to help! We can also connect you with trusted legal, financial, and collaborative professionals to support your transition.

05

PART THREE  
**When and Where**

02

# WHEN, WHERE, & HOW

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## PREPARING FOR THE CONVERSATION

Talking to your children about separation is never easy, but with preparation, you can help them process the news and reassure them that life will move forward. It's important to give them space to absorb the information, followed by reassurance that their routines and relationships will remain steady.

### TIPS FOR WHEN AND WHERE:

- Choose a quiet weekend without major interruptions. Weekends help give kids time to process the information without the pressure of attending school the next day.
- Aim for a time a few weeks after the start of school or before any big holidays.
- Be flexible. Adjust schedules like sports or extracurriculars if needed.
- Have the talk at least an hour after a meal and well before the next one, so kids aren't hungry or tired.
- Plan for both parents to stay together until Monday morning, giving children time to process, ask questions, and see parental unity.

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Feeling unsure of the when, where, and how? Our **“How to Tell the Kids”** session can help. During this session, we'll:

- Develop a calm and reassuring script tailored to your family.
- Prepare you for your children's questions and emotions.
- Plan co-parenting steps that prioritize their stability and well-being.

Book your session and take the first step toward creating a secure and peaceful two-home family.

04

P A R T F O U R

**Talking to  
Your Kids**

04

# 3 PART CONVERSATION

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## PREPARE TOGETHER FOR THE CONVERSATION

Both parents should work together to prepare for this important conversation. While every child and parenting dynamic is unique, all discussions about the separation should include these three essential elements to provide clarity, reassurance, and stability.

### A. BE BRIEF AND CLEAR

**It's okay if the conversation only takes 5 minutes.**

- Keep your explanation straight-forward and age appropriate.

*Example: "We want to share some news. Our romantic relationship is ending, but we still care about each other as friends. We love you. This change will help us be even better parents to you."*

### B. REASSURE WITH LOVE AND STABILITY

**Show unity. Both parents should be present for the conversation.**

- Use a script. Having notes can help you stay calm and concise.
- Answer what they ask. Follow their lead, but keep responses short. Answer only what they ask.

**Emphasize your love for them and your shared commitment to their well-being.**

*Example: "We love you so much, and that will never change. We are still a family, and we will always be here for you, no matter what."*

## C. GENTLY INTRODUCE NEXT STEPS

### **Focus on stability. Don't overwhelm them with details.**

- ✓ Let kids know how their routines and your love will stay consistent.

*Example: "We'll be transitioning to living in two homes. We're working together to make this as smooth as possible for you. Do you have any questions right now?"*

- ✓ Show patience and empathy as your children process the change.

- ✓ **Give them space to process.** Some children may need time to think before asking questions or expressing emotions.

## **DON'T OVERSHARE. HAVE BOUNDARIES IN PLACE.**

Some details of your separation are private and not meant for your children. If they ask why it's happening or whose fault it is, gently remind them:

- *"That's private between us. What matters most is that we both love you and will always take care of you."*

Relationships end for many reasons, often with complex factors. These private details don't need to be shared with your children or anyone outside the two of you.

### **Focus on providing them with love and reassurance, not explanations.**



03

PART FIVE

**Managing  
Emotional  
Responses**

05

# BIG EMOTIONS

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## **BIG EMOTIONS ARE NORMAL AND OKAY! FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN**

Transitions, like family changes or big life shifts, can be hard for kids. It's completely normal for them to feel sad, angry, confused, or frustrated.

But how can you help them navigate these emotions in a healthy way?

### **1. Acknowledge and Validate Their Feelings**

Let your child know it's okay to feel sad, mad, or confused. You might say, "I understand this is hard, and it's okay to feel upset about it."

### **2. Encourage Open Communication**

Create a safe space for your child to express their emotions. Encourage them to share what they're feeling without fear of judgment, which helps them feel understood and secure.

### **3. Use Tools Like a Feelings Wheel**

Help your child label their emotions with a simple tool like a feelings wheel, so they can point to what they're feeling and express it more easily.

If your kids see you becoming emotional, this is quite okay. Just let them know that they don't have to do anything to make you feel better. You're an adult and you will take care of your own feelings.

### ***Need more support?***

***Our [8 Weeks to Better Co-Parenting](#) program provides strategies to help both you, your co-parent, and your kids navigate emotional transitions.***





P A R T   S I X

**Planning for  
the Future**

# IMMEDIATE STEPS

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## SUPPORTING YOUR KIDS FOR THE NEXT 8 WEEKS

Remember, we are planning for the next 8 weeks—that's two months—not the whole next year. We're focusing on the immediate future and stability for your children.

1

### MAINTAIN FAMILIAR ROUTINES

As much as possible, try to keep things familiar for your children—like sticking to school schedules and extracurricular activities. Routines can help them feel stable and secure during a time of change. Don't stress if not everything stays the same—what matters most is providing **safety and consistency**.

2

### BE HONEST BUT DON'T OVERWHELM

If you're feeling uncertain about the future, it's okay not to have all the answers. When your children are ready, gently share what you do know: where they'll be living, what their routines will look like, and how school will fit in. Keep them informed as things become clearer—**honesty helps reduce anxiety and builds trust**.

3

### COMMUNICATE WITH TRUSTED ADULTS

Let key people in your child's life know what's happening—like teachers, family, and close friends. **Encourage your children to talk to these trusted adults about their feelings**. Remind everyone that no one needs to “pick a side” and that **it's important not to speak negatively about your co-parent in front of the kids**.

This helps create a supportive, neutral environment for your children to feel safe.



P A R T   S E V E N

**Long-term  
Planning**

# LOOKING FORWARD

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## HAVING THAT TOUGH CONVERSATION IS A BIG MILESTONE!

You will begin to feel a sense of relief. Now, let's set the stage for what's next.

It's normal to feel uncertain or overwhelmed about creating long-term care plans and sorting out finances. But the good news is, you don't have to do it alone. With a cooperative approach, **these steps can feel manageable.**

You've already made it this far—take it one step at a time, and remember, support is available when you need it.



## NEXT STEP—THE PARENTING PLAN

After the initial conversation, it's time to set the stage for a successful co-parenting partnership. At this point in the co-parenting journey, many couples choose to be working with a mental health professional. Not sure if you want to bring in a professional or not? Try our FREE 15 minute consultation.

# PARENTING PLAN

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## WHAT IS A PARENTING PLAN AND WHY DO I NEED ONE?

A Parenting Plan outlines how both parents will share the responsibility of caring for their children. While this plan is especially helpful during more challenging times, it can also offer flexibility in moments of harmony.

### WHY A CO-PARENTING PLAN IS CRUCIAL:

- **Clarity and Consistency:** A Parenting Plan helps reduce stress and confusion by setting clear expectations for both parents and children. It includes arrangements for day-to-day care, school schedules, holidays, and special events like birthdays and Christmas.
- **Flexibility When Needed:** While the plan offers structure, it also provides room for adjustments if needed. Having an agreement ensures that when challenges arise, you both have something to rely on for guidance and stability.
- **Comprehensive Coverage:** A good Parenting Plan can cover everything from visitation arrangements and school decisions to handling holidays, gifts, and extended family interactions. Knowing what's agreed upon in advance helps prevent last-minute stress and disagreements.

## Need Help Creating Your Parenting Plan?

If you're unsure about creating a Parenting Plan that works for both parents and prioritizes your children's needs, we're here to help. Our therapists are available, and [our blog](#) offers resources on topics like:

- Creating a Parenting Plan
- Visitation Arrangements
- Managing New Partners and Children
- And More!

# FINANCES

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Navigating financial decisions during separation can feel overwhelming, but you don't have to figure it out alone. Whether it's dealing with superannuation (retirement savings), child support, mortgage payments, or asset division, trusted professionals are here to help guide you through the process, making it simpler and less stressful.

## **1. Get Professional Guidance**

You're not expected to be a financial expert. A Financial Advisor or Accountant trained in collaborative law can help both parents make informed decisions about your financial separation. Their expertise will allow you to focus on what matters most—caring for yourself and your children.

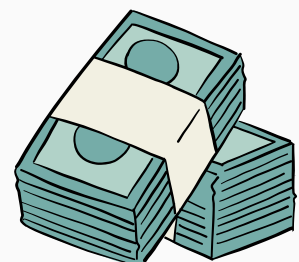
## **2. Submit Your Agreement to the Family Court**

Once you've agreed on your financial separation, you'll need to submit it to the Family Court. This step helps ensure you access available tax benefits, such as tax concessions on asset transfers. While this might sound complicated, your Financial Advisor and Lawyer will walk you through it to make sure everything is in order.

## **3. Collaborate with Lawyers for a Fair Outcome**

One lawyer cannot represent both parents during this process, but collaboratively trained lawyers can help keep things quick, simple, and cost-effective. They'll ensure the agreement is fair for both parties and supports the long-term well-being of your family.

**Remember, professional support is key in making the financial aspects of separation manageable. With the right guidance, you can confidently take steps toward securing your family's financial future.**



# IT TAKES A VILLAGE

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## BUILDING YOUR COLLABORATIVE TEAM

Navigating separation is complex, but you don't have to do it alone. Building a strong support team can help ease the process for both you and your children.

Here's a brief overview of key people to consider:



### **Family Therapist**

Can help manage emotions and facilitate healthy communication, ensuring the focus remains on your children's well-being.



### **Family**

Will provide emotional support and help bridge the gap in difficult conversations while offering a sense of stability for your children.



### **Individual Therapist**

Provides a safe space for you to process emotions, challenges, and stress.



### **Lawyer**

Ensures that the separation is legally sound and fair for both parents, focusing on collaboration instead of conflict.



### **Doctor**

To address any health concerns for your children and ensure their physical and mental health needs are taken into consideration during the separation.



### **Financial Neutral**

Can help divide assets and debts fairly, providing insight into your financial situation and ensuring long-term stability.

***Need more support?***

***Our 8 Weeks to Better Co-Parenting program provides strategies to help both you, your co-parent, and your kids navigate emotional transitions.***

## WHY WE RECOMMEND A COLLABORATIVE TEAM

- **Complex Financial Situations:** A collaborative team can ensure a fair division of assets and minimize tax implications when significant assets are involved.
- **High-Conflict Relationships:** A Collaborative Team can manage conflicts and focus on the children's best interests when communication is strained.
- **Concerns About Child Welfare:** Lawyers and therapists can help move matters forward when a child has mental health or developmental challenges.
- **Imbalances in Power or Knowledge:** Collaborative Lawyers ensure both parents fully understand the implications of their decisions, balancing negotiations.
- **Significant Concerns About Shared Care Arrangements:** Lawyers can help create a Parenting Plan prioritizing children's safety and well-being when one parent has concerns about the other's ability to care for them.
- **Child Disability:** A Collaborative Team ensures specialized care for children with disabilities or complex medical needs across both homes.
- **One Parent Lives Abroad or Relocation Plans:** A Collaborative Team can create workable solutions for long-distance co-parenting and visitation schedules when one parent plans to relocate.
- **Blended Families and Step-Parents:** Collaborative Coaches can manage family dynamics and ensure the needs of all involved are considered in the Parenting Plan.
- **Special Circumstances like Family Violence or Addiction:** A Collaborative Team can provide a structured process to manage co-parenting and financial arrangements in cases of family violence or addiction.
- **Disagreements About Schools or Religious Upbringing:** A Collaborative Team can help co-parents find middle ground on major decisions like schooling or religious upbringing to prioritize children's best interests

***With the right team in place, the process of separation can be more manageable, with decisions made in the best interests of your children and your future.***





P A R T E I G H T

**After All is  
Said and Done**

# BUILDING RESILIENT KIDS

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Separation and transitioning to a two-home family is a major life change, but with the right mindset and support, it doesn't have to be overwhelming.

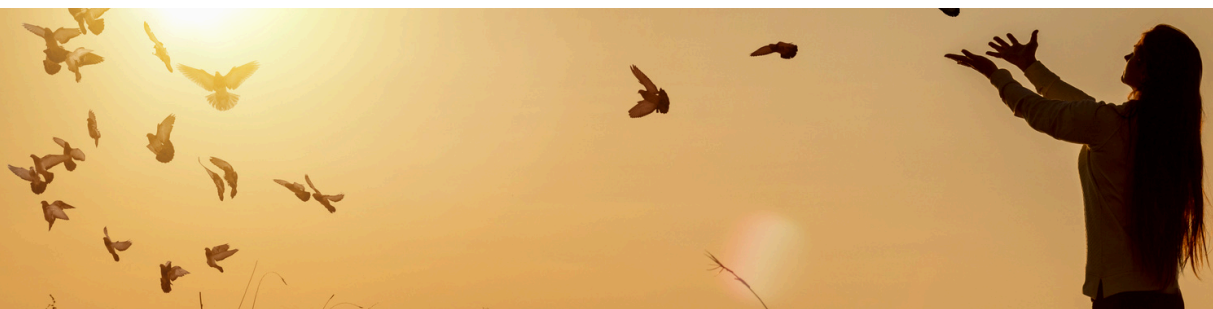
This chapter can be a positive one for you and your children, as you work together as co-parents to raise resilient, well-adjusted kids. By developing new communication skills, setting healthy boundaries, and focusing on what truly matters—**your children's well-being**—you can build a strong foundation for the future.

Your co-parenting journey doesn't have to be done alone. Even if one parent isn't ready to participate, there are plenty of benefits to moving forward with the right tools. You both have the ability to create a peaceful and cooperative relationship that helps your children thrive in both homes.

**Remember, this is not just the end of one chapter; it's the start of a new one—a chapter where, together, you build a future that works for everyone involved.**

We're here to support you every step of the way, offering therapy and resources to help you create the resilient, positive family environment you want for your children.

You've found your village, and as long as you need it, we're here to walk beside you. **Let's build a future full of hope, healing, and happiness.**





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# LET'S BEGIN!



Co-parenting is a journey of growth and teamwork—one step at a time, you are building a brighter, more secure future for your child and yourselves.

**You've got this!**

*Thank you!*



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# GLOSSARY

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- **Child Support:** Regular payments made by one parent to the other to help cover the costs of raising their children, ensuring both homes meet the child's needs.
- **Co-Parenting:** The process of raising children together as a team, despite no longer being in a romantic relationship. The focus is on the children's well-being and stability.
- **Collaborative Therapist:** A professional trained to help parents communicate effectively and work through the emotional and logistical challenges of separation in a cooperative way. The therapist ensures discussions are productive and focused on the children's needs.
- **Collaborative Law:** A legal approach where both parents and their professionals work together to reach agreements without going to court. The goal is to reduce conflict and prioritize the family's best interests.
- **Family Court:** A legal court that deals with family matters, including divorce, child custody, and financial settlements. In a collaborative separation, parents aim to avoid court by agreeing on decisions together.
- **Financial Neutral:** A collaboratively trained accountant or financial advisor who helps both parents navigate the financial aspects of separation in a fair, balanced way, ensuring the decisions benefit the whole family.
- **Parenting Plan:** A written agreement that both parents create to outline how they will share the care and responsibility of their children after separation. It typically includes details on living arrangements, holidays, and significant family events.
- **Participation Agreement:** A contract signed by both parents and their collaborative professionals, agreeing not to take the matter to court and committing to resolve issues through cooperative means.
- **Superannuation:** A retirement savings account, often one of the largest assets to divide during separation. It's crucial to determine how this will be split to ensure both parents' financial stability.
- **Tax Concessions:** Tax benefits or reductions provided by the government. These can help save money on things like property or superannuation transfers during separation.
- **Two-Home Family:** A family dynamic where children live between two homes, with both parents working together to raise them, even after separation.