

# Does divorce of parents harm children?

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



Divorce has become prevalent, but what are its effects on children? Many researchers began studying this question in the 1970s, and they have learned a great deal about children and divorce. One thing researchers have learned is that we must distinguish between children's initial or short-term reactions to marital disruption and their long-term (more than two years) adjustment. Children's long-term reactions vary greatly, depending on how the parents respond to the child during and after the breakup.

In particular, the most important factors that shape long-term adjustment are (1) the amount of parental conflict children are exposed to and (2) the quality of parenting or childrearing competence they receive. In addition to these two factors, children's reactions are affected by social or environmental factors such as living in a neighborhood with high crime and violence. Economic factors are an important aspect of divorce, as most single-parent mothers have more economic stress and can provide fewer resources and opportunities for their children following divorce.

Economic stress leads to increasing family mobility and an unwanted decrease in kinship networks and family support systems. This becomes especially problematic when it deprives families of grandparents and other kin who can help parents cope in the aftermath of divorce. Yes: Judith S. Wallerstein, from "Growing up in the divorced family" *Clinical Social Work Journal* (Winter 2005) Clinical psychologist Judith Wallerstein argues not only that children are harmed when their parents' divorce but also that these negative side effects continue into their adult lives.

Wallerstein claims that adolescents of divorce families often become involved with drugs, alcohol, and sexual activity earlier than adolescents of intact families. And once they are adults, she claims that these children suffer from acute anxiety when attempting to love and form permanent relationships. Parent-Child relationships not only change at the breakup but continue to change during the years to follow. When this bond is broken by divorce, a wide range of passions spills over into all domains of the family.

These emotions, as noted, have the power to derail parent-child relationships that were in place during the intact family. One immediate consequence of these chronic uncertainties in the post-divorce family is the eruption of persistent anxiety in the child, setting into motion a hyper vigilant tracking of each parent. They grow up insecure. They worry about another loss or sudden change in their family or household. They worry for many years about their parents' well being.

The central finding of our study is that, adulthood, the experience of having been through parental divorce as a child impacts detrimentally on the capacity to love and be loved within lasting, committed relationship. At young adulthood when love, sexual intimacy and commitment and marriage take center stage, children of divorce haunted by the ghosts of their parents' divorce and terrified that the same fate awaits them. In addition to overcoming their fear of failure, they have a great deal to learn about the give and take of intimate living with another person, about how to deal with differences and how to resolve conflicts.

Children recover, typically within a 2 year period, and then resume their normal developmental progress, if three conditions obtain: 1) the parents are able to settle their differences without fighting; 2) the financial arrangements are fair and; 3) the child has continued contact with both parents over the years that follow. Our findings are that where parents got along both maintained caring relationships with their children of the first marriage, undiminished by their post-divorce relationships, and where both parents were doing reasonably well in their personal lives, the childhood and adolescence of the children were better protected.

Personal Evaluation: Are people just too selfish to make commitments or care about others anymore? Have people become too lazy or unwilling to work on the problems that exist in every relationship? I believe people still are capable of making mistakes. It's not that divorce is such a bad thing... it's more that people are making the mistake of rushing into marriage for whatever reason and finally coming to grips with reality. Divorce is not questioned, in my opinion, when one of the spouses is abusive an adulterer, or other legally or morally wrong issues. I believe that divorce can harm children.

However, I also believe that God can heal those wounds and He can teach them how to live healthy lives. In my opinion, divorce leaves a mark. Like the books says: "... impacts detrimentally on the capacity to love and be loved within lasting, committed relationship. At young adulthood when love, sexual intimacy and commitment and marriage take center stage, children of divorce haunted by the ghosts of their parents' divorce and terrified that the

same fate awaits them. " I do agree with what the book says. I also come from a broken family and it's been hard to come to the place where I know and believe in commitment of marriage and love.

In my case, my adoptive family had to do a lot with my healing process and the role model they were to me. A loss of family identity often makes one feel inadequate, inferior or incomplete. And that's how I felt at the beginning but the truth of the matter is; none of us are, whether we come from a broken home or not. Bibliography: Slife, Brent. Taking Sides- Clashing views on Psychological Issues. FIFTEENTH ed. Boston: McGraw Hill Companies, 2006. Newton, Lee. " Divorce is like a Death in the Family. " About. com. 1 Mar. 2009