Divorce:
The Effects it has on Children
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In this article, researchers examined children between the ages of 5 and 15 in relation to whether or not they experienced a parental divorce. This came to be 260 families being studied. Mothers did a checklist of their child’s behavior at the different stages of their life (24 months, 36 months, 54 months, etc). When the kids reached between the ages of 11-15, teachers and mothers rated the behavioral problems of children from divorced families one fifth more than the standards of children that parents are together. At grade 6, teachers reported internalized behavior problems and externalized behavior problems by students. Mothers reported that their kids had internalized behavioral issues and externalized behavior issues at 15 years old. Some examples of internalized behavior is social withdrawal and being fearful. Externalized behavior means acting outward towards others. For example, bullying of other students. Researchers did find however that divorce did not lead to faster behavioral problems. Children were also more likely to develop behavior problems if income of household was low before separation. This was because of the experience of stress of lack of financial stability, lack of educational community resource, and neighborhood crime incidents. Conflict theory plays a role in this because when finances are tough conflict between the household is a huge factor. Also, children are more likely to have behavioral issues when income was lower and mom was depressed which is also conflict theory.

This article looks at the divorce affects of women, men, and children. It starts off by talking about the overall facts of divorce. 50% of marriages ending in divorce, and 67% of second marriages not working out, however divorce is slowly decreasing. Many people cannot afford divorce, and many people can’t afford to get married as well. The divorce life is less satisfying than the married life. The article continues to talk about divorce and the affects of children. 50% of all children are children of divorce and 28% of all children are born to never married parents. It mentions that divorce, indeed, is expensive and the Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC) resources or drained because of the needs for divorced and single parent families (the collecting of child support). For women, 90% of divorced mothers have custody of their children. The article goes on and talks about the many statistics for women that are divorced. 60% of people under the poverty line are divorced women and children. I learned that for women, and increase in their psychological and emotional health increase. When a woman gets divorced, their stress decreased because they feel a sense of relief when problems end, also, their self-esteem increases because divorce adds new roles to their life. Men have more of a hard time adjusting emotionally after divorce because of the loss of intimacy, social connection, and reduced finances. Men do remarry quickly than women. Something interesting that I did not know was that men are more negative about divorce than women and attempt to save the marriage more often than women. Children of divorce that are depressed, get into trouble with the law, fail in school, etc, show problems during the pre divorce stage because of parental conflict before the divorce. The severity of a child's psychological reactions of divorce vary from
their quality relationship between parents, the intensity of conflict, and whether or not the parent’s are able to focus on the child while having conflict. The conflict theory recognizes that however the parent’s are dealing with the divorce, the child will respond the same way. If a, single mother for example, is relieved of divorce, than this could become a function for mother and daughter because stress could lessen.

Sutherland Institute. (2012 January 12). Divorce’s cruel effect on men, women, and children. [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8ibdo4sJF8

This video involved scholarly research on the effects of one family that had went through a divorce. It was said that children flourish educationally, socially, and economically in an intact family. It is the children that are affected the most, not the parents. One woman named Nicole explains that when she was a child and heard the word “Divorce,” from her parents, she was astonished. She didn't think it could happen to her family. This affected her confidence for herself for having a long-lasting marriage in the future. The little brother suffered the worst. She explains how when parents are going through the stress of divorce, they don’t have time to give the children the attention they need. Her parents made a decision to quit, instead of taking the time to think through the divorce more. Another incident was John, a single father of 5, went through a divorce that involved many court hearings and trials with his ex-wife who they both adopted. The children through all of this were the biggest victims. John claimed that the hardest thing for the children during the divorce is their perception of self esteem. John remarried 7 years later. One last incident of divorce was a woman named Karen who did not have a college degree, however her husband did have a college degree. Karen always wanted to be a wife and mother.
She was married with her husband for 13 years and he was emotionally abusive. She had four children with him, and she saw the struggle in each of them while going through the divorce. Since she didn’t have a college degree, when the couple went to court, karen lost, and her ex husband had full custody to his children because Karen wasn’t able to financially take care of her children. Researched concluded that children that live with both parents enjoy a wide range of advantages, more likely to succeed in school, adequate financial resources from childhood and beyond, and live a safe childhood free from threat. Some characteristics that had a conflict on Karen and her family was her lack of education because this allowed her ex-husband to have the power and custody of his own children.


When children grow up, they need protection and a secure, safe environment. In this book, it talks about how there are three protective “psychological” factors for a child when going through divorce and family that are “intact.” 1) the reasonably harmonious parental relationship in which parents support and spell each other through the rigors of parenting. 2) the sensitivity and commitment of each parent to the child. 3) the psychological intactness and morality of each parent. “If the child has sensitive, committed, moral parents (whether divorced or not) the child is extremely blessed” (pg 74). The author explains how the effects of children and parents of divorce isn’t a single event, however it is a long-lasting event. Wallerstein mentions the different stages of the child and adults during pre divorce, present divorce, and future divorce. At the pre divorce stage (which can be marital abuse and violence in a relationship between man and wife)
is when parents are **unable to recognize** the serious issues with their children during this stage. During the breakup, children react differently to breakups depending on their age, gender, and degree of anger and depression of their parents. This stage is especially important for the functionalist perspective because when parents are unable to recognize this prime time in a child’s life, while going through divorce, this can be the fine line between a functional family and a conflicted one. Difficulties in change with moving to different schools, and severe sleep issues occurs more frequently in preschool children at this time. After the long years of post divorce, single parent homes acute to economic, social, and psychological stresses because of the struggle of one parent’s income and ability. This increases anger and conflict between child with the parent, which can potentially dominate the child's experiences in the future.


This article compared two different types of divorced families and did a longitudinal study of 24,599 young American 14 year olds and compared the socioeconomic consequences between these unstable families. Before researching, researchers predicted that changes from custodial parents’ remarriages, cohabitations, and terminations of these new relationships negatively affect a child’s well-being and by increasing their anxieties. There were two variables being measured: 1) stable postdivorce families. 2) unstable postdivorce families that are divorced. This longitudinal study allowed researchers to see how children in these two groups of divorced families, what their socioeconomic consequences looked like in the future. The young
adults in the unstable-postdivorce families had lower educational attainment, made around $1,800 less in income, and showed less job prestige. Results showed that although a stabilized postdivorce family doesn’t take away the long-term effects of parental divorce on young adults, it does protect them from additional consequences of chronic family instability. When a family works in harmony, even if a family is divorced, this can become a “functional” family which is an example of the functionalist theory. If a family does not work together as a team (unstable postdivorce families) this can create destruction and conflict of who is “better.” Also known as the conflict theory.