



Nesting – What is it and is it Good for the Children?

Separation, when a relationship breaks down, can be a very stressful process for the adults involved, but even more stressful for the children who are trying to cope with the changes.

One of the initial steps to make once the couple agrees that separation is inevitable, is to tell the children about the situation and then decide on the logistics of housing arrangements and contact arrangements. These decisions are often very emotional, but they also have very real financial consequence to the family. More often than not, parents cannot afford the costs of running two separate households that could provide for the same standard of living for their children. Furthermore, the constant moving between two houses can be quite unsettling for the children.

This is where the concept of nesting comes in.

Nesting is when the children remain in one home, this is usually the family home, to provide stability, consistency, and security. The parents alternate living in the home with the children. When the parents are not in that home with the children and care for them, they rent, share, or find an alternative property to live in, this can be with their own parents or even in a hotel. Essentially, it is reversing what would usually happen with the children going from one parent's home to the other, it is the parents who do all the moving.

This option has been around for a while, and it has gained more popularity recently, perhaps due to the cost-of-living crisis or parents trying to find alternatives that could potentially work for their families in terms of child arrangements.

It is by no means something available to all or even suitable to all, but in some cases, it can offer a solution. In others it will be simply impossible due to safeguarding concerns and potential hostility between the parents or the set up simply being too confusing or emotionally difficult for everyone involved.

One could argue that it may work as an interim arrangement, especially when the parents are on



talking terms and need time to sort out their finances and consider their options before any long-term changes are introduced to the children. However, that should be balanced against the potential negative emotional impact it could have on both the parents and the children of being in limbo and perhaps not fully moving on.

It is certainly something to consider and worth discussing. There is *'no one glove fits all'* solution here and it will very much depend on the individual family and their circumstances.

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