

Entering a New Phase in your Life?

# COPING WITH CHANGE

Programs for separating, divorcing and remarrying families



## MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR YOUR CHILD

Our programs provide information about how separated parents can improve outcomes for their children. This brochure describes programs that teach skills for:

- reducing parental conflict
- strengthening relationships between parents
- helping children adjust to loss
- improving parent / child relationships
- creating successful stepfamilies.

For additional information consult the *Frequently Asked Questions* publication available on our website at

[www.familyserVICetoronto.org](http://www.familyserVICetoronto.org)

or call us at **416-585-9151**.

## RESOURCE MATERIALS

Our website has information about research reports, articles authored by our staff, FIT's social justice work, videos and other materials. Families in Transition also produces materials for changing families and professionals.

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Impact of divorce for children and parents
- Creating successful parenting plans
- Stepparenting and remarriage
- Grieving and loss
- Fathering after separation
- Resources for professionals working with changing families

## EMAIL UPDATES

Join our electronic mailing list by sending your contact details to [fit@familyserVICetoronto.org](mailto:fit@familyserVICetoronto.org).

## OTHER INFORMATION

FIT is a program of Family Service Toronto (FST), a registered charity supported by United Way Toronto, providing services to individuals, families and community groups. Consult our website for information about FST's area locations and agency services including counselling, social justice work, and community and neighbourhood development activities: [www.familyserVICetoronto.org](http://www.familyserVICetoronto.org).



Contact the Service Access Unit at **416.595.9618** to request agency services. We make every effort to meet the needs of our clients and we are committed to an equity and inclusion approach to service delivery. Our locations are wheelchair accessible.

## CONTACT INFORMATION



Family Service Toronto  
FAMILIES IN TRANSITION

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## WHY SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS?

Separation and divorce are family transitions that challenge children and parents. Moving forward involves dealing with grief, anger, disappointment, and fear. Learning about the process of divorce helps parents reduce conflict, provides a foundation for building parenting partnerships, and creates an opportunity to strengthen relationships with children. Blending families and remarriage requires children and parents to build new relationships, define roles and boundaries, establish parenting styles and discipline strategies, and develop stepfamily routines and traditions.

Our seminars and groups bring together individuals with similar experiences. Listening, learning and sharing ideas with others provides children and parents with support in a safe and confidential setting. The professional leadership of our programs offers participants up-to-date information and practical skills for coping with the challenges of transition. Parents learn ways of supporting their child's adjustment to the changing family circumstances.

FIT staff are trained as social workers or therapists. They have post-graduate education at the Master's or Doctoral level. In addition to experience in working with changing families, the staff have training in child development, grief work, and conflict resolution. FIT programs and research have an international reputation.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Every effort is made to respect advertised program times. Many parents make child care arrangements or schedule adjustments.
- Latecomers can not be accommodated after the session begins.
- Please arrive ten minutes early to complete the registration process.
- Coffee/tea and spring water are provided.

## FEES AND REGISTRATION

Fees are charged because we provide high quality family services using professionally trained and supervised staff. Funds from the United Way subsidize our programs.

Fees vary according to the time involved in each program. The cost of materials and handouts is normally included in the fee. Please enquire about bursaries which may be available to you.

*Prior registration by telephone or mail is essential.*

To maximize learning opportunities, parents attend programs separately. Programs may be postponed if there is insufficient registration. Make cheques payable to: **Family Service Toronto**. Credit card payments are accepted by telephone. Debit cards are now accepted in person.

Requests for fee refunds must be received at least one week before a program begins with the exception of Coping With Life (20 working days' notice required). A cancellation charge applies to all refund requests.

# LET'S TALK ABOUT...

SINGLE SESSION PROGRAMS

These single session programs focus on specialized topics of interest to separating and divorcing families. Participants have an opportunity to hear from professionals and exchange ideas with other parents in the same situation.

**Fees:** \$50 per person per session  
Eligible for Early Bird discount

**Time:** 4:00-6:00 p.m.

**Location:** Suite 420A, 700 Lawrence Avenue West (unless otherwise specified)



## Questions Divorcing Parents Ask

Parenting at the time of separation is challenging. Participants learn to help their children cope with the changing family. Discussion focuses on making separation-related decisions that minimize the stress parents and children experience.

Questions include:

- Preparing children for parental separation
- Principles for decision-making
- Legal and clinical community resources
- The divorce process

Date: Monday September 20

Repeats: November 1, January 31

## Raising Healthy Children

The process of family change can interfere with the security, stability, and nurturing children require. Participants discuss strategies for enhancing children's self esteem and healthy development within the context of parental divorce.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Understanding children's behaviour
- Identifying strengths
- Strategies for building parent-child relationships
- Effective discipline

Date: Tuesday October 26

Repeats: March 2011

## For the Children's Sake: Reducing Post-Separation Conflict

Continuing or escalating parental conflict makes child adjustment more difficult. Participants discuss ways of supporting children who experience parental conflict.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- How parental conflict affects children
- Protecting children from parental conflict
- Conflict reduction skills for parents

Date: Wednesday September 22

Repeats: November 10, January 18

## The Challenge of Stepmothering

Participants discuss the challenges of successful stepmothering.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Difficulties stepmothers encounter
- Developing realistic expectations about the stepmother role
- Factors contributing to successful stepfamilies

Date: Wednesday October 6

Repeats: January 20

## Coparenting After Separation: Making It Work

Former partners with children continue to have a relationship. Establishing a parenting partnership after separation is critical for child well-being. It provides an important way to meet the needs of children while managing parenting responsibilities.

Participants discuss:

- Types of coparenting relationships
- Creating an effective coparenting partnership
- Challenges for parents
- Practical ideas for resolving difficulties

Date: Monday January 24

Repeats: Spring 2011



## Ask About...

Programs on related topics such as **Self and Relationships, Mothers and Daughters after Separation and Single Again** are offered from time to time. Call FIT at **416-585-9151** or consult our website [www.familyserVICetoronto.org](http://www.familyserVICetoronto.org) for more information on FIT and other program areas for program additions and resources.

# SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

## Separation and Divorce: *What About My Children?*

When parents part, there are short and longer term consequences for children. Participants discuss how children react when parents decide to live apart and strategies for responding to their issues and questions.

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- The influence of age and developmental stage
- Role of attachment and bonding
- Understanding loss from the child's perspective
- Strategies for meeting children's needs

Date: Thursday September 16  
Repeats: November 4, January 13  
Time: 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.  
Fees: \$50

SINGLE SESSION

## Coping with Life: *The Child's Perspective*

A 6 session series of groups for children (4-12), adolescents (13-16), and groups for their parents. Children share feelings, expectations and attitudes towards separation with peers. Parents' groups focus on helping children to adjust to changing circumstances. A follow-up family interview is included.

Series 1: October 25 - December 4  
Series 2: April 25 - June 11

There are separate Saturday groups for preschoolers, school age children and adolescents. Parent groups are held on weekday evenings. A 4 session group for parents' new partners, addressing child adjustment issues, usually follows each series. Topics include roles, relationships, and expectations.

Fees: Upon request  
*An initial interview is required.*

## Do I Still Have Two Parents?

When children do not have contact with one parent, adjusting to separation and divorce presents special challenges. This 5 session program addresses the feelings of abandonment, loss and responsibility experienced by children coping with this situation. Parents meet as a group to discuss how children grieve and ways of helping them cope with their loss.

Time: 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

*For information concerning dates and registration please contact 416-585-9151.*

## Successful Parenting Plans

Planning how to care for children after separation can be a confusing and difficult task. Participants discuss questions and issues that influence the development of successful plans:

- What is a parenting plan?
- Why is a plan important?
- Are there different types of plans?
- What should be included in your plan?
- Children's needs and parents' issues
- Steps for creating a successful plan

Date: Wednesday September 15  
Repeats: November 9, December 7, January 26  
Time: 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.  
Fees: \$75

*Participation in this program is a prerequisite for mediation at FIT.*

SINGLE SESSION

## Supporting Child Adjustment to Separation and Divorce

Participants discuss how parents can help children cope with separation and divorce.

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Divorce from the child's perspective
- Factors affecting how children cope with separation and divorce
- Strategies for supporting child adjustment

Date: Thursday September 30  
Repeats: December 2  
Time: 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.  
Fees: \$50

SINGLE SESSION

## It's Different Now:

### *The Young Adult's Point of View*

This 6 session group offers young adults from 14 to 17 years an opportunity to discuss the impact of separation, divorce and remarriage from their unique perspective.

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Maintaining relationships with both parents
- Changing responsibilities and expectations
- Problem solving

*For information concerning dates and registration please contact 416-585-9151.*

## Family Law Questions and Answers:

NEW!

### *Child Support, Spousal Support*

Child support is based on legislated guidelines. Spousal support is influenced by advisory guidelines. In our **child support seminar**, participants learn how basic child support is calculated, and of the permitted additional expenses. Parents who are either payers or recipients of child support gain a general understanding of how the guidelines apply to their situations. In the **spousal support seminar**, participants learn about how length of the relationship influences entitlements and obligations. The relationship between child support and spousal support is discussed.

*These seminars are led by experienced family lawyers who practice in Ontario.*

Time: 6:30 to 8:30 pm  
Fees: \$50

### Child Support Guidelines

Date: Thursday September 30  
Repeats: March 2011

SINGLE SESSION

### Spousal Support Advisory Guidelines

Date: Tuesday November 30  
Repeats: June 2011

## Angry Forever?

### *The Challenge of Moving On*

When relationships end there is often disappointment and anger, particularly if one parent feels betrayed or rejected. In this seminar, participants will discuss the impact of these feelings and the factors that help parents look to the future and influence one's ability to move on. The steps involved in moving from anger to acceptance will be discussed.

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- The impact of living with pain and anger
- Is there a role for forgiveness?
- Acceptance as an alternative to forgiveness
- Practical strategies for moving from anger to acceptance

Date: Wednesday September 22  
Time: 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.  
Repeats: Thursday November 25  
(9:30 to 11:30 am)

Fees: \$50

SINGLE SESSION

# SINGLE PARENTING

A growing number of parents share in caring for their children after separation and divorce. This series of programs provides participants with an opportunity to discuss parenting issues and concerns from several unique perspectives.

## Children's Residential Schedules

Former partners remain parents. Their relationship affects the children. In particular, conflicts about the children's residential schedules can be difficult for everyone. Parents explore ways of resolving these concerns and fostering their child's adaptation to the changing family circumstances.

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- What the research tells us
- Influence of child's developmental stage
- Creating a schedule for your child
- Transferring between homes
- Supporting schedule arrangements
- Problem solving strategies

Date: Tuesday October 19  
Repeats: February 2011  
Time: 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.  
Fees: \$50

SINGLE SESSION

## Parenting After Divorce: *Meeting the Challenges*

In this 5 session program, participants discuss the rewards and challenges of parenting. Parents learn practical strategies for enhancing relationships with children within the context of separation and divorce.

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Parenting styles and children's developmental stages
- Communicating with children: listening and bonding
- Communicating with children: talking and guiding
- Positive discipline techniques
- Fostering children's self esteem

Date: 5 Tuesdays beginning September 21  
Repeats: February 2011  
Time: 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.  
Fees: \$250

*An initial interview is required.*

Eligible for Earlybird discount

## Mother to Mother

This is a 5 session program for separated or divorced non-residential mothers. Participants examine their changing role and the way society's attitudes affect them. The unique social, emotional and practical aspects of non-residential parenting are discussed within a supportive environment.

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Identifying children's needs
- Realities of time sharing
- Strategies for successful problem solving
- Parenting without frequent contact

Time: 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.  
Fees: Upon request

*For information concerning dates and registration please contact 416-585-9151.*

## Father to Father

After separation and divorce, fathers remain involved in children's lives in many ways. This 5 session group program offers non-residential fathers the opportunity to discuss the experience of parenting in the context of separation and divorce. An interview is required.

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Identifying children's needs
- Realities of time sharing
- Strategies for successful problem solving
- Building the father/child relationship

Date: 5 Tuesdays beginning March 2011  
Time: 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.  
Fees: Upon request

## Fathering After Separation and Divorce

Participants discuss the importance of father/child relationships when parents no longer live together.

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Skills for fathering after separation
- Building meaningful relationships with children
- Communicating effectively with your former partner
- Communicating with children
- Making the most of your time

Date: Tuesday November 16  
Time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.  
Fees: \$50

SINGLE SESSION

# REMARRIAGE

## Second Time Around: *Remarriage and Step-Parenting*

This is a 4 session program for couples. Remarriage is a time of excitement and hope combined with challenges and difficulties. Understanding, flexibility, and creativity are required.

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Problems and new realities
- Strengthening the marital relationship
- Roles and expectations
- Children: relationships and discipline

Date: 4 Thursdays beginning September 23  
Repeats: February 2011  
Time: 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.  
Fees: \$275 per couple

## Earlybird Registration Special\*



A discount is applicable to all paid registrations received at least one week prior to the program date.

Single session programs are discounted \$15.00.

\* The discount program does not apply to *Coping with Life*.

### Our Website

To learn more about Families in Transition, visit [www.familyserVICEToronto.org](http://www.familyserVICEToronto.org). Programming additions, our **Frequently Asked Questions** publication, along with information about our social justice work is available on the web. Click on "programs and services" then click on "Families in Transition".

Unless otherwise noted, all programs take place at



Lawrence Square  
700 Lawrence Avenue West, Suite 420A  
(Lawrence West subway stop on the Spadina line)

3 hours of FREE PARKING is available in the adjacent parking area.