

# PARENTAL SEPARATION

Parental separation can be an upsetting time for the whole family. Children sometimes find this difficult to process which can have an impact on their self-regulation and how they cope with differing emotions.

The following information, a mixture of websites and books and resources, may be of help to support you and your child/ren through this process.

## **Websites**

The following websites have proved to be very helpful:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/separation-and-divorce/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/divorce/>

<https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/find-information/managing-separation/helping-children-through-separation/>

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/parent-carer-or-family-member/applications-child-arrangements-order/resources-help-you-make-arrangements-are-your-childs-best-interests/supporting-your-child-through-divorce-and-separation>

<https://www.annafreud.org/resources/family-wellbeing/advice-and-guidance-for-parents-and-carers-in-conflict-or-separating/>

## **Books**

There are many books that can help to explain the process of separation and divorce for children and young people. A comprehensive list can be found on the Family Action website (copy attached to this information). Many of these books can also be found on YouTube if you would prefer.

## **Resources**

Any activities you can do with your child that they enjoy creates a safe space for you to be able to talk. Answer any questions they may have as honestly as you can. Children are more resilient than we think!

This separation heart is a nice activity to do with both parents. Your child can take your half of the heart with them when they visit the other parent to keep that sense of belonging.



## Books for children aged three to ten years

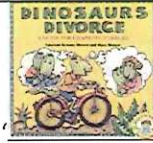
You can find some of these books read out loud on You Tube



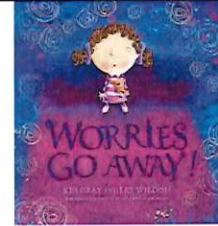
'The Huge Bag of Worries' by Virginia Ironside. Jenny has many worries and they follow her everywhere in a big blue bag. She meets her friendly old neighbour who opens Jenny's bag of worries and shows her that talking/sharing helps to get rid of the problems..



'Mum and Dad Glue' by Kes Gray & Lee Wildish -a little boy realises his parents' separation cannot be fixed but it isn't his fault and they will both still love him.



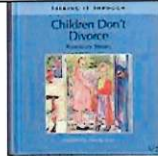
Dinosaur's Divorce by Marc Brown and Laurie Krasny Brown- Shows a range of possible feelings that 'divorce' produces using cartoon dinosaur characters. This is not a story, but a book of practical information explaining why parents divorce, what children might feel about it and what might happen afterwards.



'Worries Go Away' by Kes Gray & Lee Wildish -helps children to realise that it's better if they talk to someone if they feel worried.



'Goodbye Daddy' Brigitte Weninger -Tom is feeling sad after one of his father's regular visits. So Teddy tells Tom a story of a little bear in a similar situation. Father and Mother Bear live apart, although Father Bear often comes to visit. Like Tom, Little Bear gets upset when he leaves. Mother Bear explains that she and Father Bear used to argue a lot when they lived together, but now they are both happy and nothing changes their love for Little Bear. A useful book for discussing separation with young children.



Children don't divorce by Rosemary Stones & Nicola Spoor-Covering issues around divorce eg the effects on friends at school, visits by a social worker and the arrival of a new partner. The book looks at separation and divorce from the child's angle and offers a good opportunity for children to explore and express their feelings.



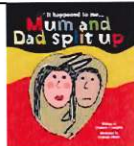
Was it the chocolate pudding? by Sandra Levins and Bryan Langdo  
A story about divorce in a typical family, with age-appropriate explanations with childlike innocence and humour, this book explains divorce from a kid's point of view.



What are Parents? by Kyme FoxbyLee  
Playfully rhyming words and beautifully illustrated pictures lead a child through a journey to discovering diversity while learning to accept their unique family. The book teaches children that there are all types of families in this world and what makes a parent is someone who loves, teaches, sings, laughs and is devoted to their child.



Love is a Family by Roma Downey- Lily storms home to her mother one day, demanding a real family. She's positive they are the weirdest family. Her single parent mum doesn't seem overly fazed, reminding her daughter that they are a



Mum and Dad split up by Elizabeth O'Loughlin and Kayleigh Adams  
The simple story of a family splitting up is told from a child's point of view and illustrated by a child, letting young readers know they are not alone. Designed for adults



'Two Homes' by Claire Masurel

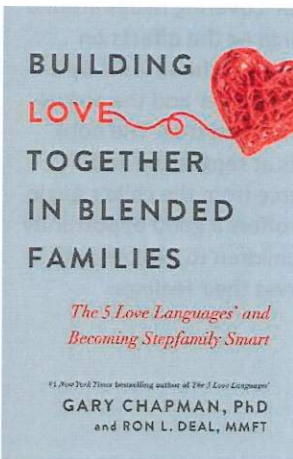
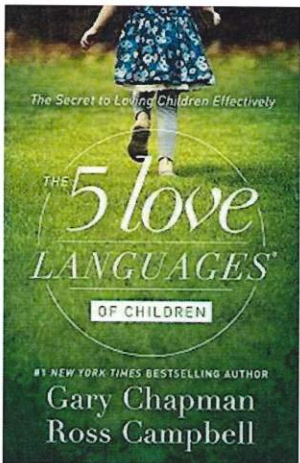
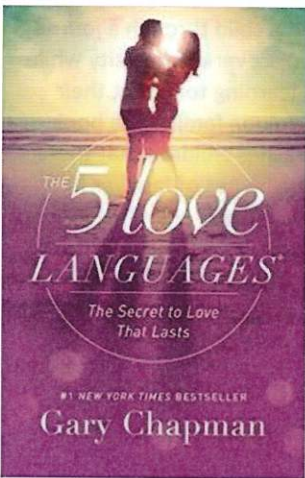
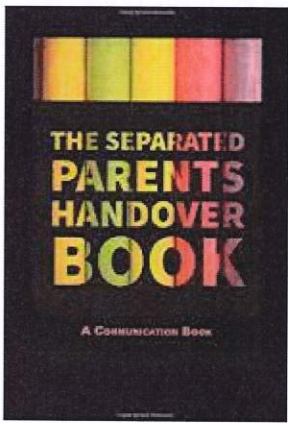
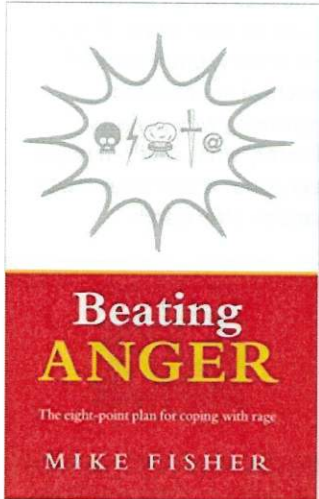
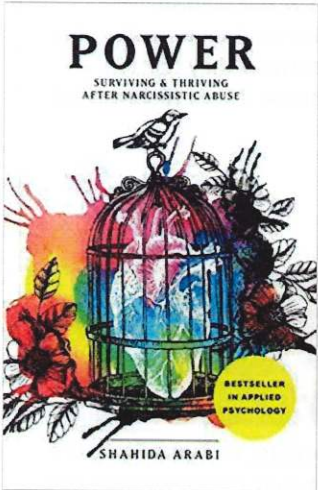
Alex has two front doors, two bedrooms and two very different favourite chairs. He has a toothbrush at Mummy's and a toothbrush at Daddy's. But whether Alex is with Mummy or Daddy, one thing

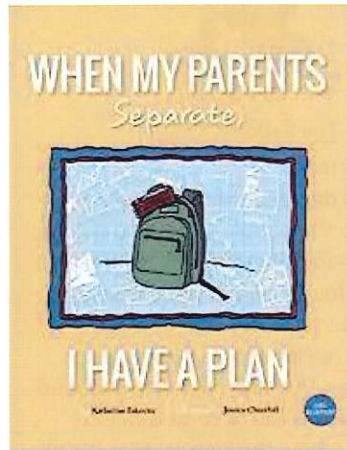
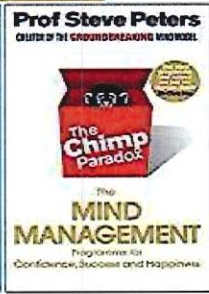
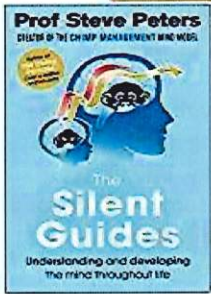
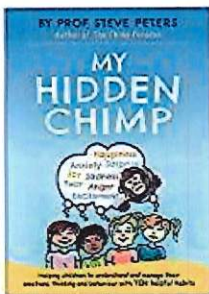


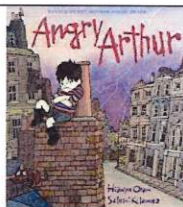
Goodnight Daddy by Angela Seward  
This is a realistic portrayal of a little girl's love for her absent father and her disappointment at being "stood up" by him. Her mother helps her realize that she can cope with being

<p>"small kind" of family, but real nonetheless.</p>	<p>and children to read together, or for older children to read by themselves, the book acknowledges children's distress and encourages children to find their own way of coping with the trauma and upheaval life has thrown at them.</p>	<p>stays the same: Alex is loved by them both by always. This portrayal of the life of a child whose parents are divorced is full of warmth, comfort and affection.</p>	<p>disappointed by someone she loves and move ahead with her life.</p>
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## Other useful books.....

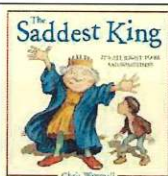






'Angry Arthur'

By Hiawyn Oram, Satoshi Kitamura A brilliantly illustrated book about a small boy's escalating rage when he is told that it's too late to watch television. His anger mounts and mounts, culminating in a 'universequake'! At the end of the story, Arthur can't remember why he was so angry in the first place. Good for opening up chats about feeling angry.



The Saddest King

By Chris Wormell  
The king has decreed that everyone must be happy, so the people smile all day long, even when bad things happen. One day, a small boy is found crying, so he is sent to the king to be punished. As the boy tells the king the reason for his sadness – his dog has died – the king begins to sob, and his smiling face is found to be a mask. Thanks to the boy, the king realises it's all right to be sad sometimes, and revokes his decree, at which point everyone has a good cry!

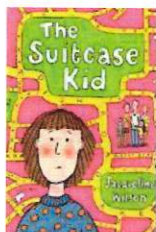


The Visitors who Came to Stay

by Annalena McAfee  
Katy lives a quiet life by the sea with her dad, occasionally visiting her mum at weekends. Then one day, Dad brings home a friend and her son, and their loud and colourful ways totally disrupt her peaceful world. In time, it gradually dawns on her that these visitors are going to stay for good – because the woman is her dad's new partner.

Books for children 10+ years...

Suitcase Kid by Jacqueline Wilson-this book deals very sensitively and humorously with divorce and how to cope with having two homes.



Distraught at her parents' divorce, Andy cannot decide who she wants to live with. She spends one week at Mum's house, the next at Dad's, but never really feels that she belongs anywhere. This difficult situation, which is worsened by animosity between Andy and her new stepfamilies, has no simple solution. Approached with humour and understanding, this is a very readable tale of confusion, guilt and ultimately optimism, with which many children (and adults) will identify.

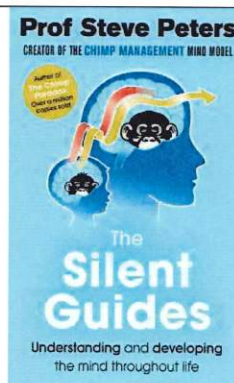
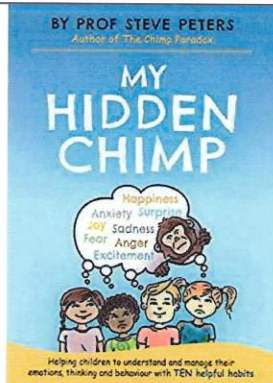
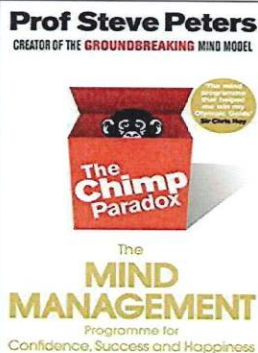
The Worry Website by Jacqueline Wilson

The Worry Website is Mr Speed the class teacher's idea of a place for his pupils to write their worries down anonymously and then get help with solving them from their peers. Linking the worries of seven children in the book through short stories, from divorced parents to living with a disability, and from feeling useless at school to nightmares at home.



My parents are divorced: how to keep it together when your mum and dad are splitting up by Florence Cadier, Melissa Daly and Claire Gandini

Practical and calming advice for any preteen or teen whose family is splitting up. The book includes sections on tension at home, being in the middle, visitation, what to expect at court, learning not to blame yourself, and much more.



# Our heart is one

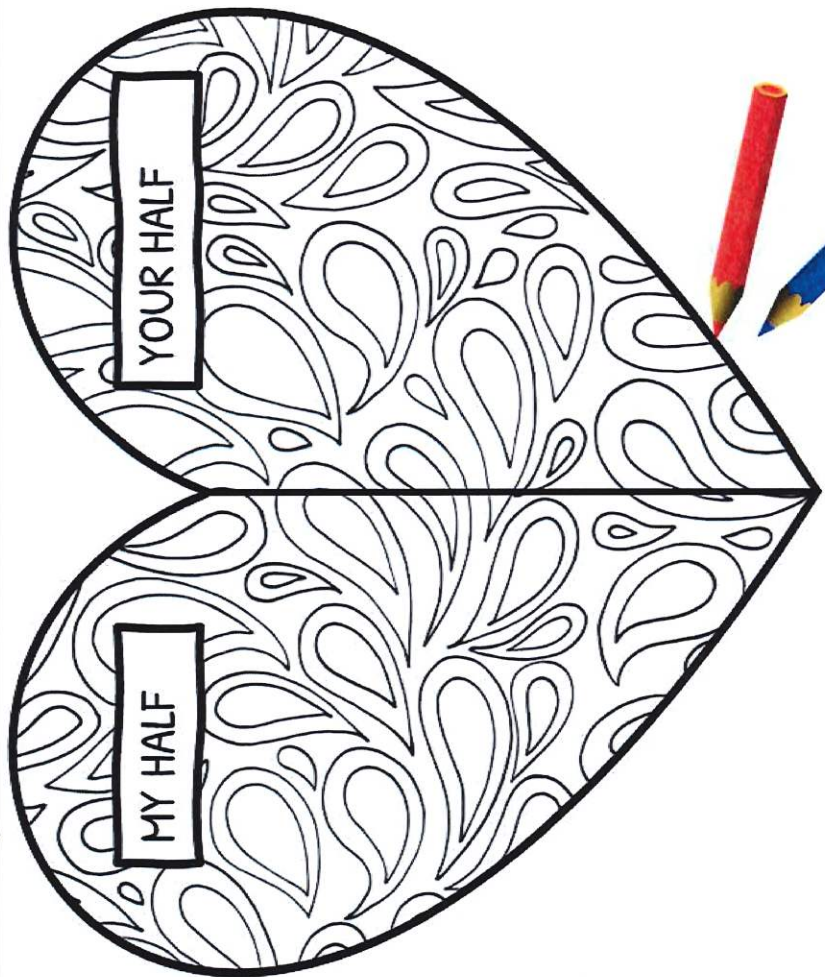


Here is a heart, that together we can share.  
Wherever you are, just know I am there.  
Let's colour it in and make it ours  
Then our heart will have super powers.  
Let's cut it in half when we part.  
We will each then have a piece of heart.  
I will keep my half close by me.  
You keep yours somewhere you can see.  
If you miss me during the night or day.  
Take it out and say  
'It's ok,  
To smile, relax, sleep or play'.

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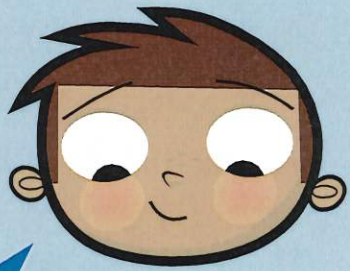
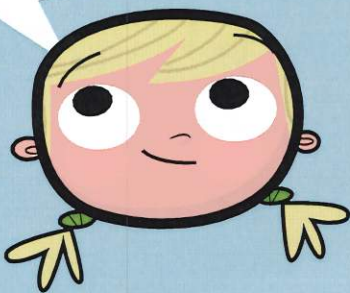


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read other children's stories inside



look inside for games and activities



# My family's changing



things will get better



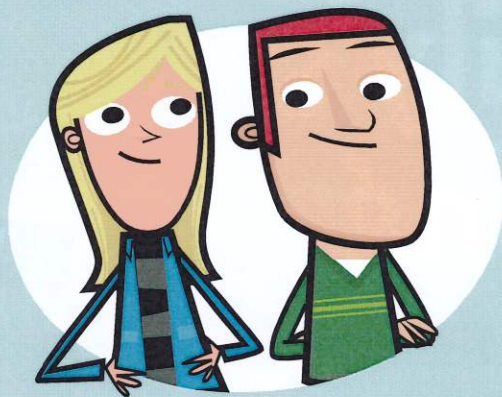
who can I talk to?



If you want more help, see the contact details on the back page

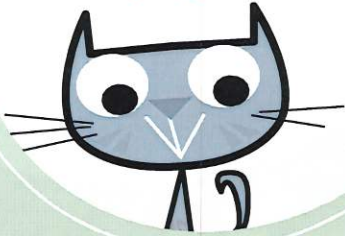
There are lots of reasons why some parents split up. Often it's because one or both of them is unhappy.

**It's not your fault that this is happening.**



It can be very confusing when parents split up. You could talk to an adult, like a parent or teacher, about any questions you have.

what about my cat?



where will I live?



do they still love me?

why are mum and dad angry?

who can I talk to?



## My family and friends

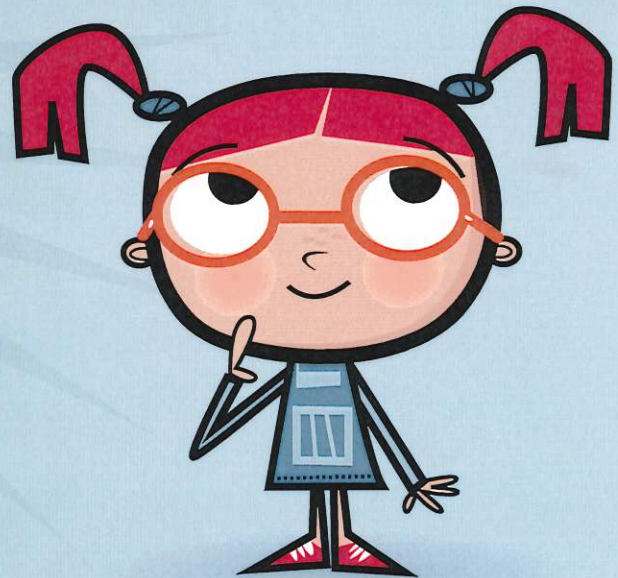
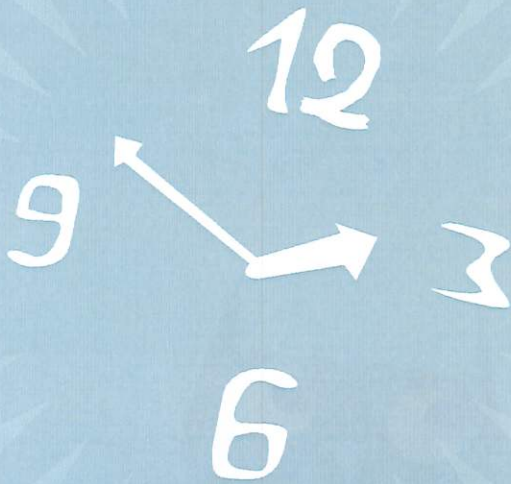
If you went to space, who would you take with you? You can draw your family and friends here...



When parents split up they have to think about lots of things, like where you will live.

Change is not always easy. But most children find that things get better over time.

things will get better over time



What are your three wishes  
for you and your family?

You might want to show  
this to your mum or dad,  
or another adult.

2

3

1



## What do you want for the future?

If you want, you can use this page to write down what you want to happen. You could show it to your parents. You might not get what you want, but it might help to write it down.



You might feel sad, lonely,  
angry or confused. That's ok.

Talk to people like your  
friends and family about how  
you feel.

Or do something that makes  
you happy. You could read a  
book or draw a picture.

lonely?

sad?

confused?

angry?

talk to  
someone

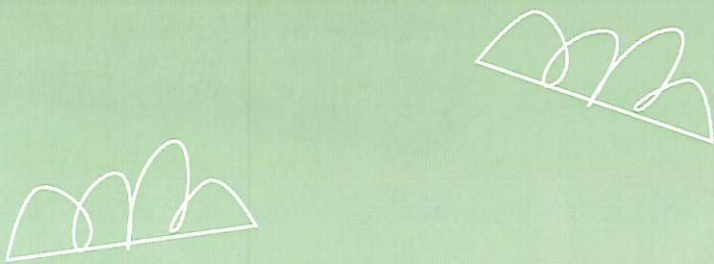




Sometimes we talk about feelings and sometimes we keep them hidden.

There are lots of feelings to find in this word search. Which of these feelings are you keeping hidden?

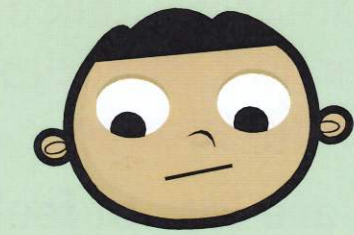
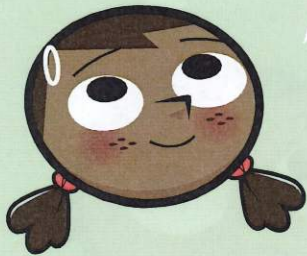
there are five more feelings in this word search – can you find them?



c	w	e	r	e	t	y	h	i	o	c
a	q	d	f	g	h	s	a	d	z	o
c	v	p	a	m	q	w	p	r	t	n
p	h	i	n	l	k	j	p	g	f	f
u	f	z	g	z	v	b	y	m	a	u
a	w	e	r	e	l	y	u	i	o	s
k	s	d	y	g	h	s	k	l	z	e
c	v	w	o	r	r	i	e	d	t	d
p	y	i	u	l	k	j	h	a	f	s
l	o	n	e	l	y	b	n	m	a	s
c	v	b	n	m	q	w	e	r	t	y

- angry
- confused
- happy
- lonely
- sad
- worried ✓

When mum and dad split up I moved to a new place with my mum. I was worried that I wouldn't get to see my friends any more, but when I visit my dad I get to see my friends too. Plus I have new friends where I'm living now.



My mum and dad have split up and I'm sorry to say it's for the better. They couldn't get on together and just argued.

# Other child

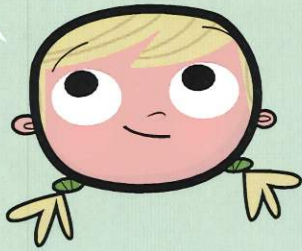
My friend's parents are getting a divorce. She tries to be ok with it but she just ends up being mean to cover up her feelings.



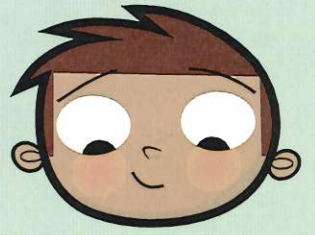
When my family changed I thought my life was ruined. But I found lots of different ways to help me cope – try to look for the positives!



My mum and dad are divorced but I got lots of help from my school and the rest of my family.



When my dad got remarried I was really upset but now I realise it's great because I have two families and I get to spend time with them all.



# ren's stories...

Me and my sister are still together with mum. I still live in the same house and go to the same school. I wasn't sure how often I would see my dad, but it turned out ok and I see him at weekends.



I thought that when it was just dad and me living together I wouldn't get to see my nana and her cat Betty and this upset me. I still get to see them at weekends and holidays though.



# Help!

## Childline

A special help line  
for children

0800 1111

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

## Voice

You can call this number  
if you are unhappy with  
decisions that have been  
made about your care

0808 800 5792

[help@voiceyp.org](mailto:help@voiceyp.org)

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

## National Youth Advocacy Service

Information and advice

0808 808 1001

[help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net)

[www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)

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