

Divorce impact on children

[Family](#), [Children](#)



Divorce can be an emotional and stressful event in any person's life. For a child the thought of not having both parents around can be overwhelming. In this essay we will look at the impact of divorce on three subgroups of children, preschool, school aged and adolescent children. Each group displays emotions and how they handle the change in the family dynamics in very specific ways based on their ability level. Parents can provide positive experiences for these children involved in a family separation in many different ways to assist in a healthy transition with the least amount of stress and conflict.

Both parents can lend a hand in putting the children in these situations first by working together even in not so perfect conditions. Working together to ensure the best outcome for the children involved takes time, effort and determination. Divorce Impact on Children Divorce rates are currently at an all time high. Divorce impacts pre-school children, school-aged and adolescent children with very personal and sometimes, permanent consequences. All children react to the emotional stressors of family divorce and separation.

Although divorce impacts everyone involved, children are impacted in different ways based on their level of maturity as well as their understanding of emotions and their use of coping skills. Divorce and the Pre-school Child Young child are vulnerable to the effects of divorce and separation, especially children young than 5 years old. The reasoning behind the vulnerability at this age is a combination of the interruption of the attachment relationships they have formed and the child's limited cognitive ability to understand what divorce is.

Preschool children have many reactions toward divorce to include feeling responsible, holding in anger, or may become aggressive and angry toward the parent he/she lives with (Amato, 1994). Some behaviors are normal during the beginning of the separation or divorce but should not last more than six months. Behaviors lasting longer may indicate a more serious problem or even developmental setbacks. When a preschooler feels insecure about the relationships with his/her parent they run the risk of some serious regression in development.

Children in this age group will benefit from overnight contact with each parent (Stahl, 2007). During this chunk of time with each parent provides them with the time needed to establish a routine at each house and to get settled in. It is important for parents to understand that the child should not be witness to any direct conflict. Stahl (2007) indicates that it is important to devise a parenting plan that will maximize the strengths of each parent. Developing a parenting plan will assist with issues to be resolved such as child custody and visitations.

Mediation is available to assist with co-parenting issues. Divorce and the school aged child When children reach school age their cognitive abilities increase and they begin to understand what divorce is. They increase social relationships other than those established with his/her parents. Socialization and being identified as a part of a group are important to the school aged child. As they skills such as academics they also learn how to begin expressing their feelings. Children in this age group may feel overwhelmed by the family conflict.

Amato (1994) indicates that possible reactions include: feeling deceived and a sense of loss, rejected by the parent that left, has trouble sleeping, or worries about the future. Complications in school may show up as well to include behavior problems and academic concerns. Parent should work hard to provide a parenting plan that will affect the school aged child in a positive way. Reassure them that everything will be alright, just different from what they are use to. Answering questions about the changes that are getting ready to take place can help the child ease into the issue of custody and visitation.

Using books to help them talk about feelings work well with children of all ages. Parent should remind the child that he/she is not responsible for the divorce and that both parents still love them. They should also keep an eye out for signs of depression and fear displayed by the child. This will aid parents in spotting a problem early on in order to seek professional help if depression is prolonged or intense. Divorce and the adolescent Adolescents understand divorce but they do not accept the new changes in the family dynamics.

They are prone to responding to their parent's divorce with acute depression, suicidal ideation, and sometimes violent acting out episodes (Eleoff, 2003). Although adolescents have a more complex level of thinking they tend to focus on the moral issues of divorce and will often judge their parents' decisions and actions. Behrman & Quinn (2004) provides some feelings that adolescents may display: feelings of abandonment, feel the obligation to take on more adult responsibilities in the family, they may

withdraw from friends and favorite activities or act out such as using bad language and being rebellious.

Parent should always maintain lines of communication and reassure the child that both parents love them. They should try to continue to be involved in their lives by honoring special family activities. Whenever possible, parent should keep up with children's progress at school and other activities such as sporting event. The adolescent should be told who will be attending special occasions, especially if you plan to bring a new romantic interest. By doing this can cut down on unnecessary conflict and behaviors from the adolescent.

Adolescents should be allowed room to have a say in the parenting plan when possible, and reasonable. Many children will have a preference as to which house they would like to live at and have visitations to the other house on weekends with the other parent. This can help discourage rebellion by the adolescent when they feel that the parents are listening to them. Conclusion Divorce is tuff on everyone involved. Parents must reassure children involved that they are not the reason for the divorce and the mommy and daddy still loves them. Divorce can have a major impact on the well being and development of children and adolescents.

Younger children display an array of symptoms and feelings from holding anger inside to feeling rejected by the parent who left. Adolescents can hold feelings of anger and fell obligated to take on more adult responsibilities. Although all these feeling are important for parents to address it is also important to recognize major concerns and not be afraid to seek professional

help from a therapist or other mental health professional. In all the issues of divorce, just remember that parents do not have to do it alone; counselors and mediators are available to help make sense of it all.