



On Divorce

The Facts

Our society portrays a family as consisting of a father, mother and child/children. However, our society is diversified with all types of families, including divorced families. At first, divorce is a change that will affect everyone in the family, however; it is not something that should divide a family.

Reasons for divorce may vary from whether a spouse is facing depression, feels the relationship growing apart, argues with the other spouse or submits to alcohol, drug or physical abuse. These are just a few of the causes behind divorce. What one loses from a divorce can reflect upon their love and affection, emotional support, their sense of family and their financial stability. These changes bring added stress to the parents and even their children. During this transition children are scared and they feel as if their security is threatened.

Effects on a child

- Behavioral problems
- Decreased psychological well-being
- Low self esteem
- Academic difficulty
- Conduct problems
- Difficulty sleeping
- Emotional changes (i.e. anger, resentment, depression, loneliness, etc...)
- Change in appetite
- Relationship withdrawal
- High-risk behaviors (in relation to drugs, alcohol, stealing, sexual encounters, etc...)
- Self blame

These are just a few of the effects associated with what a child of a divorced family may go through. These stresses disrupt what, up until the point of family separation, was normal for the child. These effects differ according to the age of the child, however; may be caused by the same reasons. Difference in family structure, abandonment issues, parental conflicts and loss of an important family member are all causes of stress among divorced children.



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Transitional Support

Children, not matter what age, will be affected by divorce. However, the severity of such effects can be based on how both parents handle the situation. Divorce is a transition that everyone in the family should try to cope with together.

Here is some advice for parents provided by the Shared Parenting Information Group (SPIG) UK, which may help ease a child's stress level during this change in life.

- Provide answers and explanations behind the divorce
- Reassure your child that they are not the cause behind the divorce
- Provide continual support and love to your child in order to deter feelings of rejection and abandonment. This can be achieved by continuous contact via phone, visits, letters, etc...
- Steer away from defaming the other parent in front of the child
- Keep up communication between you and your ex-spouse
- Maintain a consistent schedule for child care, which will bring few changes to the child's daily routine
- Preserve the child's relationship with his extended family members on both ends of the family
- Be honest and explain how the divorce will impact the future and the realities associated with divorce.

Adapted from:
ClassBrain.com: Focus on Kids: The Effects of Divorce on Children
Divorcesource.com: Divorce your spouse, Not the Kids
Shared Parenting Information Group (SPIG) UK
Channing L. Bete CO, Inc.: About Divorce

Produced by
CFERT (800) 457-2736
Colorado Family Education, Resources & Training
Colorado State University
Funded by the Division of Behavioral Health and CSAP
Information for this PIP TIP collected from a variety of research based resources.

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