

Children's Development and Family Disruption

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Forensic Psychiatry Service Goals

- **Develop multidisciplinary team**
- **Train students in ethical and procedural considerations**
- **Offer relatively low cost evaluations for legal purposes**

Types of Cases

- **Child Custody Evaluations**
- **Parental Competency Evaluations**
- **Psychiatric/Psychological Evaluations**
- **Personal Injury Cases**
- **Adoption cases**
- **Psychiatric/psychological second opinions**

Child Development

Needs of Children²

- **Parental affection, protection and guidance**
- **Feeling valued and cared for by parents**
- **Limit setting**
- **Value system that accommodates self interest to social realities**
- **Parental acceptance as a unique child**
- **Physical care responsive the child's needs**
- **Parental involvement that meets the child's emotional needs**

Needs of Children (cont.)

- **Parents who are suitable models for identification**
- **Parents who will exercise proper amount of control**
- **Parents who enforce rules**
- **Parents who differentiate child's needs and feelings from their own**
- **Parents who model handling of stress and anxiety**

Parenting Tasks³

- **Provide nurturance and physical care**
- **Train basic self-care in weaning, toileting, provision of solid foods**
- **Teach language, perceptual skills, physical skills, self-care skills for care and safety**
- **Provide a safe home environment**

Parenting Tasks (cont.)

- **Orient child to family, neighborhood, community, society and child's own feelings**
- **Transmit cultural goals and values**
- **Motivate child to accept goals**
- **Promote interpersonal skills, motives and modes of feeling and behaving with others**
- **Guide child to formulate own goals and activities**

Themes of Child Development

- **Nature and Nurture**
- **Activity of child**
- **Continuity/ Discontinuity (Stages)**
- **Mechanisms of change**
- **Sociocultural context**
- **Individual Differences**

Definition of Attachment

Attachment is the reciprocal, enduring relationship between two people resulting in mutual satisfaction of the adult and child.

Four Types of Attachment

1. Secure Attachment

**Sensitive, warm, responsive,
not intrusive and not abusive**

2. Insecure/ambivalent

**Inconsistent, intrusive,
mother's response meets her
own needs**

Four Types of Attachment (continued)

3. Insecure/avoidant

**Slow to respond, little
physical contact**

4. Disorganized attachment

**Confused, disoriented,
unpredictable**

Sources of Interference

- **Neglect**
- **Abuse**
- **Institutionalization**
- **Illness, chronic pain**
- **Death of a parent**
- **Birth of a sibling**
- **Inadequate child care**
- **Frequent moves or placements**

Results of Interference

- **Occurs on a continuum**
- **Based on pervasiveness, intensity and duration**
- **Frequency of interruptions**
- **Neglected children internalize**
- **Abused children externalize**

Temperament

- **Emotional Reactivity**
- **Thomas, Chess and Birch (1963)**
- **Flexible, feisty, and fearful**
- **Role in adjustment**

Stages of Social Development

FREUD	AGE	ERIKSON
Oral	0-1	Trust
Anal	1-3	Autonomy
Phallic	3-6	Initiative
Latency Stage	6-12	Industry
Genital Stage	12+	Identity

School-Age Children

- **Entrance into competitive world**
- **Importance of peers and achieving goals**
- **Real-life anxieties and fears**
- **Ethnic identity development**

Sources of Self-Esteem for School-Age Children

- **Academic Ability**
- **Social Acceptance**
- **Athletic Competence**
- **Physical Appearance**
- **Behavior**

Effects of Family Disruption

Statistics

- **50% of all marriages end in divorce**
- **1,000,000 children a year are affected**
- **>50% of children are 6 or younger**
- **75% of these children are <3 years old**
- **1/3 of children under 2 spend separate overnights with each parent**

High Conflict Divorce

Developmental Task

- **Infancy** **Trust**
Attachment
- **Toddler** **Autonomy**

Impact on Development

- **Inconsistent availability of caregiver**
- **Poor self-regulation**
- **Maladaptive attachment**
- **Separation anxiety**
- **Disruption of separation/individuation**

High Conflict Divorce

Developmental Task

- **Preschool Initiative**
- **School-age Industry**

Impact on Development

- **Issues with guilt, failure and punishment**
- **Poor peer relations, gender identity disrupted**
- **Splitting of self and parents**
- **Low self-esteem**
- **Poor achievement**

High Conflict Divorce

- Developmental Task
- Impact on Development
- Adolescence Identity
- Identity confusion
- Depressed/withdrawn or acting out behaviors

High Conflict Divorce

Developmental Task

■ Young Adult Intimacy

■ Adult Generativity

Impact on Development

- Adolescence protracted
- Lower rate of marriage
- Higher divorce rate
- Passivity

- Decision not to have children
- Less protective of children if divorced
- Less care of aging parents

Stressors of Divorce⁵

- **Lack of information about separation**
- **Parent conflict**
- **Diminished parenting**
- **Loss of relationships**
- **Economic change**
- **Step-parenting, blended families**

Predictors of Adjustment

- **Age**
- **Sex**
- **Predivorce Adaptation**
- **Parental Conflict**
- **Temperament**
- **Relationship with Parents**

Protective Factors for Children⁵

- **Competent custodial parent**
- **Active involvement of nonresident parent**
- **Diminished conflict**

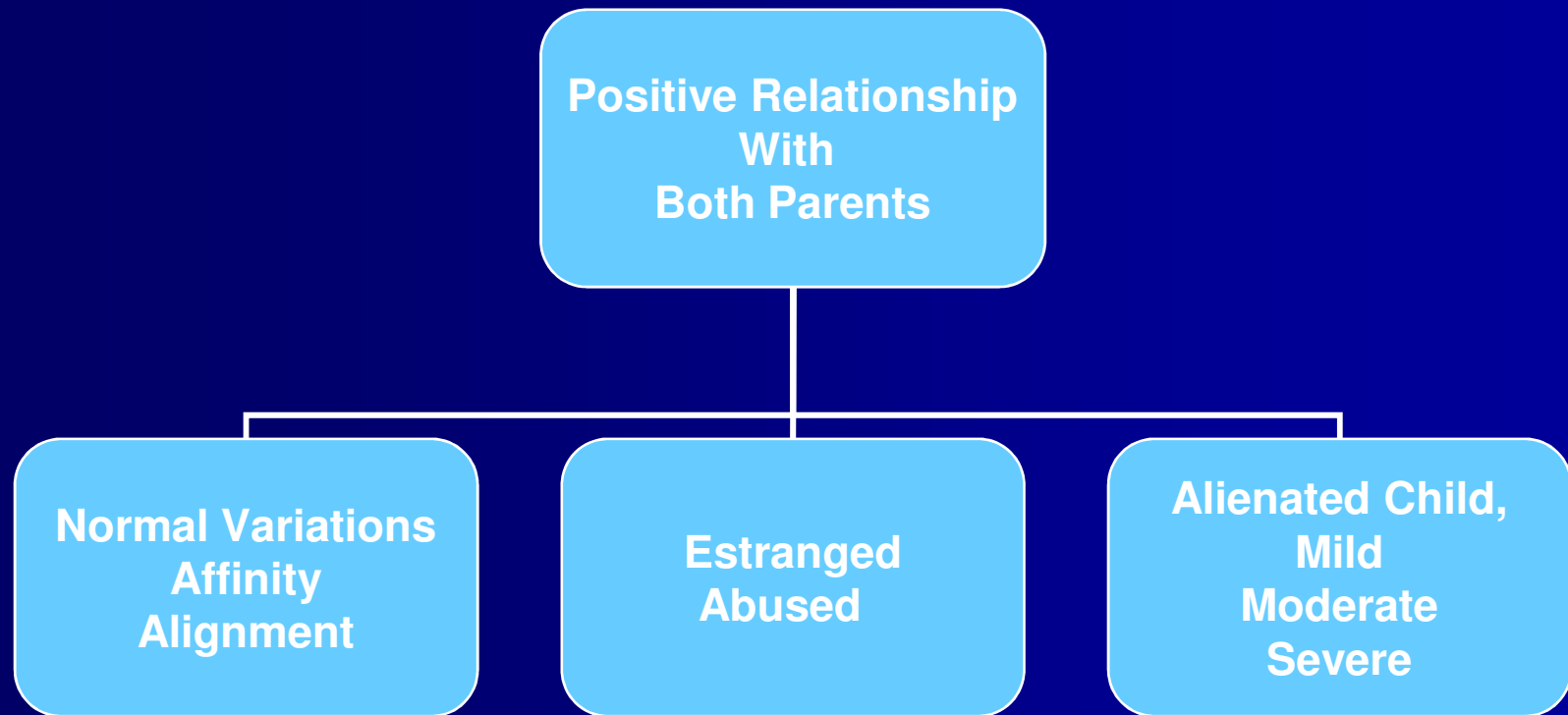
General Reactions of Children to Divorce

- **Preschool**
 - **Anxiety**
 - **Regression**
- **School Age**
 - **Sadness**
 - **Poor school performance**

Special Issues of Divorce

- **Alienation**
- **Domestic Violence**
- **Relocation**
- **Substance Abuse**
- **Children with Special Needs**

Alienated Child



Parenting Plans

Studies on Young Children and Effects of Divorce

- **Solomon & Biringen (2001)**
Infants with overnight visitation had more disorganized attachments
- **Clarke-Stewart, et al. (2002)**
No effect of divorce on young children
- **Pruett, et al. (2004)**
Older children (4-6) benefit from overnights

Positions on Overnights for Young Children

- **Solomon & Biringen (2001)**
- **Lamb and Kelly (2001)**
- **Warshak (2000)**

Parenting Considerations in Plans for Young Children

- **Attachment**
 - Measurement problems
 - Meaning of term
- **Access and Relationship**
 - The Friendly Parent
 - Relocation
- **Availability**
 - Emotional
 - Physical

Parenting Considerations (continued)

- **Stability**
 - Emotional
 - Physical
- **Level of Conflict**
 - Transitions
 - Interventions

Optional Access Plans for Children

- **Infancy**

- Low Conflict**

- Frequent contact, daily**

- 6 weeks-3 months, overnights**

- High Conflict**

- Contact at Day Care**

- Education of parents**

Optional Access Plans for Children

- **Toddlers**

- Low conflict**

- Child changes every two days**

- Parents agree on schedules**

- Child tolerates change**

- High conflict**

- Frequent parent visits**

- One overnight per week**

Optional Access Plans for Children

- **Preschool**

Low Conflict

Rotating 2-2-3

With older sibling 2-2-5

High Conflict

Same schedules if transitions safe

Optional Access Plans for Children

- **School Age Children**

2-2-5 rotating schedule

7-7

9-5

10-4

12-2

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