

'This book should be obligatory reading for anyone even contemplating the ending of a relationship where children are involved.'

Sir Paul Coleridge

The Hon. Mr Justice Coleridge, High Court Judge Family, Division 2000–2014

FAMILY BREAKDOWN

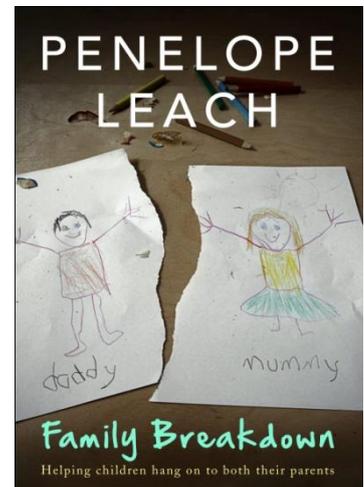
Helping children hang onto both their parents

By Penelope Leach

Foreword by Sir Paul Coleridge

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Over 40% of UK marriages now end in divorce, three-quarters of which involve children. In addition, nearly half of all babies are born to parents who are not married and they are vulnerable to family breakdown, too. Yet, in family breakdown resolution the focus is almost always on the adults' needs, and not on those of the real victims, the children. In her new book, **FAMILY BREAKDOWN**, leading child development expert, Penelope Leach, says that it's time for attitudes to change, and that both parents, their advisors and the family courts, must put the needs of the children first.



FAMILY BREAKDOWN looks at divorce and separation from the child's point-of-view. Leach writes that it's essential that the end of a marriage, or partnership, is not seen as 'adult business' only, but as the break-up of the child's family, too. She cites the latest findings from 'attachment science' to show that parents matter to children even more and for longer than we knew, and says that whatever age the children are when the break-up happens - baby, toddler, primary school-age or teenager – they will be affected, not just in the short-term but as the kind of people they grow up to be.

Leach explains how parents can minimise the impact of parental separation on children right from the start. She outlines how mothers and fathers should, wherever possible, employ 'mutual parenting', and remain united in their determination to carry on being loving parents.

Often using their own words, the book looks at what children of different ages are likely to understand and feel about the process, and offers guidelines to handling situations which may remain difficult despite mediation, from 'child arrangement orders', to convincing children that the break-up is not their fault. There are practical suggestions from other parents, too - from how best to manage handing over a toddler, to organising teenagers' possessions between two homes, or coping with Christmas.

FAMILY BREAKDOWN is written for mothers and fathers who have separated or divorced or intend to do so; for their extended families and prospective partners, and for many professionals who support and advise them. Above all, the book is written to help those parents help their children.

About the Author: *Penelope Leach is a research psychologist and one of the world's leading experts in child development. She is the author of many books including **Your Baby and Child** and **The Essential First Year**. She is Visiting Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Winchester; and Hon. Snr. Research Fellow, Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Social Issues, Birkbeck, University of London, and at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. She is a mother of two, grandmother of six, and lives in East Sussex.*

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