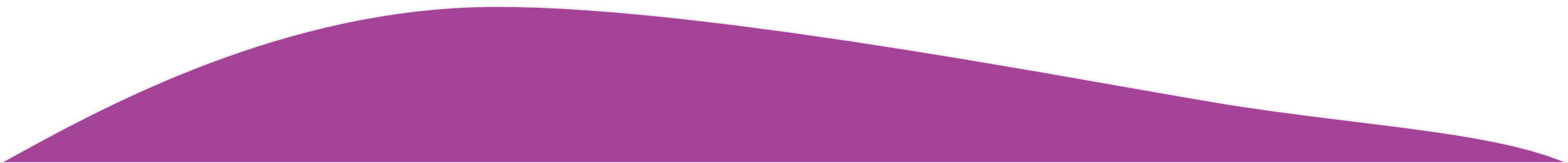




**REDUCING PARENTAL CONFLICT
INCLUDING SUPPORT FOR SEPARATED AND
SEPARATING PARENTS**



PARENTAL CONFLICT

Some level of arguing and conflict between parents is often a normal part of everyday life.

However, there is strong evidence to show how inter-parental conflict that is frequent, intense and poorly resolved can have a significantly negative impact on children's mental health and long-term life chances.



SEPARATED PARENTS

47% of children no longer live with both birth parents

Almost half of all divorces (48%) involve children under 16

The annual cost of family breakdown in England and Wales is estimated at £51 billion

IMPACT OF PARENTAL CONFLICT ON CHILDREN

Children exposed to frequent destructive conflict are more likely to:

- ❖ Experience depression or anxiety
- ❖ Have physical health problems
- ❖ Develop behaviour problems
- ❖ Do worse at school
- ❖ Struggle with peer relationship
- ❖ Be prone to substance misuse, criminality, homelessness, self-harm and suicidality

This can have a knock-on effect in later life on:

- ❖ Adult relationships
- ❖ Psychological wellbeing
- ❖ Employment



PARENT CONFLICT OR DOMESTIC ABUSE

Parental conflict and domestic abuse are very different, although they can look similar.

Parental conflict is below the threshold of domestic abuse. This means there is no violence and no significant power imbalance between the couple, and no coercive control being exerted by one parent over the other.

If you suspect there is domestic abuse present, refer to Merton's Effective Support Model and follow the procedures in place. If you are unsure of the next steps, contact the children and families' hub for a case consultation.



PARENT CONFLICT OR DOMESTIC ABUSE

Parent Conflict

- Conflict is frequent and intense and is often left poorly resolved or unresolved.
- There is a lack of open communication and topics of conflict are frequently revisited.
- There is no physical violence and no significant power imbalance between the parents
- Children may be caught in the middle of the conflict but this is not likely to lead to significant harm

Domestic Abuse

- There is an imbalance of power with one parent using coerce and control against the other, the non-abusing parent is likely fearful of their partner/ex-partner.
- May include some or all of the following:
Physical violence which may lead to injuries, intimidation or threats, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, and harassment.
- Children experience this abuse, or the harm caused to a parent who's been abused. This will be frightening, worrying and is likely to cause significant harm.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

Merton's free accessible digital resources provided by OnePlusOne are designed to help parents understand the impact of their arguments on their children, and learn techniques to communicate better, handle stress, and manage conflict more constructively.

The resources can be used directly by parents themselves or facilitated by practitioners either 1:1 or via group sessions.

The resources are designed to support reducing parental conflict and should not be used when domestic abuse is present.

ME, YOU AND BABY TOO

Me, You and Baby Too helps new and expectant parents adapt to the changes that parenthood can have on their relationship while raising awareness of the impact of stress and conflict on their baby.

Parents completing this course will develop the skills to manage their conflict more constructively.



An online course for new and expectant parents in Merton

Me, You and Baby too

Having a baby can be an exciting time but it's also one of the biggest changes you and your partner are likely to go through. You'll both be tired and stressed, and you may argue more.

Me, You and Baby Too is a free online course that can help you navigate these changes and keep moving forward together.

You will learn:

- What your baby picks up, even before they are born.
- Why stress should be a shared burden.
- How you and your partner can support each other.
- How to talk to bring up difficult topics.
- How arguments start, and how to stop them.

To access the course, you will need a smartphone, tablet, or computer, and a good internet connection. It's FREE to use, so you'll just need to create an account with a username and password.

Register at this address
www.oneplusone.org.uk/parents
or scan the QR code

- *Me, You and Baby Too* is designed for new and expectant parents.
- The course is online so you can go through it at your own pace.
- You can do it all in one go or save your progress and come back to it later.
- The course will take about 40 minutes to complete, so it's best to give yourself enough time and space to reflect.

For support, please contact an Early Help Support Coordinator by emailing FSD@merton.gov.uk

oneplusone LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON Merton family hub



Me, you, and
baby too

ARGUING BETTER



An online course to help parents in Merton communicate better with each other

Arguing better

Disagreements are a normal part of life, and most couples argue from time to time. The way you approach these conversations can make a big difference to you, your partner, and your children.

Arguing better is a free online course to help you manage difficult conversations, avoid conflict, and improve things for your whole family.

You will learn:

- Where stress comes from and how it can affect you.
- Ways to recognise stress and talk about it.
- How to support each other through difficult times.
- What causes arguments and how to stop them.

To access the course, you will need a smartphone, tablet, or computer, and a good internet connection. It's FREE to use, so you'll just need to create an account with a username and password.



Register at this address:
www.oneplusone.org.uk/parents
or scan the QR code

- Arguing better is designed for parents who want to learn healthy ways to deal with stress and conflict.
- The course is online so you can go through it at your own pace.
- You can do it all in one go or save your progress and come back to it later.
- The course will take about 40 minutes to complete, so it's best to give yourself enough time and space to reflect.

For support, please contact an Early Help Support Coordinator by emailing FSD@merton.gov.uk

Arguing Better helps raise awareness of parental conflict and its impact on children. It gives parents the skills to cope with stress together and manage their conflict more constructively.





GETTING IT RIGHT FOR CHILDREN

Getting it Right for Children uses Behaviour Modelling Training techniques to help separate parents see how they are putting their children in the middle of their conflict.

It helps parents to develop positive communication skills so that they can parent co-operatively and work out solutions together.



An online course for separating parents in Merton to help manage conflict and minimise the impact on children

Getting it right for children

When parents are separating or separated, children can often get caught in the middle.

Getting it right for children is a free online course designed to help you parent co-operatively. It can help you to develop positive communication skills, so that you can sort out disagreements and find solutions together.

You will learn:

- How to stay calm and listen as well as talk.
- Why it's helpful to see things from a different point of view.
- What to do to stop a discussion from turning into an argument.
- Skills for finding solutions and making compromises.

To access the course, you will need a smartphone, tablet, or computer, and a good internet connection. It's FREE to use, so you'll just need to create an account with a username and password.



Register at this address
www.oneplusone.org.uk/parents
or scan the QR code

- *Getting it right for children* is designed for separating or separated parents who want to reduce conflict and communicate better with their child's other parent.
- The course is online so you can go through it at your own pace.
- You can do it all in one go but it's often best to spread it over a few weeks to give yourself time to reflect and practise the skills.

For support, please contact an Early Help Support Coordinator by emailing FSD@merton.gov.uk

DEBT AND RELATIONSHIPS



Debt and relationships

Online materials to help you with debt and the impact it has on your relationships

Debt and money troubles are among the biggest causes of relationship stress.

In these short animations, real couples tell their stories of being in debt and the steps they took to get things back on track.

If you're worried about debt, watch these clips to see why it's best to act as soon as possible, and why it's always a good idea to talk to your partner about what's happening.



To access the online material, you will need a smartphone, tablet, or computer, and a good internet connection. It's FREE to use, so you'll just need to create an account with a username and password.



Register at this address
www.oneplusone.org.uk/parents
or scan the QR code

For support, please contact an Early Help Support Coordinator by emailing FSD@merton.gov.uk



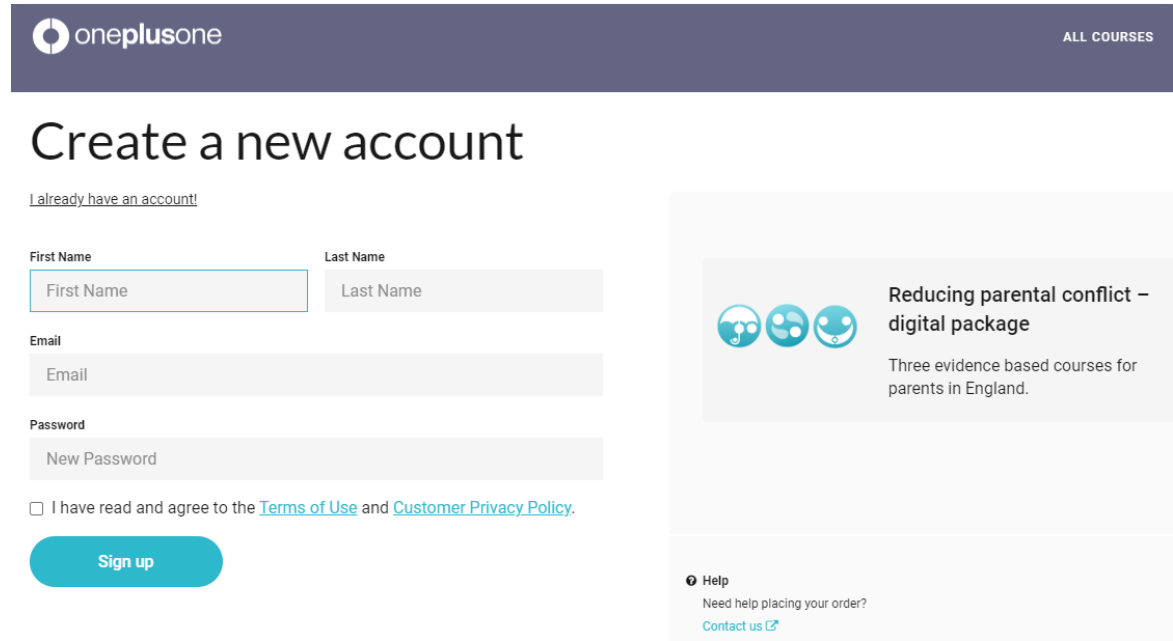
In response to the cost-of-living crisis, Debt and Relationships, offers parents free advice about how debt can have an impact on relationships.

ACCESSING SUPPORT

Parents can access the digital resources and complete themselves by creating an account and having their own login.

Practitioners can also support parents to complete the resources on a 1:1 basis or in a group setting.

[oneplusone parent login](#)



The screenshot shows the 'oneplusone' website's account creation page. The header is dark purple with the 'oneplusone' logo on the left and 'ALL COURSES' on the right. The main heading is 'Create a new account'. Below it is a link: 'I already have an account!'. The form has four input fields: 'First Name' (with placeholder 'First Name'), 'Last Name' (with placeholder 'Last Name'), 'Email' (with placeholder 'Email'), and 'Password' (with placeholder 'New Password'). Below the password field is a checkbox labeled 'I have read and agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Customer Privacy Policy](#)'. A teal 'Sign up' button is at the bottom left. On the right, there is a promotional box for 'Reducing parental conflict – digital package' featuring three icons of people and the text 'Three evidence based courses for parents in England.' At the bottom right, there is a 'Help' section with the text 'Need help placing your order?' and a 'Contact us' link with an external icon.

GETTING ON BETTER CARDS

Arguments are like fire

1) You can think of arguments as a fire.

The **LOGS** are the things you argue about most. Even when you're getting on well, the logs are still there.

Some common ones are:

- Money.
- Friends.
- Housework.
- Sex.
- Children.



Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/logsandfire to watch the relevant video clip

2) The **MATCH** can be anything that starts an argument. It's often something small:

- The wrong tone of voice.
- Feeling stressed.
- Not listening to each other.



3) Once the argument has started, we can make things worse by the way we respond. This can **ADD FUEL** to the fire:

- Raising your voice.
- Walking out.
- Bottling things up.
- Saying hurtful things.
- Bringing up old arguments.



4) There are also things we can do to stop the argument getting worse. This is like putting **WATER** on the fire.

- Taking a break.
- Listening.
- Saying sorry.
- Having a hug.



A few things to try:

- a) Think about what your logs might be.
- b) Next time you argue, try to notice when you're adding fuel.
- a) See if you can water things down before the argument escalates.

There are 8 Getting on Better cards available.

The cards can be given to parents to encourage them to think about their relationship and how they can communicate better.

Getting on Better cards can be downloaded from the reducing parental conflict webpage on the [Merton directory](#)

The cards are available in English, Polish and Tamil.

GETTING IT RIGHT FOR CHILDREN SKILL CARDS

There are also 5 Getting it right for children skill cards available.

These can be given to parents who are separated and co-parenting to support them with key communication skills.

Getting it right for children cards can be downloaded from the reducing parental conflict webpage on the [Merton directory](#)

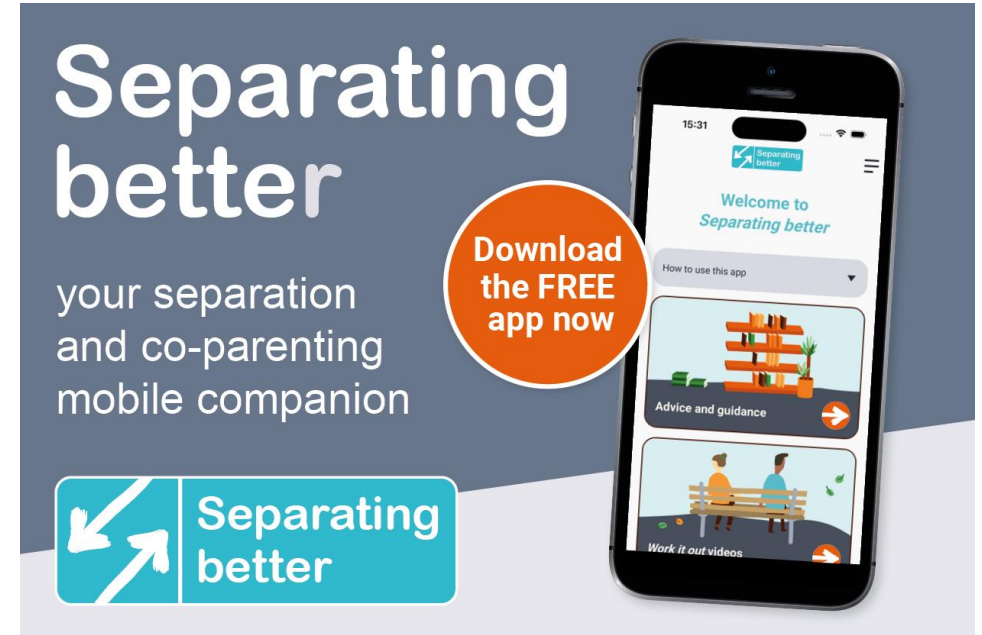
The cards are available in English, Polish and Tamil.



SEPARATING BETTER APP

This FREE app will help parents to self-manage their separation, equipping them with the practical knowledge and emotional skills they need to make decisions which work in the best interests of their children. It features practical tools to help with budgeting and legal arrangements, and parents can create their own parenting plans to make effective co-parenting arrangements.

A series of specially created videos showing typical co-parenting scenarios will help parents to improve their conflict resolution and communication skills. There are also evidence-based articles offering expert advice on separation and co-parenting.



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities provide 2 online courses for parents who are experiencing parental conflict:

- Parental conflict course for co-parents living apart
- Parental conflict course for co-parents living together

Both courses help parents and carers recognise, understand and resolve conflict. The courses which are currently free include weekly online sessions and live group classes.

Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities

MEDIATION

Family mediation is a process where a trained independent mediator helps separating or separated parents work out arrangements concerning children, finance or property.

It is important to remember that mediation is only an option when both parents agree to take part in it.

When parents make an application for a court order in relation to many types of family law disputes, they must show the court that family mediation has been considered, by attending a Mediation Information Assessment Meeting (MIAM). This is a short meeting with a qualified mediator where parents will be provided with information about mediation as a way of resolving their issues.



FAMILY MEDIATION VOUCHER SCHEME

Family Mediation Voucher Scheme has been set up to support recovery in the family court and to encourage more parents to consider mediation as a means of resolving their disputes, where appropriate.

Parents will receive a financial contribution of up to £500 towards the costs of mediation if parents have :

- ❖ a dispute/application regarding a child
- ❖ a dispute/application regarding family financial matters where there is also a dispute/application relating to a child

Parents will need to discuss the voucher scheme with a qualified mediator at their Mediation Information Assessment Meeting (MIAM). If eligible, the mediator will apply for the voucher funding and it will be paid directly to them once all mediation sessions are concluded. Parents will not receive a physical voucher.



MEDIATION SERVICES



[Wimbledon Family Mediation](#)



[Family Mediation In Action - FAMIA](#)



[Welcome to Calm Mediation - Calm Mediation](#)



[The London Mediation Service](#)



[National Family Mediation Service](#)



[Parenting together - Cafcass](#)



PLANNING TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN

Planning Together for Children encourages parents to consider how they can communicate and work together to agree parenting arrangements without the need for more court hearings, and to understand how disagreements and arguments can impact their children's wellbeing and development.

Planning Together for Children combines e-learning, group work and online support for parents involved in private law family court proceedings. It replaces the Separated Parents Information Programme (SPIP).

Planning Together for Children is for families in private law family court proceedings and can either be ordered by a court or referred by a Cafcass Family Court Adviser at any stage of proceedings.



FURTHER SUPPORT FOR PRACTITIONERS

The Early Intervention Foundation provides a guide to support practitioners talking to families about parental conflict, and how to alleviate negative feelings about relationship support.

The Guide includes practical tips for talking to all families, including the importance of avoiding jargon, using inclusive language, acknowledging personal experiences, and knowing when to apologise.

It also provides a set of guiding questions for practitioners to ask themselves on the use of inclusive language with specific groups of vulnerable families, including parents with mental health difficulties, minority ethnic parents, parents belonging to the LGBTQ+ community, parents of children with special needs, and separated or separating parents.



Six key tips for talking with families about parental relationships



Talking with families about parental relationships:
Practical tips and guiding questions



FURTHER SUPPORT SERVICES



[Click Relationships](#)

Click provides early intervention relationship support from a mobile-friendly platform which is accessible 24/7. It helps parents understand more about their relationship and what they can do to improve it.

See it differently

[See it differently](#)

See it Differently is a collection of videos and animations that helps parents see family arguments from their children's point of view and offers alternative ways of handling disagreements.



[Family Lives](#)

Family lives offer free and confidential information and advice on relationship support as well as other aspects of family life, including parenting, child development and mental health concerns.



FAMILIES NEED
FATHERS

[Families Need
Fathers](#)

Families Need Fathers provide support and information to separating or divorced parents who are worried about how their breakup might affect their children.



FURTHER SUPPORT

Families can receive further information on reducing parental conflict through the Family Information Support Hubs (FISH).

FISH provides parents/carers with information, support and guidance on all aspects of family life.

FISH sessions take place Monday – Friday with FREE face-to-face or telephone appointments available. Appointments can be booked via [Eventbrite](#) either by a parent/carer or a practitioner on their behalf.

Or parents/carers can come along to one of the FISH drop-in sessions (no appointment needed):

Family Hub at Church Rd Children Centre – Mondays, 1.30pm-4.30pm

Family Hub at Acacia Children Centre – Wednesdays, 9.00am-12.00pm

