



# Separated Parents Information Programme



The Separated Parents Information Programme (SPIP) is a course designed to help parents become clear about what their children need most from them and learn the fundamental principles of how to manage conflict and difficulties between separated parents – including how to put this into practice.

The Programme encourages parents to take steps for themselves; this may include developing agreements that do not need court intervention. The Programme will give you ideas and signpost ways in which you can get help outside court, and you are expected to make use of these where possible. If this leads to agreed arrangements that are safe and beneficial for children, the court will help with this process. The majority of parents that go on the course find it very helpful.

## The Separated Parents Information Programme (SPIP)

- \* It is usually delivered to mixed groups of parents in one four-hour session or sometimes in two, two-hour sessions. You must be there for the whole programme.
- \* Separated couples do not go on the same course, but it is important that both parents go on a programme.

## A SPIP might be appropriate for parents (or other parties) when:

- \* you have difficulty focussing on your children's needs due to ongoing conflict
- \* you find that your feelings and reactions to the separation are affecting your ability to communicate about your children
- \* you would like communication to improve, perhaps you are thinking about mediation
- \* there are no safeguarding concerns about children or parents.

## Two things that can really help you:

- \* Parenting Plan - to help you plan a structure for the children [www.cafcass.gov.uk/parentingplan](http://www.cafcass.gov.uk/parentingplan)
- \* Getting it Right for Children - to help with the skills you need to parent after separation [www.theparentconnection.org.uk](http://www.theparentconnection.org.uk)

## The course

- \* Looks at working as separated parents in the best interests of your children.
- \* What children need: you will watch a powerful video which demonstrates the impact of communication between parents on the children.
- \* Parent communication – you will be asked to think about prepared scenarios from other viewpoints. You will also see and try out some methods that can help both parents react better to stress in practical ways.
- \* Emotions – you will look at the emotional effect of separation or being separated parents and the options for moving forward.

## Feedback

The provider only reports back to Cafcass about attendance and does not assess your responses to the various parts of the programme. Some providers also seek feedback through an evaluation form.

## To take part in a course:

Courts have the power, by making a court order, to 'direct' parents to attend a programme aimed at promoting safe contact with children.

You can be ordered to go to a Separated Parents Information Programme and/or to a Mediation Information Meeting. Cafcass is usually asked to advise the court if it is suitable for you. You can choose a SPIP provider convenient to you.

There is no charge to Cafcass service users for the SPIP.

# Notes



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