



1.5HRS

Start course

## Child-focused practice with separating parents online course

As a practitioner, you can help create supportive environments where families thrive amid changing relationships

### About this course

This course focuses on four practice skills that will help you ensure children's mental health and wellbeing is a central aspect of the conversations you have with parents who are going through separation or divorce:

- Supporting separating parents' wellbeing
- Supporting parenting and the parent-child relationship
- Supporting separating parents to support children; and
- Responding to the unhelpful effects that common social expectations and messages surrounding separation and divorce can have on parents.

A key concept informing this course is that parents are highly influential in how children experience parental separation and its consequences for their everyday lives. Although difficult, parental separation doesn't have to be distressing or traumatic for children.

### Why was this course developed?

From 2017–2021 approximately 47% of divorces involved couples with children under 18 years. This means that around 217,000 children experienced their parents entering divorce during this period. This doesn't include children in households where cohabiting couples may have separated.<sup>1</sup>

This course was developed to support your work with parents who are going through separation and divorce. By providing understanding and child-focused strategies, you can empower parents to navigate challenging times while promoting children's mental health and wellbeing.

### How was this course developed?

This course was developed in collaboration with academic stakeholders, child and family services and child mental health experts. Parents with lived experience of separation and divorce were also consulted about their experiences, and those of their children, to inform the development of this online course.

### Who is this course for?

This course is for a broad range of practitioners in health, social and community services who have contact with parents during separation and divorce, and who work outside of specialist family dispute resolution or counselling services. It recognises that practitioners who aren't trained in family dispute resolution or counselling – including GPs, social workers, allied health professionals and teachers – often have contact with parents during separation. Sometimes, they're the first or only impartial people that parents see during this period. These practitioners have an important role in supporting parents, the parent-child relationship, and children's mental health and wellbeing.

It builds on the foundational knowledge presented in the [Supporting children's mental health when working with separating parents](#) online course.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Marriages and divorces, Australia 2021*. Canberra: ABS.