

References & Resources

- [1] [DWP Reducing Parental Conflict: the impact on children 2021](#)
- [2] [Adverse Childhood Experiences and Attachment](#)
- [3] [EIF Commissioner guide: Reducing parental conflict](#)
- [4] [CAFCASS Separated Parents Information Programme](#)
- [5] [Practice Resolution Protocol](#)
- [6] [Anna Freud: Conflict & Separation](#)
- [7] [BASW: Social Pedagogy = real Social Work](#)

Managing Parental Conflict

Keep the child in mind, and work to reduce the impact of conflict on them [6]

Look after yourself, avoid getting caught up in conflict, or reflecting it in your professional relationships

Work with and alongside families [7]

- [DWP Training & Tools for Practitioners](#)

How this was Raised

The RSCP Practice Standards Group monitors practice standards across the Safeguarding Partnership and considers the ways in which Partner Agencies work together to safeguard children.

We considered the case of a four-year-old child whose parents were in dispute over residence and contact, and there was an imminent risk of conflict at the end of the school day. Children's Social Care intervened and prevented an escalation of the incident but this should not have been necessary, and placed a burden on Social Care services.

Home school agreements set out the conduct expected of parents and carers in this context.

The Impact of Parental Conflict

'Frequent, intense, and poorly resolved conflict between parents can place children at risk of mental health issues, and behavioural, social, and academic problems. It can also have a significant effect on a child's long-term outcomes.' [1]

Consider Adverse Childhood Experiences [2]

What we Learned

When professionals can't agree about how best to work together to safeguard individual children, follow the Practice Resolution Protocol [5]

Parents should be encouraged to seek mediation and legal advice to resolve disagreements about contact and care arrangements.

Professionals should be aware of any arrangements ordered by the Family Court and reinforce parents' responsibilities to comply.

What Children Say

I just wish mum and dad would stop yelling at each other. I've tried to tell them, but they don't listen to me. They didn't used to shout so much.

Try not to argue in front of us

I don't like it when my mum keeps asking about my dad's new girlfriend

My mum and dad are always arguing. When I try and talk to them about the trouble I'm getting into they don't even listen. At least when I go out with my mates drinking, I can have a laugh and forget about things [4]

The Nature of Parental Conflict

It is not unusual for parents to be in conflict, particularly during and after a separation. Most adults take care to avoid adverse impacts on children, but some might put their own interests first, or lose sight of children in the heat of the moment. Conflict can range from mild to destructive, to domestic violence. Mild conflict can be constructive in helping children learn how to deal with it, but repeated and severe incidents of conflict, as well as accumulations of issues can multiply the negative impact on the child. [3]