

**“Divorce: A teacher’s perspective on how it affects
primary age children and their behavior in an
elementary school setting”**

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Statement of Purpose

There are an overwhelming number of children that are forced to deal with the experience of divorce each year. Today, nearly forty percent of first marriages end in divorce, sixty percent of divorcing couples have children, and over one million children experience the divorce of their parents each year. (Kurtz, 1994) The increasing number of divorces is an indication that today's society can no longer neglect the turmoil that children are asked to overcome when their parents separate. This paper will examine how divorce affects a child's education and classroom behavior at a primary level. The effect that divorce has on a child is significant and steps should be taken to both help them to understand that they are not alone and to ease their pain. As both a future educator and a child of divorced parents, I am able to speak from both a professional and from a child's perspective.

Introduction

Divorce affects virtually every aspect of a child's life. Understanding why their parents do not want to live together anymore is a lot to ask of a young child and as the situation unfolds, it may seem to turn their lives upside down. With divorce comes a multitude of mixed emotions ranging from abandonment to guilt to anger. All of these feelings will eventually lead to some type of behavior that needs to be understood by the adults that are closest to the child, especially parents. When a child enters school, the teacher becomes one of those adults.

The stigma that divorce once carried has since been erased and in turn, now seems to be the norm in today's society. By the time they turn eighteen, approximately fifty to sixty percent of all children in the United States will have been affected by divorce (Furstenberg, 1990). Divorce rates in this country began to rise shortly after the Civil War and continued on this trend for nearly a century. The largest increase in divorces occurred between the mid-1960s to the late 1970s, steadied in the 1980s, but increased yet again at the turn of the century and shows no signs of letting up in the future (Furstenberg, 1994). It is for this reason that teachers need to be educated about the tendencies and problems that accompany this event. This paper will examine the rising problems that divorce is causing and how it is affecting the children of today's society. The main focus will be upon how this affects the behaviors of primary age children in a school setting. This entails embarking upon the emotional, psychological, and economical changes that may take place in a child's life due to divorce in their family. Our question is; how can parents and educators understand what is in the best interest of the child? Each and every situation is different, but if signs of concern are identified, there is hope that positive steps can be taken to help the child.

Research Statistics

Between the 1960s and the 1980s, the United States divorce rate jumped by nearly 250 percent (Galston, 1996). This is a huge justification that more and more children will be and are dealing with marital disruption everyday. Divorce is said to be the second most stressful situation for a child to overcome after the death of a family member

(Amato, 1994). The connection between these two traumatic events is the absence or loss of a parental figure. Children dealing with one of these two events tend to go through many of the same emotions such as guilt, sadness, denial, anger, and abandonment. This comparison alone indicates the intensity of this experience to a child.

The statistics associated with divorce and its affects on children brand this an issue that can potentially affect a child's behavior in a classroom setting. These numbers are evidence that divorce can have very negative affects on a child if the situation is not handled in a loving and understanding manner. Divorce is well on its way to becoming more common than marriages that last and for that reason, it is imperative that the affects of this separation on the children are researched and investigated thoroughly, so that helpful support can be offered accordingly.

The statistics show that on an "average", children with divorced parents demonstrate more "acting out" behaviors when compared to intact families, or families with two custodial parents. These behaviors may include moodiness, absent-mindedness, nervousness, poor grades, etcetera (Amato, 1991). The important thing to remember when using the term "average" is that this does not mean that all children of divorce have behavior problems that require professional help. Actually, the majority of children do not have serious problems following a divorce, but when compared to children of intact families, more children of divorced families need help (Amato, 1994). There are so many factors to take into account when exploring a child's well-being. It may turn out that a child is better off in a divorced family rather than in a household in which there are two parents that argue a lot. The amount of parental conflict that a child witnesses prior to

) and during a divorce play a very important role in the amount of problems the child will endure (Amato, 1994).

An educator has a very important role in a child's life and therefore, is a huge asset for intervention purposes. Some researchers claim (Amato, 1994) that there is no evidence that supports the idea that their age or developmental stage plays a role on how divorce will affect their classroom behavior, while still others declare that there is (Amato, 1994). There is also the question of whether different genders handle this situation differently. Most of the research related to these subjects is very contradictory and does not seem to have any viable evidence to support the different psychologists' theories.

) Paul Amato is a Professor of Sociology and Demography at Pennsylvania State University and has spent a large part of his adult career researching the topic of how children are affected by divorce. (<http://athens.pop.psu.edu>) In 1991, Amato examined the results of 92 studies involving 13,000 children ranging from preschool to young adulthood and came to the conclusion that children from divorced families were on the average somewhat worse off than children from intact families. This statement seems to be the consensus among the professionals that have done studies on this subject. This is substantial evidence that if a child's behavior appears to be worsening in the classroom, intervention of some sort should take place.

) Judith S. Wallerstein and Joan B. Kelly are both doctors of child psychology who conducted an investigation that became known as the "California Children of Divorce Project". They spent an extended period of time interviewing and chronicling the lives of sixty divorcing families and their children in the 1970s. There were 131 children

) involved in this study that ranged from ages two to eighteen. Wallerstein and Kelly focused on the children and how it affected their lives. When examining the schooling aspect of the problem, they found that the great majority of children in the study were not described by their teachers as behavior problems in the classroom and had a good relationship with their teachers. They found that most of the problems came from the poorest students. They acquired this information through interviews and observations. When asked about changes in behavior, it was observed that the children reacted at different points in the process of their parents' divorce, while some even a year later. Approximately two-thirds of the children experienced changes in the classroom ranging from a rise in anxieties and being preoccupied to feeling a huge sense of grief and sadness, but there was no change reported in one-third of the children. (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980) These women conducted this experiment at a time when there was very little information on how divorce affects the children and it has been integral in determining existing problems that occur during a divorce.

A Review of the Literature

“ Teachers once were expected, first, to teach. No more. Today, that is far down on the job description. Now, we are expected to raise them, to impart to them some semblance of culture, to monitor their health, to provide therapy and counseling, to protect them from gangs and drugs, to feed them breakfast and lunch, to motivate them to work hard, to spark their curiosity and love learning, to entertain them, to foster their “self-esteem”, and then, only if we have produced children who care to be bothered, to teach them to read and write and do sums”.

- written by Chuck Norman

Educators are asked to play many different roles in their students' lives from counselor to confidante. It is important for teachers to fully understand the factors outside of school that affect a child's behavior and academic performance in school. It is only then that children can get the education that they both need and deserve. One of the most common situations that a teacher is faced with is that of how to help children with divorced parents. Children are the silent and innocent victims of their parents' failed marriages. Each and every situation is different and may or may not cause problems in the elementary classroom, but every child needs to know that there are people in the school that they can talk to and that are there to help.

Divorce has the capability to change everything in a child's life and in their eyes, always does. They are asked to completely change their lives to accommodate a broken relationship between parents. One of the most common changes that families of divorce go through is a drastic change in economic status because of the loss of one income. This affects a child in more ways than one. First, there will be less money to be spent on food, clothing, books, and educational resources which can all make a significant amount of difference in a child's education. Second, it is more likely that the custodial parent will be forced to work longer hours and therefore, not be home to help with school work or just be there for their children. This problem can escalate very quickly if it is not acknowledged and dealt with in a timely manner both by the teacher and the parents.

Another change that all children of divorce go through is the separation from one parent. This can be a very traumatic event for a young child and can fester some really deep feelings of guilt and abandonment. Although it is inevitable that this separation is unavoidable, it can have a better outcome if both the mother and the father of the child

have conversations about the situation and ensure their unconditional love and support. As far as the child's education, it has been found that the most successful students in this situation have the support and love of both their parents. There are many times in which adults dealing with the contemplation of divorce become consumed by the problems of their relationships, and in turn, tend to neglect their children's needs. Kids have their own needs that exist quite apart from those of their parents. It has also been observed that parents tend to think that it is better for their children if they are not involved or informed whatsoever with their divorce and this has been found to be false. This is not a subject that should be ignored or pushed under the rug, but rather it should be dealt with in an open, compassionate, loving manner in which the children are given the opportunity to answer any questions that they may need answered to better understand why their parents do not love each other anymore and will not be living together (Gable, 2000).

Children may be forced to make changes in either their home or their school and possibly both. This depends on a number of reasons ranging from whether or not the custodial parent will be able to afford the same type of accommodations on one income to parents wanting to live in the same area that may cause painful memories. School, not to mention their home, is a symbol of stability in this type of situation and if this is changed, it may cause a child to become very withdrawn, unhappy, and react to situations in ways that are abnormal to their personalities. It is very important to inform children in advance of any big changes that will be taking place and discuss how to handle them. Another very traumatic event of divorce is the question of "who will have custody?". This affects everybody and therefore, if it is possible, any type of public battle should be avoided. There are situations in which it is obvious who should be the custodial parent because of

extenuating circumstances that may range from abuse to neglect to absence. In retrospect, children are most likely to be successful and well behaved if both of their parents are equally engaged in their lives. This includes every aspect of their lives such as home, school, sports, hobbies, etc.

When comparing how divorce affects children of different ages, it was found that older children and young adolescents are affected much more than primary age children. They remembered less about the events that led to the separation of their parents. (Wallerstein, 1984). Elementary school age children are developing both cognitively and emotionally at an appalling rate and in turn, are able to understand the situation more accurately than that of a toddler or infant. Children between the ages of six and eight years old, often believed that the divorce was their fault and seemed to hold unrealistic hope that their family will reconcile their differences. (Gable, 2000) As far as feelings are concerned, these primary-aged children tend to experience feelings of loss, rejection, guilt, and abandonment.

Researchers have found that there are five major contributors to any suffering and stress that a child will go through during or after their parents' divorce. First, a child will go through a considerable amount of more suffering if they have to witness and deal with a lot of conflict in the home between their parents prior to the separation. This is not only hard for the child to witness, but also takes needed attention away from them. The second main contributor is how long the child has had to endure the conflict. The longer the amount of time, the more stress and suffering the child is likely to go through. Third, children will be more likely to understand their problems and deal with them in a positive way if their parents' can resolve their conflicts in a mature and timely manner. The fourth

contributor is how each parent is handling the divorce. In order to lower the level of stress that their children are going through, they must show strength and handle it in a way that the children will understand that it was for the best. The last contributor is the resumption of parenting roles, or how the parents will split up the parenting duties between the two of them. This should be discussed so there are no disputes in the future that may heighten any problems that already exist (Amato, 1994).

One of the most difficult things for a primary-age child to understand and rationalize is not having one parent there all of the time. At this age, both boys and girls do not fully understand why divorces take place and feel like it is their fault. Adults, at times, may find themselves feeling like they are taking all the right steps to ensure the emotional and physical health of their child, when in truth the child may not be letting on any difficulties that they are having. Primary age children usually tend to hide their deepest feelings from their parents in fear of causing any more problems between them.

When young children are separated from one parent for an extended period, they usually form new and different relationships with the other parent. All of the factors that have been discussed have an impact on how well a child behaves in a classroom setting. As stated before, children perform best when the open conflict between parents is limited and when they are able to maintain good relationships with each parent individually.

As an educator, it is important to be aware of all of the factors that weigh on how a child will be affected by their parent's divorce. A child's age plays a big part in their understanding of the process and the changes that will take place. An upper elementary to teenager will be affected significantly more than a toddler because of their knowledge of divorce and their memories of happier times. A child may and most likely will,

respond worse if they are forced to choose between parents. A child's response depends on their individual personalities and perceptions of divorce. Other factor that it may depend on is remarriage and when it occurs, the extended family involvement, court battles, the parental relationship after the divorce, and sex of the custodial parent and the child (www.divorceandkids.com). All of these factors may cause a child to react differently and this is why it is so important to understand and be able to detect any tendencies in the behavior of a child at school. The most challenging part of this is whether or not any of this information will be made available to an educator and many times, it is not and a teacher is asked to make choices based on instinct.

Researchers have found that children in early elementary grades are at a stage in which they are beginning to understand what divorce is and how it will affect them. This age group is likely to react to a divorce in a very wide variety of ways depending on the circumstances that were discussed. There are behavior patterns that have been found to be a characteristic of the "average" young child. Most will feel a sense of loss or abandonment by one or both of their parents. Children between the ages of six and nine years old will tend to worry about the small changes that they will be forced to endure and whether or not the new procedure will work. They may seem very withdrawn from school and friendships, but this is largely due to the fact that they may be worried about the divorce and don't care about anything else (DeBord, 1997). This is where a teacher can step in and help. Teachers have the opportunity to ease student's minds and fill it with knowledge rather than worry.

How Educators Can Help

Teachers do not always have access to information regarding their students' lives at home. This is an indication that educators need to be aware of the behavioral tendencies and changes that may take place when a child is dealing with a divorce. Improvements and changes can not be made unless the situation is acknowledged. Once the problem has been properly assessed, the steps toward bettering the situation can begin. These steps may range from a short talk after recess to setting up an appointment with the parents. A teacher may be able to acquire this information by sending a questionnaire home with each of the students at the beginning of the school year (Diamond, 1985). The questionnaire should be unobtrusive and very general. Examples of the questions that a teacher might choose to include are: How many people live in your household? Who should I contact in the case of an emergency? Should all school information be sent to this address? This is an acceptable method of finding out about the home lives of your students and will make it easier to observe behavior and act accordingly. Because a young child does not fully understand the dynamics of a divorce, they tend to be much more emotional to various situations and lack coping skills. This may mean that they become very upset over very trivial incidents such as forgetting to complete a homework assignment or forgetting lunch money. These incidents have to do with all of the changes that have been taking place in their personal lives and feeling stability at school. Another tendency is that these children seem to worry a lot about everything that is going on in their lives and therefore, suffer from a high level of anxiety. All of these behaviors stem from somewhere and there are many things that we, as

educators, can do to detect these behaviors and take the right strides to bettering the situation.

Children react in different ways with the onset of divorce. Some may be extremely sad and show signs of depression, while others may make the adjustment quickly and have no problems. The way in which a child reacts to the separation of their parents will depend on the nature of the child, their age, and the relationship that the parents and child share before, during, and after the divorce (Diamond, 1985). Common reactions that have been observed are sadness, denial, anger, embarrassment, anger, guilt, concern about being cared for, and regression (Diamond, 1985). The first step that a teacher must take to help a student through this difficult time in his/her life is to fully understand the impact that divorce can have on a child. In order for a student that is having a difficult time to make positive strides, the school must be equipped with a supportive and safe environment, safe channels for the communication of feelings and problems, instruction on building coping and self-regulation skills, and have available resources to help parents (Miller, Ryan, Morrison, 1999).

Learning what divorce means to children at each age level is the first step in the intervention process. Teachers need to understand that all children do not react to divorce the same way. There will be some children that will be indistinguishable from children of two-parent families, while others may experience serious emotional, behavioral, or academic adjustment problems (Grych & Fincham, 1997). This will also differ by grade level and maturity level. Educators should understand that divorce is a tough situation for a child. Having to contend with their parents' unpredictable moods, dealing with feelings of isolation, insecurity, depression, and guilt, feeling pressure to choose between two

parents that are loved dearly, being unable to play with friends, and losing contact with loved ones can all cause a lot of stress for a young child (Miller, Ryan, Morrison, 1999). It is the job of the educator to take their minds off of the problems and focus them on learning the knowledge that they will need to be successful as they grow older.

Creating an environment that is supportive and safe can be a challenging task for a teacher. They have to meet each child's individual needs as well as the group's needs. It is essential that a child that is dealing with all of the emotions that accompany an event such as divorce feels emotional security in a supportive classroom. This can be accomplished in a number of ways. First and foremost, always assure the children that their relationship with you, the educator, is secure, intact, and has not been affected by the divorce at all. This reassurance may not seem like it makes much of a difference to a child, but actually has a huge impact because it affirms that this event will not change everything. Another way to succeed at manufacturing a classroom that is safe and comfortable for these children is to always be understanding and compassionate. A teacher that is tolerant and offers kind words will communicate to the children that everything will be okay and that you are understanding of the problems that they are dealing with (Miller, Ryan, Morrison, 1999).

Change is something that a child of divorce has to endure time and time again. It is for this reason that it is so important that a child's time at school is relatively routine with few sudden changes. It is very beneficial for an elementary age student that is dealing with the divorce of their parents to have consistency in the classroom. This should include routines, expectations, and consequences for behavior (Diamond, 1985). Changes are often times unpredictable, especially at school. But to put the child at ease,

it is a good idea to inform them of any changes that may take place in advance. This will give them time to mentally prepare and hopefully, will prevent them from worrying. Consistency will bring a sense of order to a child's life whose home routines have been broken down (Diamond, 1985).

Another way to foster emotional security for a child of divorce at school is to allow them to have some personal control of the events that take place throughout the activities of the day. Because children have no control over their parent's divorce, the development of their sense of mastery may have been threatened. A child's sense of mastery has to do with learning the steps to solve problems and being confident about applying them to their own problems (Miller, Ryan, Morrison, 1999). Teachers can help this situation by allowing children to be in control of various tasks or procedures such as choosing games, watering the plants, making seating arrangements. This will assure them that you trust them to complete the task and let them exercise personal control. It will also boost their self-esteem because they will have the opportunity to be proud of their accomplishments.

Students that are dealing with life-altering changes in their personal lives may put less time and effort into their school work due to all of the other issues they are being forced to deal with. Educators should not see this decline as intentional because it is more than likely due to lack of time. Having a short discussion with the child and coming to an agreement can solve this problem.

A student's classroom behavior may change dramatically after the divorce of their parents or may not change at all. This all depends on the circumstances that were discussed earlier that make each individual case different. It is essential for a teacher to

show his/her students that they have faith in their students' characters and see the capacity for growth. This can be communicated effectively through positive feedback and reinforcements. The negative emotional reactions that some children of divorce experience stem from some of the events that they have dealt with and often underlie their behavior patterns (Miller, Morrison, Ryan, 1999). This misbehavior may occur because they do not know how else to express themselves and in turn, resort to name-calling, fighting, and teasing. Teachers need to recognize this behavior as not inherent of their character and not try to control it. When a distressed child resorts to behavior that is unacceptable in the classroom, teachers should not focus on the punishment alone, but should try to help the children to learn more constructive behaviors. There do need to be consequences for their actions, but if we think of the behavior as a way of lashing out because of the divorce, we will be more likely to be more patient, less critical, and more willing to help them to learn new behaviors. (Miller, Morrison, Ryan, 1999)

Children often times hide their inner thoughts and feelings about the divorce from their parents, but still need to talk about it to somebody. This is the perfect opportunity for a teacher or school counselor to step in and help. Children need to know that educators will listen to their problems and that it is safe to talk to them. When communicating with a child about their personal lives, it is essential that teachers are noncritical, compassionate, and offer unbiased advice on choosing specific types of behavior. The elementary school should convey to the parents and children that they want what is best for the child, and will not make judgments about situations at home (Diamond, 1985). Some children dealing with divorce struggle with controlling their emotions, but there are ways in which educators can help them to regain control. Each

individual child is different and therefore, deals with their feelings differently. Some children may want to talk, while others may want to write a story or draw a picture. Finding out which method of dealing with these feelings and emotions will be the most beneficial for each child will be difficult, but well worth it. When any child appears to be extremely upset or angry, the most important thing to do is to help them to regain their composure.

Misbehavior by any student should be dealt with accordingly and all children need to learn to take responsibility for their actions. Being firm, yet fair about expectations for classroom standards of behavior and expressing feelings is the most effective form of classroom management. This means that if a child is showing anger towards another student, the appropriate way to handle the situation would be to say "That type of behavior is unacceptable in this classroom. I think that you should spend a few minutes by yourself thinking about how you could have handled that situation differently. When you think that you are calm enough to talk about it, we will discuss how you could have reacted." This response will communicate to the student that their behavior was unacceptable and allows them to both take responsibility for their actions and find solutions to change it. This will teach the children methods of coping with their anger and emotions at school and over time, will help them to deal with the problems that accompany dealing with a divorce.

Available Resources for Parents

Teachers are not only educators of children, but also have the opportunity to strengthen the parents' knowledge of specific behaviors and tendencies that they have noticed and offer advice about how to deal with this. A good educator will be both alert and responsive to any unusual behavior that a child exhibits and make the appropriate contacts (Diamond, 1985). This will allow the parents to get a better understanding of how their child is handling the situation at school. Parents also need to be aware of the many resources that are available to offer guidance, counseling, answer questions, or provide financial assistance. Helping the parents to become aware of the many ways to help themselves and their children cope with the divorce will better the child's behavior and academic performance at school.

Teachers can choose to deal with this situation in a variety of different ways. An effective, uninhibiting method would be to send out an informational newsletter to all of the students' parents. For divorced families, this would include both the mother and the father. The newsletter would inform the parents of your knowledge of the subject and understanding of how children tend to cope with it. It must include information that can be cited to psychologists and doctors to show reliability. The newsletter should also include a list of books that the parents can use to help them talk to their children about the divorce, books that they can use as references, and a list of informational websites. Another method might be to set up a meeting with the parents to discuss any changes that have been noticed in their child's behavior. This might be a special meeting or could also be discussed at a usual time such as conferences or open house. A more extensive, but effective method would be to work with the school counselor to set up a workshop for parents. The workshop would allow them to learn about what their child is going

through, give them information on how to handle the situation, and answer any questions that they might have. The teacher would be responsible for letting the parents' know how important and useful it would be for both their children and themselves to attend.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is that of the rights of the noncustodial parent. The U.S. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act states that the noncustodial parent is entitled to all information regarding school achievement and progress whenever he or she requests it, unless prohibited by law (Diamond, 1985). It is important that a teacher is unbiased and relays information to both parents. Teachers need to understand that each parent's relationship with the child is important.

There are specific guidelines that should be followed as not to upset the parents' of the children or the administration of the school. Divorce can be a very touchy subject and many parents might feel that what happens at home in their personal lives has no bearing on what takes place at school. The general guidelines that should be followed are to make sure to only focus on the divorce-related problems that affect the child's classroom behavior or academic performance and only discuss these problems with the parents. It is also important to be compassionate to the child as a teacher, not a parent, and offer resources to both the parents and the children, but do not become personally involved in the process. Divorce can be a very touchy subject and retaining their professional demeanor will allow teachers to focus on helping his or her students. As a result, the teaching and learning process should be much more meaningful for everyone involved.

Summary

The number of children living with divorce today is increasing. This problem is not going to go away, but with the right information and resources, can improve.

Teachers play an important role in the lives of a child that gives them the opportunity to intervene if there are problems at home and offer support. If the right steps are taken at school, children dealing with their parents' separation can feel a greater sense of comfort and stability.

There is a lot of research and many resources available today that once were not. Therefore, this enables teachers to educate themselves on how to deal with the issue of divorce and take the right steps to make the child's school experience an enjoyable one. There are many steps that a teacher must take to ensure a child's safety, comfort, happiness, and well-being. First, a teacher must be consistent in his or her approach to the child, while also being flexible and understanding in certain cases. Next, they must be alert to any unusual behavior that is taking place in the classroom and contact parents if need be. They must also communicate with parents about available resources including school personnel, help groups, books, and websites. Finally, they must be caring, without being judgmental or becoming over attached or involved in their students' personal lives.

Divorce is not an issue that is ever going to disappear and in all probability, is going to become more evident in the classroom. Although divorce has become acceptable in today's society, it does not change the fact that children all over the world are dealing with the emotions and feelings that accompany the separation of their parents.

These feelings and emotions should be acknowledged, talked about, and dealt with in a manner that will facilitate increased understanding and coping skills. I believe that it is imperative for teachers to be educated and properly informed about the problems and behaviors that their students may be dealing with. In my experience, divorce is not a topic that is covered while learning how to be a successful teacher. This may or may not change in the future, and it is for that reason that teachers may need to take responsibility on their own for learning about children dealing with divorce. Numerous resources that range from books to websites talk about this subject in depth and are especially geared toward educators. Once teachers are equipped with the correct information, there are possibilities for using that information to help not only the students, but also the parents. In collaboration with the school counselor or psychologist, it may be beneficial to organize a workshop for parents. This will give parents the opportunity to learn more about how their children may be dealing with their divorce, but will also allow them to converse with other parents in similar situations. Teachers have the power to ease the minds of their students and help parents, but they must first be educated about how divorce affects their students' lives.

In conclusion, divorce is a subject that needs to be acknowledged and not "brushed under the rug". Children are being forced to deal with emotions that accompany the breakup of their family structure and it is affecting their education. It is for this reason that teachers should be equipped with the knowledge needed to teach children coping skills as well as academics. There is much more to teaching primary children than academics. They are at a time in their lives when they are developing physically,

mentally, psychologically, and academically and each of these processes works hand-in-hand to develop a well-rounded, independent adult.

Recommended Readings and Resources

There are many resources available for children, parents, and educators. Books can be used to teach children that the feelings that they are dealing with are normal and help them to understand why parents choose to get divorced. I have listed a few selections that I believe are appropriate for students at a primary grade level. I have included both books and websites because it might also be beneficial for children and parents to converse with other individuals that are going through similar situations. The books that I used to complete this paper and that are listed in the bibliography are all wonderful resources for teachers to learn more about the children in their classes.

Books for Children

It's not your fault, KoKo Bear. By Vicky Lansky (1998)

How do I feel about: My parents' Divorce. By Julia Cole (1997)

Dinosaurs Divorce: A guide for changing families. By Laurence Krasney Brown and Marc Brown (1986)

The Divorce Express. By Paula Danziger (1982)

Where is Daddy? The Story of Divorce. By Beth Goff (1969)

It's Not the End of the World. By Judy Blume (1972)

The Boys' and Girls' Book about Divorce. By Richard Gardner (1970)

Websites for Children

<http://www.tqjunior.advanced.org/4284>

Books for Parents

The Parents' Book about Divorce. By Richard Gardner (1977)

Surviving the Breakup. By Judith S. Wallerstein and Joan B. Kelly (1980)

Websites for Parents

<http://outreach.missouri.edu/cooper/fok/>

<http://www.nnfr.org/parented/>

<http://www.custodyplans.com>

http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/positive/family/help_child_divorce.html

<http://divorcesupport.about.com>

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