

## Words & Pictures Plans and Explanations

When family life is hard, all children need an explanation of what is going on - and how it will get better - that suits their age and their understanding.

Grown-ups sometimes think children won't notice when their parents and other people they care about are struggling, upset, angry or not speaking with each other. Even very young children are tuned in to what is happening around them and will worry about it.

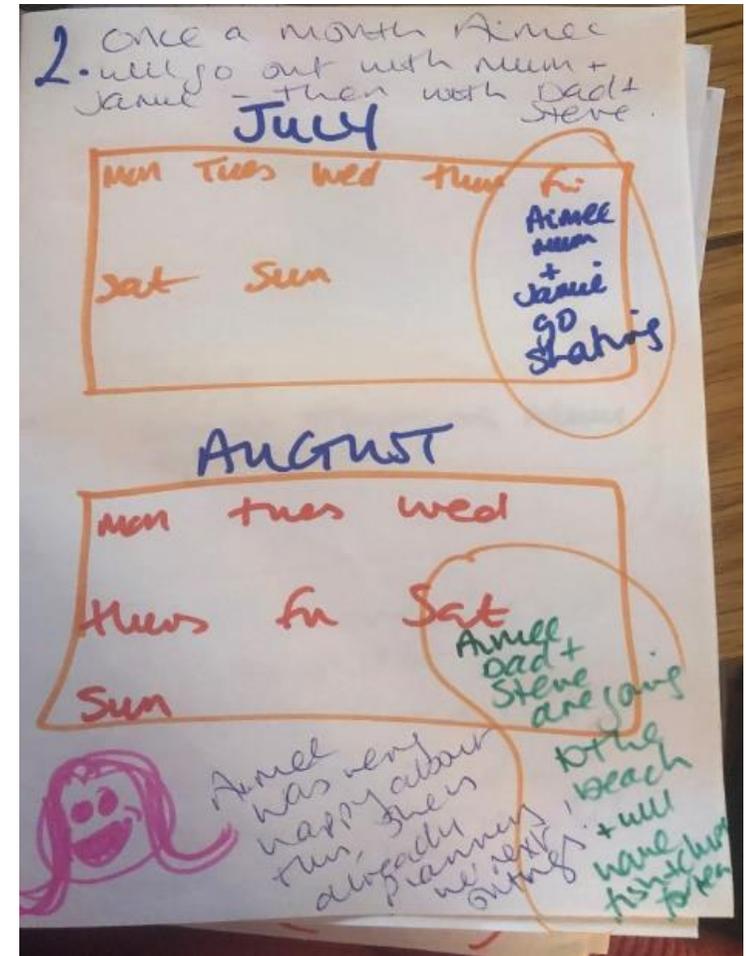
If they don't have all the facts, they might imagine the worst, and be so confused it affects their feelings and how they behave.

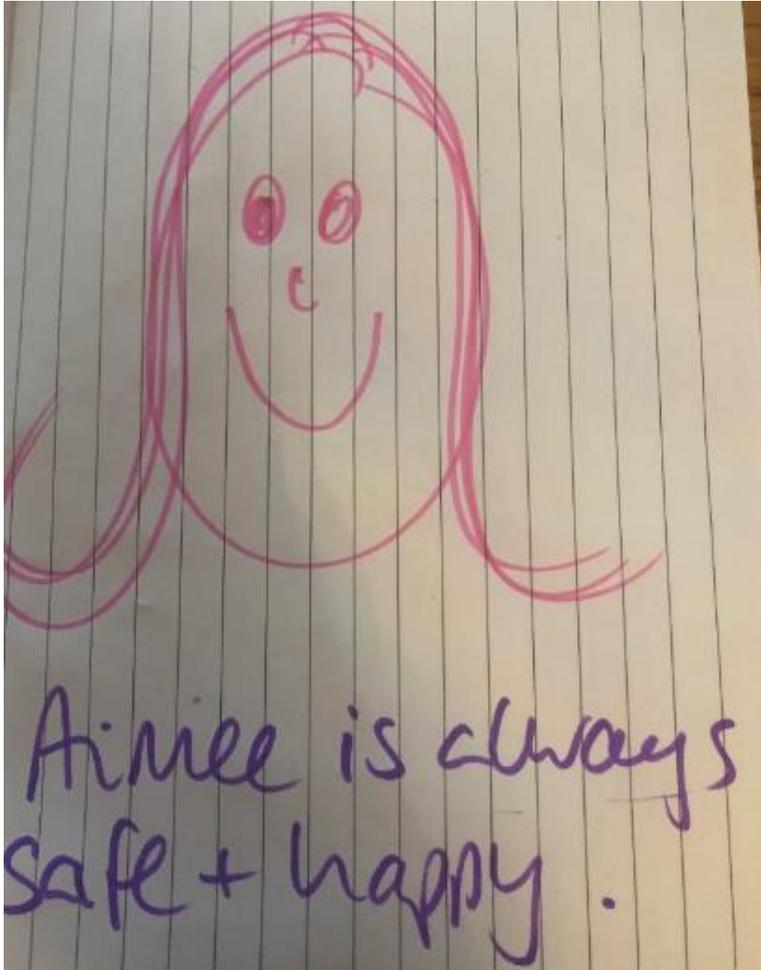
To feel safe and secure even in those harder times children need their parents and close family adults to reassure them. They need to feel confident the grown-ups they rely on in their family network have a plan to make things better.

You can do this with a Words & Pictures Plan. This can help you -

- Talk to your children about what is going on in the family now.
- Let them share any thoughts, worries and ideas they have.
- Share the plan of how everyone is going to work together to get things on track.

The Plan can also let them know what would happen to keep everyone safe if the situation got worse. Children cope better even at the toughest times in family life if they are well prepared and understand what will happen next.





How you do your Words & Pictures explanation/plan is up to you and will depend on the age and understanding of your child. You could –

- Draw some stick figures and write a few words on paper.
- Cut out pictures from magazines or find on-line pictures to ‘tell the story’ .

Remember your child doesn’t need perfect pictures (in fact they will enjoy it going a bit wrong!!). They need the words and picture to help them;

- Understand in a simple and honest way what is happening in their family.
- Know how everyone is going to work together to make things better.

Set aside some quiet time together to do the words and pictures activity together. It is really important. Children always know more than we think about what is happening in their family.

A Words & Pictures Plan will help your child to know exactly what is going to happen in family life, for them and for you. They will know they are very important to you. It can reassure them that you and the other important grown-ups are there to take care of them even when things aren’t easy.