

# Sharing my Parents



Investigating the experiences of young people  
from different parenting backgrounds.

November 2021

## Abstract

This research aimed to gather the experiences of young people who have lived through parental separation and discover if common issues emerged that they thought their parents should have dealt with differently.

An online survey was created and circulated around undergraduate students of the University of Glasgow which included separate questions for those with and without separated parents in order to discover if there were contrasting opinions of certain issues between the different groups.

Participants were asked if they would like to speak about their experiences further in a short interview. In both the interviews and the questionnaire participants highlighted a lack of available support for them as children of

separated parents. Those who reached out to get support had a negative experience.

Almost all participants stated that they would have liked to have seen their other parent more (the 'contact' parent) but did not for various reasons, including that they felt it would upset their mother. They felt pressure to put their parent's feelings above their own.

Recent research evidence on the benefits of shared parenting is considered and it is concluded that there is a need for support to help parents co-operate after separation to ensure that they act in the best interests of the child and also to help children and young people with issues relating to the separation of their parents.



Stock images in this report do not show actual interviewees

## INTRODUCTION

This project obtained the views of young people in Scotland about the involvement of their parents while they were growing up, with particular reference to experiences of young people whose parents separated at some point during their childhood.



The research was carried out by Jamie Wark while he was working on placement as a paid student intern with Shared Parenting Scotland during Summer 2021. His internship was supported by the Robertson Trust as part of his role as a Robertson Scholar. The Robertson Trust's Scholarship Scheme gives financial support and promotes career development amongst Scottish undergraduates.

The aim of this research project was to gather evidence from young people about their experience of parenting after separation and, rooted in their personal experience, their views on the advantages and disadvantages of shared parenting. Shared Parenting refers

to both parents having a relatively equal involvement in the upbringing of their children. Involvement includes sharing key decisions on education, health, religion etc as well as personal contact.

This piece of research is modest in scale but is intended to open up an area of policy discussion that has hitherto been absent. It gives young people who were most affected a chance to reflect on their own experience while growing up and offer their contribution to 'the voice of the child'.

**Ian Maxwell**  
Shared Parenting Scotland  
November 2021

## STUDY 1 - QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

### PARTICIPANTS

An online survey "Experiences of Parenting" was created and published on 25 May 2021 using the SurveyMonkey platform. This survey was circulated around the Glasgow University Psychology department as well as amongst Robertson Trust scholars. 53 responses were collected with some participants opting to leave further comments about some of the questions. Of these 53 participants, 11 were male and 41 were female. 35 of our participants were undergraduate students at the time of survey completion.

### DATA COLLECTION

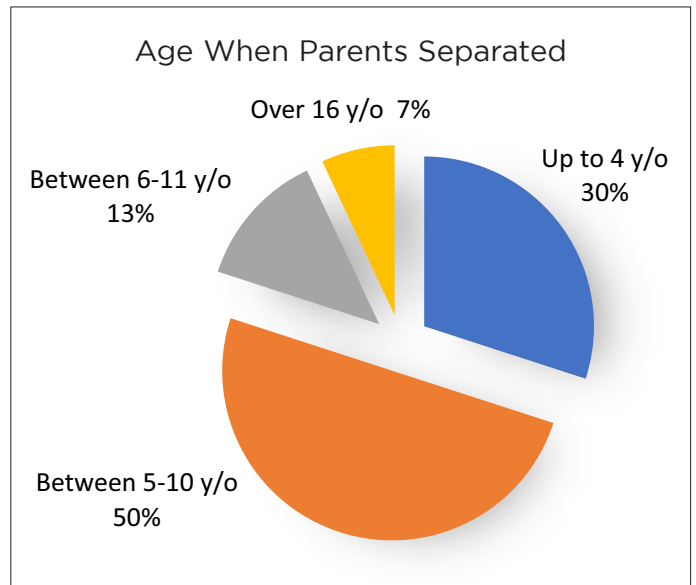
Of this study population, 32 had separated parents and 21 did not. There was a different set of questions for those with or without separated parents. Functions of the SurveyMonkey website were used to allow those from each group to skip all questions that were not directed at them.

There were 10 questions for each group, with the survey taking around two minutes to complete. These questions were presented in a structured order that was determined by the researcher prior to the publishing of the survey. They were presented with answers from "bad to good", in order to account for social desirability bias, in which participants will present themselves in a more favourable way and lean towards agreeable ends of the survey scales. This was also to account for primacy bias, in which participants will anchor their thinking on the first response option that they see, laying out the scales from negative to positive will counteract these biases and gather more valid results.



## SURVEY ANALYSIS

### Separated Parent Group



20 of the 30 responses received to the question "What best describes your living pattern since your parents separated?" stated that they lived mainly with one parent but had very limited contact with the other, by seeing the other very rarely/occasionally. Only 3 participants lived with both parents after the separation, with the remaining 7 stating that they see both parents regularly.

We asked participants what proportion of time they spent with their mother/father after the separation. A large majority of time was spent with the mother as the average response to "what proportion of time have you spent with your mother?" was 83%. Whereas the average response to this question for spending time with their father was only 18%.

This question was followed up by asking participants if the time split has been the same since the separation with 59% responding "yes" and 41% responding with "no". Some comments were left in response to this question, with one participant stating that *"Used to be often then as I got older, I saw my dad less. However, I always consistently stayed with my mum."*

A large majority of these participants (70%) indicated that they would have liked to have spent more time with one of their parents after the separation, with one participant leaving a comment: *"Would have liked it to*

*be split equal with both my mum and dad."* There was a mixed response to this question, as another participant commented: *"I wouldn't have liked to see my father more in hindsight, but at the time I did."*

A recurring theme was participants were worried about hurting their mother by attempting to contact their father: *"I would have liked to have visited my dad more but I was often a bit worried that it would upset my mum as my dad left my mum for someone else."* This was developed by another participant who stated: *"I don't see my dad due to domestic abuse against my mother. Although I recognise the hurt he caused, I would like to get in contact now I'm over 18, however I don't want to hurt my mother."*

Finally, one participant responded by saying *"The court wouldn't accept that my mother was causing me real emotional harm, so refused to change custody arrangements until I was old enough to be listened to."*

### **Unseparated Parent Group**

12 of the 18 responses to the question "How would you describe the relationship between your parents?" were either "good" or "very good" with one participant commenting; *"We can talk about anything and they support me in my decisions"*. The remaining 6 reported "very bad", "bad", or "okay". One participant commented: *"They have many difficulties but have been through marriage counselling and they do their best to work through it. They actually separated for a few years when I was about 8 before getting back together"*.

When asked *"How do you perceive the importance of a healthy relationship with both parents?"*. 44% responded with "very important", and 44% responded with "necessary". All the remaining responses were "somewhat important".

Three comments were left in response to this question:

*"I would like to clarify that healthy doesn't mean loving, I truly believe that an individual's parents can be separated but provided they are civil to each other and the child is aware they respect each other, I feel the negative consequences will be minimal."*

*"If parents are together I believe a child would be affected if both parents have a bad relationship such as physical abuse, arguing, emotional abuse etc."*

*"It is important to have good relationships with the people around you and parents are a natural fit for this however if this cannot be achieved I believe you can build these types of relationships with other adult or mentor type figures in life be it other relatives or people you interact with"*.

These participants displayed critical thinking in their response to this question, and highlighted reasons as to why parents might separate, whilst still maintaining a loving relationship with the child. They show that it is important to have that "mentor-type figure" and this meaningful relationship can be achieved through parental co-operation and acting in a way which is best for the child.

Most of the participants in this group had a good or better relationship with their mother, with 12 people responding "very good", 5 people responding "good" and one person responding "okay". When asked about their relationship with their father 8 people responded "very good" and 6 people "good". However, 2 people said they had a "very bad" relationship with their father, 1 responded "bad" and 1 responded "okay". One comment was left to this question: *"Dad can be okay at times but most of the time we don't see eye to eye"*.

In the next question, participants were asked how comfortable they would be talking to their parents about problems they are facing. 7 participants said that they were happy to speak to both parents, and 6 said yes but they only felt comfortable talking to their mother. 5 participants said they would not feel comfortable talking to their parents about issues that are concerning them, and no participants were willing to speak to only their father. One participant left a comment saying: *"Depends what the problem is though. Would go to a different one for different things and wouldn't go to either for other things"*.

## STUDY 2 - QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

### PARTICIPANTS

Six undergraduate students were enlisted from the online survey. These participants indicated in the survey that they would be willing to talk more about their experiences in a focus group setting. Demographic information is reported in Table 1.

**Table 1**

#### De-individualised Demographic Information

Gender	Age	Nationality
Female	20-29	English
Female	20-29	English
Female	20-29	Scottish
Female	20-29	Scottish
Female	20-29	Scottish
Male	20-29	Scottish

### DATA COLLECTION

One focus group and two individual interviews took place between 12/07/2021 - 22/07/2021. These were conducted and audio-visually recorded on Zoom. While virtual focus groups are associated with difficult rapport building (Abrams & Gaiser, 2017), an in-person setting was not possible given geographical locations of participants as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. To account for environmental distractions, participants were asked to turn off notifications on their devices and be in a quiet environment.

Before the data collection, all participants were briefed on the aims of the study and signed consent forms, they then physically indicated that they were willing to continue with the interview. Participants were given warnings before the focus group and told they could leave at any point as the discussion was centred around a sensitive topic, and contact details to Shared Parenting Scotland were shared if they felt they needed support. The focus group followed a semi-structured schedule developed by the researcher.

The recordings were transcribed automatically using Microsoft Word online, and then manually edited to ensure accuracy and to anonymise the data with pseudonyms.

The recording and transcript were stored on a secure Shared Parenting Scotland database in compliance with GDPR.

### ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW RESULTS

A common issue that was raised throughout both the focus groups and one-to-one interviews was how the separation of parents can have a direct impact on an individual's perception of relationships in their own life

*"When you're looking at relationships yourself, it also can make it harder. Like how does this work? Is this like? Does this work forever? I think for me that's kind of like changed as I've grown up and got older."*

When this participant gets into new relationships she questions if it will in fact "work forever", it is clear that they would not want their child to go through a situation similar to their own. They are made to question themselves as a result of their experiences, which can make it more difficult to get into new relationships as the fear of separation is heightened due to experiences with their parents. Another participant in a separate interview also thought about the future and how their experiences have made them realise how important it is to have both parents involved in a child's life.

*"If I was to have kids one day and we were to separate I think it's vital, just for like you developing as a person, to have like a dad and a mum figure in your life."*

The use of "developing" is important as it shows that this participant believes that both parents should have an active part in a child's life in order to maintain an adequate and healthy development.

Previous research has shown that children who have a healthy relationship with their mother and father will have a better socio-emotional wellbeing than those who are frequently witnessing conflict and have resultingly poorer relationships with their parents. Flouri & Buchanan (2002) found that significant father involvement before the age of seven was associated with good parent-child relationships in adolescence, satisfactory partnerships in later life, less likely to be in trouble as children are more likely to have high educational attainment.

However, some participants believed that the issue lies not with having *both* parents involved, but the quality of the relationships:

*"One great parent can do the work emotionally of two."*

*"I think that if the relationship is good and if you have one strong good relationship with a parent and there is a level of love then I think that is all that's really important."*

These extracts suggest that these participants believe it is better for a child to have a really strong relationship with one parent than having two distant relationships. Another participant also highlights how it can be an issue if separated parents fail to communicate a reasonable plan for equal time with the child.

*"It can be so disruptive just moving-moving all the time... my brother failed all of his A-Levels because it was so disruptive".*

This highlights the need for co-operation, even if the relationship between parents is falling apart, it is important to put that conflict aside in order to provide what is best for the child. This observation is backed up by another participant who states: *"Feeling isolated and completely alone in childhood is when that creates a problem."*

This isolation can happen when parents are arguing frequently and the child is witnessing a lot of conflict; *"I think as a younger child you definitely don't know where to look [for support]"*. This creates a strong feeling of being "isolated" as it is likely that the only support networks a young child could have would be their parents.

This could create further issues if the parent uses this time to complain about the other parent or try to justify their own position to the child when in reality it is emotional support the child needs as watching your parents' breakup can be a horrifying experience which can only be made worse if there is no support being given to the child.

*"I went to a school counsellor, and I hated it and never went back, um, and then I just kind of talked to my mum"*

This participant actively looked for emotional support during their parents' breakup. This suggests that there was trauma they had to speak about but felt as though they could not to their parents because of their involvement in the situation.

One participant highlights this well as he stated that *"the child seems to always end up in the middle."* This participant did not like the experience of going to a school counsellor, suggesting that there needs to be more work done to educate people on the troubles a child can face as a result of a parental breakup, and how to properly provide support to the children that need it most.

Following on the theme of support, one participant of the focus group experienced parental separation when she was an adult and explained that this situation was really difficult as she felt as though she was expected to handle it in a different way because of her age.

*"Your poor mum has been left by her husband so you should be there for her and she should be your primary parent."*

This shows that because her parents separated when she was an adult, she was expected to be a support network for her mother, and her parents didn't actually consider how she would be impacted by the situation. Although it is true that she should support her mother, it is important for her mother to also in turn be there for her and consider her needs. This is emphasised as she then went on to say: *"I'd be being a bad daughter if I said that I wanted to spend Christmas with my dad"*. Although this participant was an adult when her parents separated, she was still being held back from having that relationship with her father.

It is important for parents to realise how much their actions are impacting their children no matter how old they are, and their mental health should be at the forefront of the discussion. This participant was almost neglected in the discussion as she stated:

*"My mum is the priority and my dad is the secondary one, and I think that it is always centred around my mum and what is best for her and not for me which I have just accepted now. But I definitely found that really hard at first."*

This participant felt as though everyone was focused on how her mother felt as opposed to how she feels. Everything was "centred" around her mum, her feelings were expected to be put aside in order to support her mother which can be detrimental to her own mental health if she needs someone to talk to about her own feelings.

*"Had I had access to Shared Parenting [Scotland] would've been really helpful because even though I was an adult I felt like there was an expectation for me not to be bothered by it because I was an adult".*

This further highlights the expectation that she shouldn't be "bothered" by her parents' breakup, it seems as though she had no one to talk to because communication between her and her father was blocked off by her mother due to the way the separation happened. This is emphasised as she said that she would have benefitted from the support of Shared Parenting Scotland. This highlights that there is a general need for more awareness on ways that people affected by parental separation can receive support.

When asked explicitly on their opinions on how parenting responsibilities should be split, there seemed to be unanimity amongst participants that it should be split equally between both parents wherever possible:

*"If men and women are meant to be equal and both be working it feels like having the mother as the primary person who will get the child seems like the expectation that the father will work and the mother will work but at the same time it depends what stage the child is at... It's hard because I feel closer to my mum and I would rather have that kind of figure early on but I also think that my mum worked and I had babysitters a lot so it's a really hard one but I think it should be equal because we should have an equal society".*

Another participant followed this up directly by saying:

*"I agree with that because it perpetuates that idea that women are the only people who are capable of caring for a child and it's always the mother that is the best destination for the child and I guess in some circumstances it hasn't always been that case, I know people who definitely would have been more comfortable being with their dads".*

Both of these extracts demonstrate exactly why it is important for both parents to have an equal responsibility in the upbringing of a child. Wherever possible, time with the child should be split as best as possible as long as that is what the child wants in order to develop a healthy relationship with both parents.

## DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the experiences of young people who have experienced parental separation and how best to give support to these individuals. This was achieved by giving young people the chance to talk about their experiences and how they felt during this time, as much of the time in the parental separation discussion all the focus is on the parents. We asked young people a series of questions in the online survey that related to not only those with separated parents, but also those with more traditional family circumstances. The aim was to see if there was a difference in perception to different issues that might have come as a result of parental separation. Following this, two online one-to-one interviews and one online focus group were conducted in order to hear further about the experiences of these young people, with the aim to hear common issues that arise under separated parenting, and how to best support them.

When asked about the relationship with their parents, most participants in the unseparated parent group indicated that they had a strong relationship with both of their parents. In the separated parent group, a large majority of participants indicated that they would have liked to have spent more time with their other parent after the separation. This highlights the desire for children to have a strong relationship with both of their parents, as those with unseparated parents indicated a strong bond that they had with each of their parents, with most responding with "very good" when asked about their relationship with each parent.

A combined 89% of participants in the unseparated parent group said it was either very important or necessary to have a strong relationship with both parents. In the separated parent group, most of the time was spent with their mother, with an average of 83% of time being spent with the mother, and only 18% on average with the father. This has unfortunately been the case for a long time, with the vast majority of separated parents typically adopting the arrangement of resident mother and non-resident father, who will have varying degrees of contact with the child.

Unfortunately, in a large number of cases, the father loses contact with the child altogether. (Buchanan & Hunt, 2003). This indicates that there is a clear problem with fathers being unable to spend an adequate amount of

quality time with their children after a parental separation. Although there could be a number of reasons for this such as distance, a number of participants in our study indicated that they did not see their father as they did not want to upset their mother. With 70% of participants indicating that they wished to spend more time with their other parent, this shows that in the parental separation discussion, children often put their parent's feelings before their own, which could lead to separation issues as they are preventing themselves from developing a healthy relationship with their father.

These findings are in line with a previous study looking at experiences of young people in which many participants wished that their parents had managed the post-separation parenting more effectively (Fortin et al., 2012). This point was further developed by a participant in the focus group discussions, as she stated that she felt as though her mum was the priority, and that she felt like a bad person for even suggesting that her father should come to her graduation alongside her mother. It is imperative that children should be considered more in the discussion and it should be the parents that make sacrifices to ensure that the child gets to have that meaningful relationship with both parents that is necessary for a healthy development. This is an interesting finding as there is a lack of previous literature looking into how a child might upset the mother as a reason for children not being able to see both parents.

Young people were asked about equality and how time should best be split between both parents after a separation. All participants of the focus group and individual interviews agreed that time should be split as equally as possible after the separation, and that parents should compromise in order for both parents to achieve a high-quality relationship with the child.

Researchers largely agree that shared parenting should now be a legal presumption with at least 35% of time being allocated to each parent (Braver & Lamb, 2018). This comes after a 2012 study concluded that 30% of time in shared custody is necessary to achieve qualitative parenting outcomes (Fabricius et al., 2012). It is important to mention that participants argued that a high-quality relationship with one parent was better than two distant relationships.

This is backed up by developmental research which states that in families where there is significant conflict, contact with the non-resident parent, or witnessing conflict when parents come in contact may be damaging in the long-term development of the child (Buchanan & Hunt, 2003). Participants state that it is the loneliness that creates problems, which is why parents must make sacrifices and ensure they do what is best for the child in their situation.

A metaanalysis of outcomes for children in various types of custody (Nielsen, 2018) concluded from 60 studies that independent of family income or parental conflict, Joint Physical Custody (shared parenting) is generally linked to better outcomes for children than sole physical custody.

A Swedish study (Bergstrom, 2015) concluded that children with non-cohabitant parents experience more psychosomatic problems than those in nuclear families. Those in joint physical custody do however report better psychosomatic health than children living mostly or only with one parent.

Another theme that was prevalent during the focus group discussion was the lack of support children received after the separation of their parents. One participant stated that they actively sought support from a school counsellor but hated it, with another participant stating that they wish they knew about Shared Parenting Scotland so that they and their parents could have had more support in their situation. Most participants said that they reached out to family instead however this can become difficult when it is an only child situation as it can be difficult to talk to the parents about the situation as they are directly involved, which could push the child further away from the other parent.

This is in line with previous literature that states that parents often abandoned their usual parental role after the separation, leaving children feeling "alone" and "unsupported" (Fortin et al., 2012). Further questions should have been asked in the online survey so we could have a better idea of how many people with separated parents have actively sought out support or know how they could receive this support.

**Overall, this small study describes experiences of young people who have lived under shared parenting, and reasons why a child might not see their non-resident parent. It indicates that work needs to be done to inform children with separated parents of the various ways to receive support, and there needs to be more research done on how children and young people would best feel supported.**

The age group of the participants, all university students, by definition gives them a relatively recent perspective on the questions put to them. Repeating the exercise with them in 10- or 20-years' time may give more insight as they grow older and know more about themselves and their parents. This would seem to be a priority area of research for any government or any legislature looking genuinely to find a way of supporting children and their parents through separation and divorce.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SHARED PARENTING

Tens of thousands of children in Scotland experience parental separation every year. Separation can be highly associated with stress and long-term adversity (Fortin et al., 2012). Most separated parents adopt the arrangement of the mother being the primary carer with the father often struggling to see the child or develop a bond with them in any way. In some cases, the father loses contact with the child completely after the breakup, with around 20% of fathers not seeing their children at age 18 (Buchanan & Hunt, 2003; Régnier-Loilier, 2015). Previous research suggests that it is imperative for the child to have a healthy relationship with both parents to ensure an adequate development in the early years (Amato, 1994; Flouri & Buchanan, 2002).

Parents who manage to reach agreement on arrangements for their children without needing to resort to court action are still likely to settle for children staying mainly with the mother. If agreement cannot be reached and the case has to be decided in court, Scottish sheriffs are unlikely to order equally shared care and usually stick at 'every second weekend and half the holidays with the father'.

Legislation in other countries such as Sweden and Belgium and certain American states has made it more likely that court decisions will

# Consequences of Paternal Absence on Child Development



Parental co-operation is extremely important even after separation - as studies have shown that a high quality relationship with both parents predicts significantly better outcomes for the child.

Complete paternal absence can lead to various negative implications for child development. It is important to maintain meaningful, shared time with the child.

“

When a father is fully present in a child's life, they can benefit from a warm relationship with their mother because they are not conflicted about their loyalties to each parent.

Rueven-Krispin et al. (2021)

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Rueven-Krispin reported that children felt a significant psychological cost of feeling divided when separated parents are in frequent conflict.

The consequences of witnessing these disputes can outweigh the benefits of being close to both parents.

## Young people who had experienced paternal absence from younger than 6 years old reported:

- Lower relationship satisfaction
- Greater psychopathology
- Commitment issues
- Higher self-criticism
- Perception of lower romantic intimacy
- Maternal overprotection



Paternal absence is one of the major consequences of divorce for children. It can have a detrimental effect on the well-being and development of the child and therefore it is important for separated parents to work together to ensure that the child has a meaningful relationship with both parents.

For more information, visit  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/fare.12516>

support shared parenting and enable children to maintain a close contact with both parents after the separation through measures such as a presumption in favour of joint physical custody as the default option after separation (Turunen, 2017).

Previous international research suggests that it is important for the child to have a healthy relationship with both parents to ensure an adequate development in the early years. (Amato, 1994) found that regardless of the quality of the mother-child relationship, the closer children were to their father, the happier, more satisfied and less distressed they were.

A 2015 study looking into stress levels of children with separated parents found that children with 50/50 shared residence were significantly less likely to experience high levels of stress (Turunen, 2017). Flouri and Buchanan (2002) found that significant father involvement before the age of seven was associated with good parent-child relationships in adolescence, satisfactory partnerships in later life, less likely to be in trouble with children and more likely to have high educational attainment.

However, there are counter arguments that must be considered in order to come to a fair, informed conclusion as to whether shared parenting is the best way forward.

It has been argued that shared parenting can decrease children's emotional well-being, as children may become stressed from the changing of routines and moving households (Bauserman, 2002).

Scotland currently follows a "Getting it Right for Every Child" (GIRFEC) approach. This aims to make sure that every child should be:

*Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included*

The Scottish Government believe that every child should be helped to reach their full potential as an individual, and have developed a series of wellbeing resources aimed to explain how to support children and young people the best way possible. However, Scottish Government policies across a range of its responsibilities often find it difficult to define 'family' in a way that includes both separated parents as equally contributors to the wellbeing and emotional and psychological development of their children.

Separated fathers and mothers who are not the 'main carers' of their children are easily rendered invisible to services and in policy development. The best interests of children cannot be fully realised if these hidden parents are not taken into account.



## ABOUT SHARED PARENTING SCOTLAND

Shared Parenting Scotland is a small Scottish charity which aims to provide support for parents and their children who are suffering the consequences of divorce or separation. We provide advice to ensure parents can maintain an adequate amount of contact with their children to ensure the necessary emotional and behavioural development for the child. We encourage shared parenting arrangements, to enable children to have a meaningful relationship with both parents.

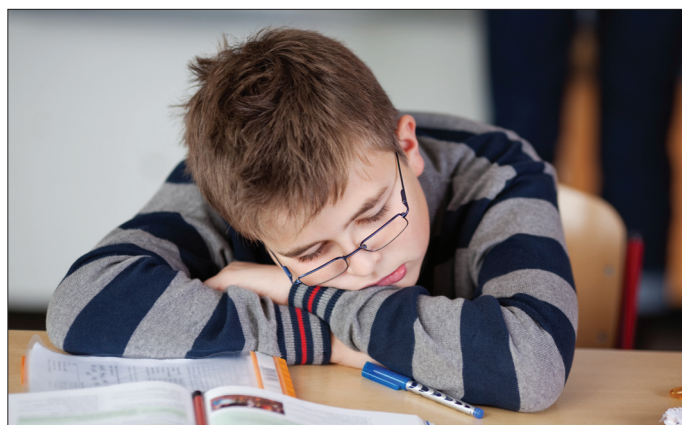
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## KEY POINTS

1. Most young people in separated families would prefer to have spent more time with one of their parents, usually with their father. **Comment:** "Would have like it to be split equal with both my mum and dad".
  2. Young people agreed that parenting responsibilities should be split equally. **Comment:** "I agree with that because it perpetuates that idea that women are the only people who are capable of caring for a child and it's always the mother that is the best destination for the child and I guess in some circumstances it hasn't always been that case, I know people who definitely would have been more comfortable being with their dads".
  3. Respondents worried about hurting their mother by attempting to contact their father. **Comment:** "I would have liked to have visited my dad more but I was often a bit worried that it would upset my mum as my dad left my mum for someone else".
  4. Some young people are made to feel guilty for wanting to see their other parent: "I'd be being a bad daughter if I said that I wanted to spend Christmas with my dad".
  5. Some parents seek support for themselves without offering it to their child. **Comment:** "My mum is the priority and my dad is the secondary one, and I think that it is always centred around my mum and what is best for her and not for me which I have just accepted now.
- But I definitely found that really hard at first".
6. Young people commented on how their separated family situation may affect their own future, both by making it harder for them to get into new relationships and stressing the importance of involving both parents. **Comment:** "If I was to have kids one day and we were to separate I think it's vital, just for like you developing as a person, to have like a dad and a mum figure in your life".
  7. Some of them stressed the quality of the relationship with one parent. **Comment:** "One great parent can do the work emotionally of two".
  8. The lack of external support for children whose parents have separated was mentioned. **Comment:** "I went to a school counsellor, and I hated it and never went back, um, and then I just kind of talked to my mum".



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The charity was established in December 2010 as Families Need Fathers Scotland and changed its name to Shared Parenting Scotland in February 2020. It now has offices in Edinburgh and Glasgow and local support group meetings in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee and Stirling. We are very grateful for ongoing financial support from the Scottish Government, the Tudor Trust and a range of other funders and for the fundraising and donations provided by many of the people who make use of our services

We work to keep children and parents in contact after separation, with a particular

focus on promoting shared parenting. We provide information and support to enable parents in conflict to come to child-centred agreements so that children can continue to enjoy a meaningful relationship with both parents after separation. Our service users include fathers, mothers, grandparents, extended family members and new partners

We publish 'user guides' to the family court process and on the involvement of both parents in their child's education and also publish a wide range of information on our web site and through social media.

## Sharing my Parents



Investigating the experiences of young people  
from different parenting backgrounds.

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