



How do young people experience home and family when living with both parents after separation and divorce?

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Agenda

How I undertook the research

The findings

Discussion





Sample

Age

11-12: 5
13-15: 7
16-17: 3
18-24: 7

Routine

50/50 : 11
35%+ : 4
Less than commonly defined : 7

Gender

Female : 12
Male : 6
Other : 3

Methods -Interviews

Family map

10 photos of home

Advice to a friend and the parent of the friend



Dear Grindy Parents.
Your child is
going through a lot
so please be there
no matter what. Be
honest about the
separation and don't
argue in front of
your child. It makes
them feel so guilty.
It's hard for everyone
please help them in
any way you
can. Thank you
for helping them
through this!

Why these methods?

Prioritising the voice of the child

Creating a social of the ordinary rather than the extreme. (Rose, 2014)

Visual materials reveal the ordinary and taken for granted. (Knowles & Sweetman, 2004b; Rose, 2014)

Making the familiar strange. (Mannay, 2010)

Family map allows the young person to show me their family in a concrete way thereby reducing the number of clarifying questions needed from me during the interview.



Findings



Time



Space



Relationships

Time as controlled

**Set routines
decided by
adults**

**Practicalities
affect routine**

**Young person's
preference can
affect the routine**

**Keeping things
fair and equal**

I don't think they told us until she'd like found somewhere to go so it was kind of like 'this is happening, Mum's moving out' and then it was almost immediately just a kind of - at Dad's Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Mum's Thursday, Friday and then alternating weekends. (Gavin, 21)

...when I did turn about 15 and my times did, that was when I started biasing towards my Mum because that's when my bus stop moved to my Mum's house, so things just came easier at my Mum's...I started spending more than 50% of my time at my Mum's, not that it was particularly like I never saw my Dad, it was just more like, my general weekdays were at my Mum's. (Imogen, 18)

Yeah, like, (laughs), there was one time I went and I really wasn't happy about it. I can't remember when, we'd had a massive argument and he'd like locked the door and he was trying to stop me from getting out because I was going to walk home or something (laughs) and I climbed out the window and I walked back to here and then after that it's kind of been, I haven't really, like it got to the point where they just couldn't really make me go. (Chloe, 15)

And we usually make up for it afterwards (Lauren, 14)

Time as variable

Time can be experienced differently depending on which day of the week it is, and which parent they are with or house they are in.

I'm not sure but it might make me feel a bit stressed. I have different things going on at my parent's houses. One, everyone's there and it's quite busy and we're usually getting ready for school, or we've just been to school. And at my Dad's is much more relaxed and we get to do our own thing. (Robin, 12)

It's quite different, um, because at Dad's house I have a little bit more responsibility I guess, um, because at Mum's... I can rely on Mum or John to wake me up in the morning when it's time to get ready for school. But at Dad's house I can't, he has to rely on me and so does Poppy, so that can be a bit stressful...(Lauren, 14)

Maybe if we got to do a few more things with Mum, 'cos we don't really do much with her unless it's a holiday. Because we just go to school, then come home, do homework, and then go to bed. (Ryan, 13)

Time as ordinary and precious

**Meal times
Watching tv together**

Communicating

Time together 'just us'

**Special occasions are
spent together**



I sit there with my Dad and watch, you know Hawkeye? There's a series on Netflix now, so yeah we watch that together every week. We'll probably watch that together tomorrow. (Jack, 11)

I used to talk to him every day for like the entire week until I got used to it and now it's like, every other day or sometimes every day. (Liam, 13)

That's something I do with Mum, the horses. That's like mine and her time. (Rebecca, 15)

Home as familiarity- A familiar place

"I've always felt stable, pretty much in my Dad's place because it's where I've lived since I was two months old. That to me is home. When I say home I mean my Dad's house." (Amy, 20)

"...my Mum left the house. Lived there with my Dad 'til I was ten, eleven and then he sold that house. I never really got over that because for me, throughout all the arguments and that, it was kind of my happy place, it was like where everyone I knew was." (Reece, 21)

"I remember going to visit my Dad and appreciating the fact that I was there but also because this, because it was a different atmosphere in the house, it wasn't familiar, and so I remember also not feeling fully comfortable at my Dad's house." (Rachel, 22)



Home as familiarity - 'stuff' & comfort

“So my Mum’s bedroom was definitely much more my bedroom than my Dad’s was...The room at my Dad’s was quite small as well so all of the stuff that I’d had at my family home had gone to my Mum’s, you know my bed, my desk, dressing table, you know, all of that stuff was over there, so that felt much more like my bedroom because it was all my stuff...” (Imogen, 18)

“So that is bunny. He’s like my little comfort teddy...which I take to my Dads and I take him many places, if I sleep somewhere...” (Paige, 12)

“That’s just the chair that I always sit on at Dad’s and I think it just reminds me of his house because I always sit in that chair and I remember all the nice things that I’ve eaten, and I don’t know, it’s quite comfy as well” (Leah, 14)

“When I come home, as well, the dog’s always waiting for me, either at the door, or, and he’s so excited to see me, so he really reminds me of home. Definitely.” (Ashley, 11)

Home as familiarity - familiar connections



"Erm with the fire, it made me think of like camping because we go camping like every year and we always toast marshmallows round the fire. And like when we're all sitting here watching tv together, the fire's always lit." (Jack, 11)



"This is my little shelf of knick-knacks, at, up there, and it reminds me of um all the places like I got them and some of things that I've done here at home and some of the things, there, at home. And then, when I come home, I put them on there and it just reminds me of all the places and things that I've done." (Ashley, 11)



Home is my territory - I do what I choose



"When I get home from school, I go straight to that afterwards to play Minecraft with Emma across the road or like er, or just to chill with people or yeah." (River, 14)



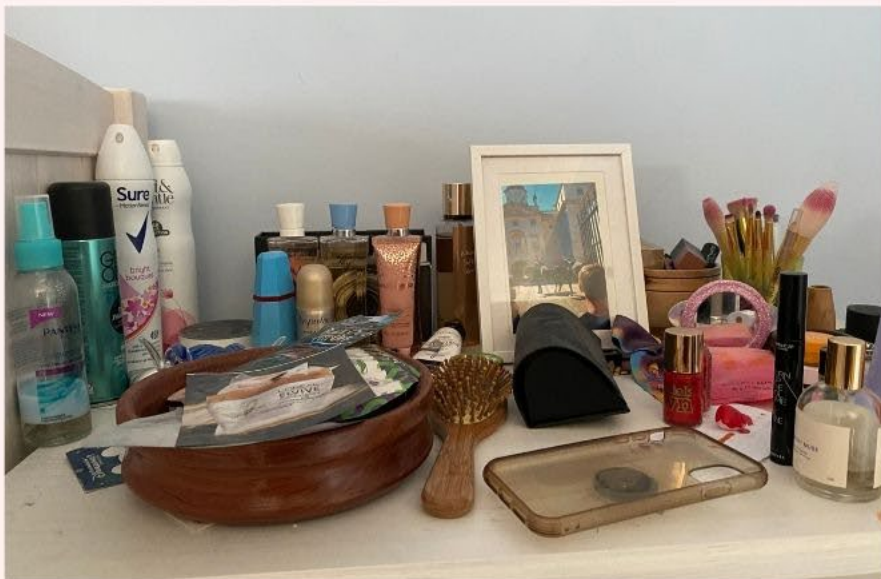
...whichever house, I spent quite a bit of time with my head in books. (Violet, 22)

"So, this one's at my Dad's house, and I just felt like this area, um, is kind of the main living area, I just felt kind of like, if I come to the house I'll just chill out there. It's also got the books in, um and I, at home I read a lot and I find that like a big thing that I do. Um, so I felt that that would be, yeah, um...yeah I just felt like that was a big part of this house, just like the chilling, the calm of it." (Olivia, 12)

Home is my territory - Leaving a trace



"So generally I had, I had sort of two sets of quite a lot of things, just day to day things, you know bathroom stuff and stuff like that, so I didn't feel like I was going for a sleepover one night to the next, or anything" (Alex, 24)



You can't do anything on it (the desk), 'cos it's full of stuff and there's a wall at the top which is also full of stuff, which you can like hang pens on there and like your hat and a book and stuff and its just so full of junk but I know where everything is on there though, so it's not that bad...(River, 14)

"And it's just, it's my room. I've got hanging plants and fairy lights and a tapestry and I feel so like 'ooooooh! This is my room' and I get so excited every time I walk in there. Which sounds so silly and childish, but I walk in there and I'm like 'this is my space' and that feels really, really good." (Amy, 20)



Home is my territory - Leaving a trace

"Not really, only things that like we got bought there, like sort of like little bits from like Christmas and birthdays but we didn't really have our own things there, like if you looked through the room there was kind of like mostly the other person who lived there most of the time, most of their things, but we had like little odd bits like little body scrubs, you know like bits you get like in your stocking from Christmas and things like that...Even though it was equal amounts of time, it'd be like live here, go to stay there, over, like, it's like we were sleeping over somewhere when we went there, but then, it's weird 'cos it's the same amount of time but it felt like we were staying here, going there." (Ava, 17)

"Like I say, if I wanted something it'd have to go on the window sill and even then it was like, me Nan used to have this Greek jar, jug even, so when she passed I took that and put it on there, because it looked classy and nice, it was allowed to stay but everything else had to be in a drawer, or out of sight or under the bed or I'd have to like sneak it somewhere" (Reece, 21)

Family as variously defined



Who counts?

Are they just blood relations, or could they be? (Imogen, 18)

My Dad's girlfriend, would that count? (Ryan, 13)

I am allowed to do...is it just family members or is it friends too? (Lauren, 14)



Parents
Siblings
Grandparents

I mean, like, I think of them as both home because like, if my parents are there, I call it home because like, my parents live there. So my Mum's house is home, my Dad's house is home, I just feel they're the same. (Liam, 13)

**Connections beyond
blood & marriage**

Er, they're kind. They care about me. They trust me.
Erm, I can't think of anything else. (Ashley, 11)

Family as variously defined

'Doing family' creates close bonds

...then she started living with us and that kind of thing. Probably a few weeks after that I considered her a part of my family... (Olivia, 12)

Mum says I am turning more into him [stepdad] every day. (River, 14)

Yeah, I don't see him [Dad] as like a, like an actual parent, that doesn't make, I see him as like a parent but not a parent, but he is a parent, I see him as a parent but not like doing parental stuff. There, that works. (River, 14)

I'm very glad he [her half-brother] actually came along because in regard to my Step Mum, she was part of the family, she is part of the family, but I think until, when he actually came along it was very much like, that solidified everything, so, yes, he is great and hilarious, so! (Rachel, 22,)



Family as varying in quality of relationships

...with the younger, like with the step siblings, like it was more of a case of when we were mixing with Marie and her kids...it was just a bit more friendly 'oh yeah, we'll come over!' and it was more...they didn't see me, like the step siblings, we're all really close and we see each other as like, siblings almost, but they don't see me as 'the older brother' in the same way, it's like they see me as more like the one they'll take the mick out of and it's a lot more of a friendly, like banter that we have, so I'd say with Leo and Lily, it's more we're starting to get what I've had with my step siblings pretty much from the start. (Gavin, 21)

Like, before John, it was like stress up here, like really high, panicking in the mornings because she has to get to the city to get us to school and then drive all the way back to somewhere further away, um to get to work, and yeah, when John turned up, because he can do the school run for us and he can help cook things, and stuff and um, yeah, so I think it was the change in Mum's stress levels that made it click. (Lauren, 14)

before that I had a parent relationship with my sister, and then I actually had siblings, and when we were all together, I did have that sibling relationship with my sister and even when she wasn't there, I still had that sibling relationship with them and that did me a lot of good, just having people to be a kid with and that was all. (Reece, 21)



Family as varying in quality of relationships

Connections are fragile

I think it would be nicer to see Jude a lot more, like that's our little brother and we used to see, we went from seeing him literally like um, like the equal amount of time like, growing up with him and things like that, went from only seeing him then two days a week which is quite hard, so probably a thing that I'd change is to see Jude more, yeah. (Ava, 17)

Strained relationships & conflict

Well, I get on with him [stepdad] like most of the time and I can just talk to him, but if it gets really bad then I usually just go to my Dad's for a bit and talk to my Dad about it. And my Dad agrees that he's a little overreactive sometimes, so he understands that with me... (Leah, 14)

Young people's relationship work

**Keeping the other
parent in mind**

Caught in the middle

Keeping the peace

Um, there was a lot of arguments, a lot of going back and forth between the parents, it's the kind of divorce they can't speak to each other at all. So, when I was eight, I'd be bringing messages between them, have them slag each other off to me. (Reece, 21)

I grew up so quickly. I was the mediator until my parents' hired mediator and solicitor, I was the mediator, from, probably from the age of six or seven.

...you know it wasn't really my choice completely to go between I had to like, read whether my Mum was sad I wasn't with her and therefore did I feel dutiful to be with my Mum or the other way round. (Alex, 24)

Yeah, they, basically yeah, so like to keep the peace we'd just kind of go with it. To make sure there weren't arguments and stuff, we'd just rather miss out on a day out just to like have no arguments if you know what I mean. Not that there was like loads, but like sometimes Dad would kick off if like something wasn't right or to plan. (Ava, 17)