

**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**
- **Collaborative Child Abuse and Custody Evaluations**
- **Parental Competency Evaluations**
- **Psychiatric/Psychological Evaluations**
- **Personal Injury Cases**

Child Development

- Needs of Children³
- 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 Tasks⁴

- **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, parent's response meets their own needs, not child's

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 Success
- 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

<u>Developmental Task</u>	<u>Impact on Development</u>
• Infancy Trust Attachment	• Inconsistent availability of caregiver • Poor self-regulation • Maladaptive attachment
• Toddler Autonomy	• 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

- **Adolescence Identity**

Impact on Development

- **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 Divorce⁶

- **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 Children⁶

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

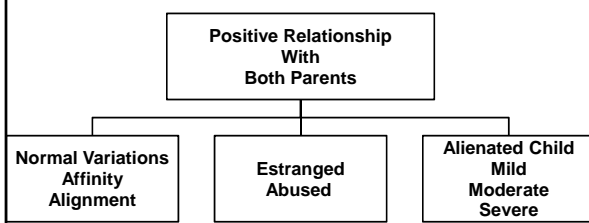
General Reactions of Children to Divorce

- **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



**Relocation
Considerations ¹**

- 1. Geographical Distance**
- 2. Psychological Stability of the Relocating Parent**
- 3. Individual Resources and Child Temperament**
- 4. Age of the Child**

**Relocation
Considerations (cont.)**

- 5. Involvement by the Nonresidential Parent**
- 6. Gatekeeping**
- 7. Interparental Conflict and Domestic Violence**
- 8. Recentness of Marital Separation**

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

Criteria for Infant Overnights⁹

1. **Attachment**
2. **Predivorce Distribution of Parenting Time**
3. **Child's Temperament**
4. **Level of Parental Conflict**
5. **Parental Communication**
6. **Primary Parent's Separation Anxiety and Lack of Trust**

**Criteria for Infant Overnights
(cont.)**

7. **Parent's Ability to Follow a Consistent Schedule**
8. **Gender of the Child**
9. **Parental Involvement**
10. **Age of the Child**
11. **Warmth of the Non-Primary Parent**

**Criteria for Infant Overnights
(cont.)**

- 12. Special Needs of the Breastfeeding Infant**
- 13. Sibling Relationships**

**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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