

Cause and effects of divorce on children essay sample

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



Divorce in today's society is very common. Divorce also has terrible and lasting effects on children. In today's society, marriages are less likely to last as they did 20 years ago. There are over 1 million children that suffer each year because of the divorce of their parents. There are usually children involved in almost all divorce cases. " Moreover, half of all children born to married parents this year will experience the divorce of their parents before they reach their 18th birthday. This fact alone should give policymakers and those whose careers focus on children reason to pause." (2) When things are not working in a marriage, it is usually because of a breakdown of communication, common goals, or trust, and often this starts the process of a divorce. A divorce is a very painful process with detrimental effects on children that are involved. Depending on the child's age when the divorce takes place, depends on how much trauma that child will endure. "" Social science research reveals that the effects of divorce not only impact a child into adulthood, but they also affect the next generation of children as well."(Linaman)."

There are three common effects on children, they are depression, behavior problems and economic hardship. The psychological effects are normally considered long term and the hardest to deal with for children involved. The easiest of all effects of a divorce is a child is behavior outburst normally displaying aggression and a feeling of not caring about anything or anyone anymore. When parents are going through a divorce, they feel the need to protect their children from pain and anguish. Unfortunately, this is impossible. Divorce causes children to go through a number of mixed

emotions. Some of the different emotions are fear of abandonment, feeling of hopelessness and fear of fault or guilt.

When one of the parents leave, it is hard for children to understand the concept of the situation. This causes children to fall prey to the fear of abandonment. The fear of abandonment and losing one of the parents is devastating on a child. How a child perceives their homes normally sets the level of damage children are going to have to cope with throughout the divorce and thereafter. If a child perceives the home as stable, they may handle a divorce well, but if a child perceives a home as frightening and scary place, they may try to avoid dealing with it at all. The trauma that a child endures will probably be worse than a child in a stable household environment will. The most important issue that affects the level of perception and a level of damage is the age of a child when the parents divorce. Younger children will normally take a divorce of their parents more personally and handle it worse than an older child would. Children always feel that since one parent has abandoned them, the other will leave also.

Children also go through feelings of hopelessness. This is caused by not being able to better the situation. They become stressed because they cannot bring their parents back together. Another feeling that children deal with when going through a divorce is feeling of fault. They feel that it is their fault or that they had done something wrong to make that parent leave. There are many things that go through a child's mind that make them become depressed during a divorce. The psychological effects are more categorized as long-term effect that leave the children feeling responsible

and blaming themselves for the guilt of a divorce everyone going through. Most children exercise a sense of loss during a divorce that can only be compared to as lost of a loved one. Feeling of rejections and loneliness normally confuses a child to the point of depression and some times suicide. “ The single best predictor of teen suicide is parental divorce and living in a single parent household.” (2). The struggle as a child try’s to keep in contact with the absent parent without offending the parent that they are still are with becomes stressful and some times damaging to a young child.

Another effect on children involved in a divorce is that the children develop behavior problems. Some children react to divorce by acting out in violence. The deepest of all emotions is anger, and it is the easiest to recognize in older children that are coping with a divorce. The anger is normally turned toward both parents and sibling in the household. The behavior change in a child is almost immediate after the announcement of a divorce. The behavior outburst and disruption in a child’s life are signs that a child is having a hard time dealing with the idea of parents splitting up. Academic problems with school activities and grades and physical displays of anger are the first of behavior effects to be seen in a family that is falling apart.(2) “ Children from divorced families drop out of school at twice the rate of children from intact families.” (2) Verbal abuse would consist of talking back, yelling or cursing at their parents, elders or authority figures.

By acting out this way, a child may become a problem in school by talking back and disrespecting teachers or other students. This can lead to having problem students that may become expelled from school or a child that is

always in detention. Also, if a child is always constantly in trouble the child may not be interested in school and may even fail and even eventually drop out. “ Children whose parents divorce have lower rates of graduation from high school and college and complete fewer college courses.” (2) Children from divorced homes performed more poorly in reading, spelling, and math and repeated a grade more frequently than did children from intact two-parent families. “ The college attendance rate is about 60 percent lower among children of divorced parents compared with children of intact families.” (2).

“ Children of divorced parents are significantly more likely to become delinquent by age 15, regardless of when the divorce took place, than are children whose own parents are married.” (1&2). Older children and even younger children are turning to drugs and alcohol to cope with the emotional stress of losing one of the parents in the household. Girls tend to become sexual active with older partners, as they long to find a father like figure to replace the parent that is no longer a direct part of their lives. Boys tend to have shorter relationships refusing to get close for fear of being rejected again as they might have felt when their mother left them with his father as a child during a divorce. These children are just trying to find someone that they feel will not abandoned them as they feel their parents have done to them.

Another form of behavior problems is physical violence. Physical abuse consists of fighting, throwing things and hitting people with objects. The physical abuse is usually acted out on classmates, siblings and parents.

Other children react by acting out with destructive behavior. This allows them to release all of the built up anxiety and anger inside of them. They may break things in the house, their toys and things that belong to the parent. Another sign of behavior problems is sleeping disorders. When some children are going through a traumatic time, they tend to sleep less. When children are deprived from sleep, it is hard for them to function normally in everyday activities. All of these are factors that bring on behavior problems within a child, which can last until they become adults.

Economic hardship is a major effect on a child involved in a divorce battle. Children suffer in this case because they are not financially able to have things that other children are allowed to have. " Often mothers are left to support the children and the dad's leave and abandon them."(2) Most moms do not have the proper education or training to obtain the higher paying jobs. In this case, the mom's usually have to both go back to school and work at the same time, or work two jobs. The result of this is that the mother hardly has time to spend with their children. Another result of economic hardship is that you would have to move and adjust to a smaller apartment in low cost living areas if the parent cannot afford to stay in the present home. Usually this type of housing is in an undesirable area, maybe drug infested and poverty stricken.

Divorce can put a lot of strain on a child and cause them to become stressed. Children handle divorces in many different ways. Depending on the way, the parents conduct themselves while going through the divorce has a lot to do with the child's mental health. A child that has been subject to a

divorce tries to navigate the painful process that is broken into stages. “ In therapy, the psychological effects in children are normally over looked as a child grows up and into adults themselves.”(1) These children typically are found to have poor relationships and an unbalanced social life as they struggle to find where they belong in this world. The physical effects that affect everyone are the choices that children make while thinking that they will never survive the divorce. Drugs, alcohol, and the sexual behaviors of the older children are just a few effects that a divorce can have on the children. “ The poor decisions of the current generation to enter in to marriage lightly at such a young age, leaves our society open for a generation of parents that are emotional basket cases to raise our future generations.”(1) There is no way to protect a child completely from the effects of divorce. Divorce in general is a hard thing to go through for anyone at any age.

“ Only acts of war and the events of natural disasters are more harmful to a child’s psyche than the divorce process.” (The Newsletter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, summer 1997).

References

Internet resource:

World Wide Web:

(1) Linaman, Dr. Todd E. “ The Effects of Divorce on Children and Families”.

Healthy

<https://assignbuster.com/cause-and-effects-of-divorce-on-children-essay-sample/>

Family Living article – Marriage. [<http://www.flc.org/hfl/marriage/mar-flf03.htm>].

(2) Fagan, F. P. & Rector R. (2000). No. 1373 “ The Effects of Divorce on America”.

Produced by the Domestic Policy Studies Department. Published by The Heritage

Foundation. [<http://www.nd.edu/~afreddos/papers/fagan-divorce.htm>].