

PARENTHING WEEKLY

The question no app asks

Every co-parenting app is learning to score the grown-ups. None of them can tell you how your child feels about two homes.

Everyone is measuring the wrong person

This back-to-school season the co-parenting apps are all selling the same promise: score the adults. Tone meters, sentiment scanners, a message coached to look calm if it is ever read in court. The pitch is that if you can prove who stayed reasonable, the co-parenting must be working.

But the measure that actually predicts whether a child is okay sits on none of those dashboards. The research is consistent that it is the level of conflict between parents, not the tidiness of any one message, that shapes how children cope. And the perspective that tells you the most, how your child feels moving between two homes, is the one thing no app can score for you.

1 in 5
families in Ireland is a one-parent
family.

Census 2022. Behind many of them, a child quietly working out
two homes, two routines, two sets of rules.

THIS WEEK'S TIP

How to ask, without turning it into an inquiry

You find out how your child feels by asking, and the asking is braver than any score. Pick an ordinary moment, the car, a walk, drying the dishes, not a sit-down with a serious face. Ask about the small mechanics, not the big feelings: what is easy about going between the two houses, what is annoying, what one thing they would change.

Then listen without fixing it or defending anyone. You are not gathering evidence about the other parent. You are checking that your child feels steady, and letting them see that their view counts. In Irish law it already does: a child's views are meant to be heard in decisions about their care. At home, that starts with a real question.

● parenting.ie



**No app can tell you how
your child feels about two
homes. Only your child can.**

The most useful review this term is the
one you cannot automate.

A calmer week, not a cleaner court file

ParenThing is built for the ordinary week between two homes, not the worst one. A shared calendar and one place for the small stuff, so bedtime, the homework slot and who is on the school list are agreed once, and your child is not re-learning the rules at every handover.

It will not settle every hard thing between two adults. What it can do is take the daily friction off the table, so there is room left for the question that matters more than any tone score.

Get started free at parenthing.ie

● **parenthing.ie**

SOURCES

CSO, Census 2022 Profile 3: Households, Families and Childcare (one-parent families). cso.ie

Children and Family Relationships Act 2015, on hearing a child's views in decisions about their care.

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Interventions targeting inter-parental conflict and family outcomes, Journal of Child and Family Studies (2025).

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