

12-2006

The Effect of Teacher Support on Students from Divorced Families

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The Effect of Teacher Support on Students
from Divorced Families

by

Jamie Kraemer Anderson

December 2006

A thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human
Development of the State University of New York College at
Brockport in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Science in Education.

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from Divorced Families

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Children are keenly aware of the emotional climate that exists in their home. There is nothing more distressing to a child than parents who discuss an impending divorce simply because divorce is a change that many children do not understand. According to Rosen-Grandon, Myers, and Hattie (2004), "Marriage has been described as the most important and fundamental human relationship because it provides the primary structure for establishing and rearing the next generation" (p. 58). It is because of this significance of marriage that divorce can be one of the most stressful events to happen in the life of a child.

In a country where one-half to two-thirds of all first marriages end in divorce, the number of children impacted by divorce is overwhelmingly large with little hope of declining in the near future (Rosen-Grandon, Myers & Hattie, 2004). As educators, we may not be able to solve this problem for our students, but we can empower ourselves by acquiring strategies that can be used to aid children who are experiencing a divorce

situation in order to make the transition into this new lifestyle much less complicated and painful.

The presence of educators in the lives of students from divorced homes is quite critical. We have the ability to influence their decisions, mood, problem-solving skills, and desire to become important members of the community. With divorce being so prevalent in today's society, school staff members are undoubtedly experiencing the effects of these divorces. In fact, often times we are the first to witness the specific negative aftermath faced by children of divorce. Perry (2006) states that

For most children, loss and fear go hand in hand. They do not know what will happen to them and fear intensifies and complicates the other emotions associated with loss. The fearful child cannot concentrate in school, will misinterpret comments, and will sometimes regress to immature or self-destructive behavior (p. 2).

We know that the effects of divorce can be long lasting and can drastically interfere with a student's ability to be successful in the classroom. Perry (2006) further states that "It is often the teacher who first identifies how difficult a loss is for a child" (p. 2).

A study by O'Connor, Plomin, Caspi, and Defries (2000) states that "In biological families, children who experienced their parents' separation by the age of

twelve exhibited higher rates of behavioral problems and substance abuse, and lower levels of achievement and social adjustment, compared with children whose parents' marriages remained intact" (p. 432). As a result of steady divorce rates, the implications for the classroom are far-reaching.

As a sixth grade teacher in a suburban middle school setting, I have a total of approximately 90 students throughout my science, social studies, and English and Language Arts classes. An informal survey of these students indicated that a substantial percent of them have had to endure a divorce in their short lifetimes. This significant number has inspired me to publish a Resource Guide containing strategies and resources that I can utilize within my classroom in order to provide my students with the support they need to overcome this obstacle and remain focused on school.

When I look at my students who are clearly preoccupied by an unstable home environment or the feelings of abandonment associated with divorce, I often ask myself how I can expect these emotionally fragile children to maintain their interest in and motivation for learning. I am a firm believer in the notion that students need to achieve mental and emotional stability

before they can begin to meet our academic expectations in the classroom.

As a result of divorce, emotional instability is likely. Changes in residence, schools, and friends are frequently experienced by the child during this time. Grueling court appearances and custody disputes are also a very real part of the progressing family permutations. As a teacher I feel that if I become knowledgeable enough in the area of divorce and its implications in the classroom, then I could potentially ease some of the burden on my students that is associated with these stressors. I want my students to feel safe at school and help them to prevail over their divorce situations in order to live healthy, stable lives. More importantly, I want them to achieve academic success in the classroom.

Part of my rationale for this project lies in my own personal attachment to and passion for this very issue. I am discouraged by the number of adults in this country who view divorce as a quick and simple solution to a hard marriage. I am also frustrated by the prevalence of couples who approach marriage so matter-of-factly. Regardless of my personal opinions, the truth is that divorce remains ever-present in the lives of students of all races and creeds, and impacts students across all

socioeconomic statuses. While educators certainly cannot resolve the problem in its entirety, we can most definitely become better equipped to handle it appropriately and in a way that best meets the interests of our students. Through a constructivist approach to education and children, school personnel can work together to represent a stable force in the lives of students during this difficult family transition. We can help children cope with the effects of divorce.

To further explain my personal link to this issue I feel that it is important to note that while I am not the child of divorced parents, I do feel that I have had substantial experience with family conflict and separation. There was a two-year period when my parents endured a legal separation and I am confident that this impacted me substantially.

I often wonder how I was affected by my parents' separation, and what my life would have been like had I not been exposed to significant family conflict throughout a notable duration of my childhood. Would my grades have been better? Would my relationships with my parents and sibling be different? Am I stronger because of it? What did I learn from the experience? Moreover, I wonder if the entire situation would have been different

for me if I had had a teacher who reached out to me while I was experiencing it. While I feel that I am already the kind of teacher that students confide in and come to with uncertainties and emotions, I would like to become better informed and prepared to handle divorce-related situations and questions that may arise within my classroom.

Fagan and Rector (2000) suggest that "The effects of divorce are obvious in family life, educational attainment, job stability, income potential, physical and emotional health, drug use, and crime" (p. 1). How can teachers ease this stress and reduce the negative impact divorce can have on students? What programs and strategies are available and appropriate for classroom use? This project encompasses finding answers to these questions through research, action, and a culminating collection of materials that will enable teachers to aid in the emotional transition of a student who is experiencing their parents' divorce.

As I prepare a complete literature review on the topic of divorce, I will be concentrating on four very specific aspects of it. This review has surely assisted me in the creation of a thorough assortment of strategies

and resources to use with children undergoing their parents' divorce.

I aimed to utilize these techniques in my classroom and evaluate how effective they can be when helping children from divorced families. In addition to my use of the Resource Guide, I also shared my culminating project with fifteen of my colleagues. They used my Resource Guide for four weeks and assessed its effectiveness with students in their classrooms. After providing them with pre- and post-implementation surveys, I evaluated the results to determine what effect my Resource Guide had on those students experiencing divorce and those teachers providing support.

Key Terms

Divorce: The legal conclusion of a marriage; to formally terminate a marriage.

Conflict: A state of open, often prolonged fighting; a state of disharmony between incompatible persons, ideas, or interests. In this case, conflict between parents that leads to a divorce.

Transition: The process of moving from one environment or situation to another. In this case, moving from a two-parent nuclear family to a one-parent separated or divorced family. This term refers to a process, not a single event, and can most closely be tied to the ramifications of divorce transitions by students that teachers witness at school.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

Every thirteen seconds there is a divorce in this country (Ahrons, 1999). For decades, the question of how this parental divorce influences children has interested parents, school staff members, and researchers alike. This chapter reviews approximately twenty different resources related to the social/emotional and academic impact divorce can have on students, as well as what role teachers and other school staff members can play in helping students to successfully adjust to their parents' divorce. Stewart (2002) stated that, "Divorce is above all else, an end" (p.5). This end has extensive implications for students within the school setting with regards to peer-relationships and self-esteem. As divorce continues to run rampant throughout our country and often appears to be embraced by our culture, how the next generation will be affected should certainly be at the forefront of our consideration.

As parents have sought to improve the quality of their lives by dissolving their distressed marriages, the assumption has always been that the lives of their children would also improve with the divorce. This is not

the case according to social science. Divorce can, and often will negatively impact children in some way. A significant percentage of children do experience negative aftermath associated with their parents' divorce, especially when considering that one half to two thirds of all marriages in the United States end in divorce (Rosen-Grandon, Myers and Hattie, 2004).

While it would be unrealistic to think that divorce is completely avoidable, it would be negligent to assume that children are resilient enough to bounce back from this substantial life change without support. It is vital for parents and school personnel to understand not only how children are affected by divorce situations, but also what steps can be taken to aid in the child's transition to a new family lifestyle, especially with regards to classroom performance.

Divorce and Its Consequences for Children

In search of answers to the ever-present question, researchers have explored various facets of how divorce really impacts children. According to Goodman and Pickens (2001), "Many researchers agree that self-esteem is negatively affected by parental divorce" (p.120). Concepts related to 'self' have often been examined in order to determine the long-term effects of divorce on

children. Goodman and Pickens go on to say that, "An individual's self-esteem is easily altered, especially during stressful life events. Divorce is, undoubtedly, an extremely stressful event for a child" (p.121).

Children's self-esteem is often compromised during a divorce situation simply because they experience feelings of culpability. Due to the vulnerable position of children involved in parental divorce, it is very common for them to feel at fault for the breakup of the family structure (Goodman & Pickens, 2001). Because children feel directly to blame for their parents' divorce, their self-esteem is negatively affected by the entire divorce experience.

For children, these feelings of blame go hand-in-hand with feelings of a lack of identity. Rosen-Grandon, Myers and Hattie (2004) state that, "A good marriage provides individuals with a sense of meaning and identity in their lives" (p.1). Without the basis of a sound marriage, many children experience mixed emotions about who they are, where they have come from, and where they are going.

Sadly, these negative feelings of self-worth are difficult to overcome. Goodman and Pickens (2001) further assert that, "The self-esteem and general well-being of

children of divorce, even as adults, remain lower than that of children from intact families" (p.121).

Additionally, these negative effects associated with feelings of self-blame are long-lasting. It can often take up to six years after their parents' divorce for a child to begin to dismiss their own feelings of responsibility for such the divorce occurrence (Goodman & Pickens, 2001).

Further support of the harmful effects of divorce on children is evident as Wallerstein, Lewis and Blakeslee (2000) found that, "Grown children of divorce have higher divorce rates" (p.19). Adults who experience their parents' divorce as children are far more likely to have their own marriages that also end in divorce.

In addition to experiencing troubles with self-esteem, feelings of blame, and identity uncertainties, many children go on to encounter struggles with alcohol, drugs, and depression as a result of their parents' divorce (Schmidtgall, King, Zarski, and Cooper, 2000). Boys who had experienced parental divorce during latency (ages 7-12) showed a 24% higher prevalence of depression. Heavy drinking was also more common in this group of males. Schmidtgall, King, Zarski, and Cooper (2000) state that, "Boys experience adjustment difficulties such as an

increase in the rate of depression and increased alcohol use" (p.150-151). Additionally, these authors found that, "High levels of depression were present in women from divorced families" (p.150-151).

It is important to be aware of just how significant divorce is in the life of a child. According to Stewart (2000), "In some ways, divorce is harder on children than it is on adults" (p.6). She goes on to explain that as a result of divorce, children feel anxious, angry, sad, worrisome, guilty, and as though they have no say in a decision that will change their whole lives. This is true because so many things are unknown and there are so many variables (Stewart, 2000).

This element of the unknown is encompassed when you think of the following scenario presented by Wallerstein, Lewis and Blakeslee (2000):

It's feeling sad, lonely, and angry during childhood. It's traveling on an airplane alone when you're seven to visit your parent. It's having no choice about how you spend your time and feeling like a second-class citizen compared with your friends in intact families who have some say about how they spend their weekends and their vacations. It's wondering whether you will have any financial help for college from your college-educated father, given that he has no legal obligation to pay. It's worrying about your mom and dad for years. It's reaching adulthood with acute anxiety. And most tellingly, it's asking if you can protect your own child from having these same experiences growing up (p. XXV).

While it is true that some children's burdens are eased by divorce, most feel that the day their parents divorced was the day their childhood ended (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2003).

With the turbulence associated with divorce comes feelings of depression and self-blame. Children of divorce come to experience higher rates of alcohol misuse, drug abuse, and divorce in their own adult marriages. Wallerstein, Lewis, and Blakeslee (2000) state that, "For children, divorce is a watershed that permanently alters their lives. The world is newly perceived as a far less reliable, more dangerous place" (p.27).

Divorce and Its Impact on Student Learning

Unfortunately, the impact of divorce on children is not limited to their social/emotional well-being. These effects can also be noted in the classroom and school settings where children of divorce are affected academically.

As Americans continue to erase the negative stigma that was once associated with divorce, U.S. divorce rates continue to soar. These divorces not only affect the mental health and self-esteem of the students involved,

but they impact their performance in school as well. Hughes (2006) states that, "Children from divorced families are more likely to have academic problems. Whether you use children's grades, standardized test scores, or dropout rates, children whose parents divorce generally have poorer scores" (p.1).

In many cases, children's difficulties at school have very little to do with their intellectual capabilities, but rather with their behavior. Hughes (2006) further explains that,

Boys are more likely to be aggressive and have problems getting along with their peers and teachers. These problems may lead them to spend less time in school or on their schoolwork. Girls are more likely to experience depression, which may interfere with their ability to concentrate on schoolwork or to put as much effort into their work (p.2).

These potential problems with school achievement have long-term implications for a student's success in life.

In reviewing the research, it is clear that a strong argument for the resiliency of children dealing with divorce does exist. This resiliency is evident when a child is able to adjust to their new family structure at home and at school with few, if any, complications.

In addition to a child's resiliency, some researchers will argue that there is such a thing as a

"good divorce." Ahrons (1994) asserts that, "In these good divorces, couples part without destroying the lives of those they love and their children continue to have two parents" (p.10).

In clear contrast, Dykeman (2003) says that, "Despite such resilience, many children of divorce experience intense, short-term effects that negatively impact upon their school performance" (p.2). The truth remains that all children experiencing divorce are susceptible to a variety of negative effects including, but not limited to, behavior problems and poor academic performance.

In addition to poor performance in the classroom, students of divorce also suffer from poor attendance rates. According to the article *Divorce Affects Children's School Performance* (2005), "Children whose parents remain married retain higher GPAs and have higher rates of attendance than their counterparts from divorced families" (p.1). This article goes on to insist that, "Keeping a home intact generally gives children an increased chance of excelling" (p.1). This appears to be true simply because giving students a jump on school begins at home.

To further explore why students who are experiencing their parents' divorce also experience school-related problems, one might consider in what specific ways divorce hinders learning and achievement. Fagan and Rector (2000) state that, "Divorce impedes learning by disrupting productive study patterns and by increasing anxiety and depression in both parents and children" (p.3). They go on to state that, "Because of its impact on stable home life, divorce can diminish the capacity to learn" (p.3). This statement is further supported by the notion that children whose parents divorce have lower rates of graduation from high school and college. They also complete fewer college courses (Fagan and Rector, 2000).

Students of all ages and socioeconomic status are experiencing the pervasive ill effects of divorce. It is because of this extensive reach to all populations that educators must become better equipped to support students who are being impacted by their parents' divorce. Hughes (2006) believes that, "Both parents and teachers often underestimate the difficulties a child may be having in school or may not recognize the problems" (p.3).

If given commensurate tools and resources, teachers have the potential to serve as the first line of support

for children during this stressful life event. In hopes of decreasing the negative academic effects for children of divorce, teachers need new and improved skills that are specific to children who are experiencing divorce. They also need to better understand their role in this complicated family situation.

The Teacher's Role

It is often the teacher who recognizes just how difficult divorce is for a student. According to Perry (2006), "Teachers know better than most that recovery from a loss is not likely to be over in a month, or two, for some children, even ten years" (p.2). Teachers have a profound role in helping their students to overcome the feelings of loss associated with divorce. After a divorce, much of the world expects a child to be resilient and bounce back. Teachers, however, are well aware of the reality that, "different children will have different styles of grieving and different timetables" (Perry, 2006, p.2).

As a result of the high divorce rates plaguing the country today, teachers are more likely than ever to have students who are coping with a variety of divorce-related issues in their classroom at any given time. According to Miller, Ryan, and Morrison (1999), "Virtually every

teacher needs to be familiar with the effects divorce may have on children's classroom behavior" (p.1). This is because unlike some other stressors, divorce-related issues (visitation, child support, parental custody) can be ongoing sources of stress to children for up to eight years after the initial separation (Miller, Ryan & Morrison, 1999). The key to aiding students during this difficult time of family instability is to understand the true impact of divorce.

Divorce situations create a myriad of needs in students. Miller, Ryan, and Morrison (1999) state that, "Effective teaching of these children requires a supportive environment, safe channels for children to communicate feelings and problems, instruction on building coping and self-regulation skills, and resources to help parents" (p.1). The school environment is an excellent place for children of divorce to experience respite because of the supportive nature of schools and the services they have to offer. Children spend a large percentage of their time in school where the continuity and routine can offer a safe environment for involvement and intervention by staff members. Teachers can also be available on a regular basis and can provide support for their students (Beekman, 1986).

Helping students adjust to divorce and family changes is a primary concern for educators and other school personnel. Leon and Spengler (2006) suggest that, "Schools can play an important role in helping children make a positive adjustment to their parents' divorce" (p.1). How this can be done remains an essential question posed by teachers. Leon and Spengler further explain that, "By working together, families and schools can form a network of support that promotes healthy child development" (p.1).

How significant is the role of a teacher in the life of a student who is experiencing a divorce? Perry (2006) states that, "Teachers serve as a crucial emotional bridge for a child at times of loss" (p.1). As a result, it has become increasingly important for teachers to become aware of how they can help their students cope. They need to be equipped with a wide variety of strategies to use within the classroom and school settings to better reach and assist their students who are experiencing their parents' divorce.

Strategies for Teachers

While divorce can be a very dispiriting event in the life of a student, the upside to it is that numerous strategies and resources do exist in order to help

children face and overcome it. These strategies range from common-sense in nature to radical new programming just recently passed in a handful of select states. Regardless of the approach selected, it is important for staff to keep in mind a few essential strategies when dealing with loss while inside the classroom.

Perry (2006) explains that teachers can help the child directly or indirectly by supporting the parents and guiding classmates. He stresses the following tips when helping children deal with divorce in the classroom.

- Tune into every child, but especially to one who has experienced a loss. Pay close attention to the content and mood of his verbalizations, play themes, stories, and drawings. The better you understand his feelings, the easier it will be for you to comfort and support him.
- Each child who has experienced a loss should be free to communicate her pain and bewilderment when ready. Forcing the issue is likely to cause feelings to go underground.
- If a child senses your discomfort with the topic, he may not want to bring it up when he is ready to. Consider your own feelings of sadness to avoid discouraging a child's readiness to express his.
- Be sensitive to any inappropriate remarks or teasing from other children. In a discreet way, you can help them to respect the grieving process and avoid their classmate's "tender spots" (p.2).

In addition to these suggestions by Perry, there are several other strategies that educators can use to help students cope. Fletcher outlines advice in his 2006

article, *Fifty Ways Adults Can Support Student Voice*. A few suggestions include:

- Have a real conversation.
- Be an advocate for students.
- Respect students.
- Listen specifically to students.
- Be consistent and clear.
- Connect with other adult allies.
- Arrange resources for students.
- Create student-led experiences.
- Hold students accountable.
- Treat students as individuals.

Beekman (1986) offers her own strategies for use within the classroom by stating that, "Teachers working with children of divorce can be most effective when they:

- Provide opportunities for students to discuss their feelings.
- Allow children privacy when needed.
- Recommend and then encourage the use of age-appropriate resource materials.
- Provide a stable environment.
- Maintain consistent expectations and routines.
- Engage in supportive communication.
- Inform parents about child's progress or difficulties.
- Encourage parents to be honest, direct, supportive, and firm with their children.
- Be aware of language that may be offensive of divorce.
- Plan and label events for parents, rather than specifically for mothers or fathers" (p. 4-5).

Strategies such as these will also allow teachers to be sensitive to and supportive of their students.

Leon and Spengler (2006) explain that there are four key elements of successful family-school relationships

that can aid a student within the school setting as they continue to cope with their parents' divorce. They are approach, attitudes, atmosphere, and action. These four elements help organize ideas for how schools can support children through family transitions. The authors state that, "Using a partnership model involves two-way communication, appreciating family strengths, and mutual problem solving" (p.2).

In regards to attitude, they further state that, "Attitudes can foster partnership or create a barrier to partnership. Viewing parent involvement as a continuum, rather than categories (uninvolved vs. involved), helps develop partnerships with parents. This means taking the perspective that all parents are involved" (p.2). If a teacher can adjust their attitude or approach to a parent, regardless of how involved that parent is, a successful home-school connection can be established and maintained, benefiting the child who is experiencing their parents' divorce.

According to Leon and Spengler (2006), the best thing teachers can do is: create an atmosphere that is welcoming to all families, avoid terms that may be offensive to some families, communicate with both parents, and involve the nonresidential parent in school

activities. In addition, the authors invite teachers to provide resources that promote positive parent-child relationships, encourage all parents to monitor their children's school progress, and encourage parent networking (Leon & Spengler, 2006).

In addition to the various strategies provided for use within the classroom, research also concludes that using literature to help children cope with problems is also very effective within the school setting. Tu (1999) states that, "Through literature, children can perceive how others have encountered and resolved problems that cause sadness, stress, fear, and uncertainty. More importantly, children learn how to use conflict resolution strategies to deal with those problems" (p.1). Encouraging students to read both fictional and nonfictional literature that is related to divorce, grief, loss, and anger is highly recommended (*Children and Divorce*, 2006).

Perhaps the most important step educators can take in learning how to help children of divorce cope with their feelings of loss is to know and be able to recognize what the student really understands about divorce and what his/her possible reactions in the classroom will be. DeBord (2006) clarifies these

reactions for both early elementary-aged students and preteens/adolescents. She explains that early elementary students can begin to understand what a divorce is. They can also understand that his or her parents will not live together anymore and that they may not love each other the same as before. According to DeBord (2006), possible child reactions an educator can expect to see from an elementary-aged student are:

- Feels deceived and a sense of loss.
- Hopes and says that parents will get back together.
- Feels rejected by the parent who left.
- Ignores school and friendships.
- Worries about the future.
- Fears nobody will be there to pick him/her up from school.
- Complains of head or stomachaches.
- Experiences loss of appetite, diarrhea, or frequent urination.

DeBord (2006) additionally explains that while a pre-teen or adolescent does understand divorce more substantially than an elementary-aged child, he/she certainly does not accept it. The author explains that possible reactions for this age group include:

- Feels angry and disillusioned.
- Feels abandoned by the parent who is leaving.
- Tries to take advantage of parents' low energy and high stress levels.
- Tries to take control over the family.
- Shows extreme behavior (good and bad).
- Becomes moralistic, or becomes involved in high-risk behaviors (drugs, shoplifting, skipping school).
- Feels like he/she will never have a long-term relationship.

- Worries about finances.

With a heightened awareness to these warning signs, teachers can make a positive difference in the lives of students experiencing a divorce situation through immediate intervention.

In Summary

Information is power. If well-equipped with information regarding how children are affected by divorce, how divorce can impact student learning, what role teachers play during divorce, and what strategies can be used within the classroom to support students of divorce, teachers can serve as the first line of assistance for children experiencing divorce. According to Leon and Spengler (2006), "Schools and teachers have the capacity to support children through family transitions by taking a partnership approach, having informed attitudes, creating an atmosphere that welcomes all types of families, and taking action that supports children and parents" (p.5). This action includes the aforementioned strategies as well as countless others.

According to the literature, divorce can be an extremely stressful event in the life of a student. While some "good divorces" do exist, they seem to be the exception rather than the norm. In light of this, it is

essential for all adults, especially teachers, who are involved in the life of a child experiencing divorce, to be well-informed about the warning signs that indicate a child needs help.

Teachers also need to be well-equipped with a variety of strategies to use in order to aid students in the transition to their new family structure so that social/emotional and academic needs can be met. With this knowledge and these skills, teachers and other adults can help children can gain some control in a life event that is typically characterized by perpetual feelings of disorder and confusion.

Chapter III

Application

As a result of my extensive research in the field of divorce and its implications for students, I have used my thesis project to address the need for divorce-related teacher resources in the school setting. In order for teachers to best serve in a supportive role for their students experiencing the social/emotional and academic impacts of divorce, teachers need to be able to reach out and find helpful information in a timely, manageable fashion. The readiness of this sort of information in the form of a Resource Guide for teachers is crucial for school personnel in all types of schools, districts, and locations because divorce does not discriminate. It impacts a wide range of students from a broad variety of backgrounds.

My thesis project, a Resource Guide for teachers, is a culmination of websites, literature, and strategies that teachers can refer to for assistance if a student has experienced or is experiencing parental divorce while in their classroom. This Resource Guide specifically contains an introduction and reason for creation, strategies for dealing with divorce in the classroom, and

early warning signs that indicate a student is in need. Additionally, it includes tips for communicating with challenging parents and user-friendly websites for adults, students, and teachers alike. The final component of the Resource Guide incorporates information about how to use children's literature to address feelings related to divorce, as well as a complete list of appropriate book choices. While this Resource Guide is certainly not all-encompassing, it is an excellent first step that teachers can take if they find that they need help (Appendix A).

In order to determine the usefulness of my Resource Guide, I knew that I needed to solicit the help of my colleagues. I chose to distribute it to fifteen sixth grade teachers in my suburban middle school so that I could not only gain personal insight and conduct action research, but also so that they could evaluate the Resource Guide's effectiveness and appropriateness in a genuine school setting.

Before distributing these guides, I first pre-surveyed the teachers in order to get a feel for their past experiences with students from divorcing families, gauge their feelings about how these divorces have impacted their students' performance in the classroom,

and establish a building need for a divorce-related Resource Guide (Appendix B).

Upon completion of the survey and after a thorough explanation of my thesis project and my need for action research, I distributed my Resource Guide and asked that they be implemented in the teachers' daily routines as educators. For four weeks, the teachers used the guides as they deemed necessary and were then given the opportunity to evaluate their efficacy.

This evaluation consisted of a post-survey that was given after the four-week implementation period so that the cooperating teachers could provide feedback (Appendix C). The combination of surveys and post-surveys provided me with important data found in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Results

Pre-Survey Results

Teachers were surveyed prior to the four-week implementation phase of this action research project (Appendix B). This pre-survey was designed to establish a need for further divorce-related strategies and resources to be made available to teachers in the form of a Resource Guide. The first part of the pre-survey included the statement, "I have students in my classroom who have experienced or are experiencing their parents' divorce." All fifteen teachers who participated in the action research responded "Yes" to this statement. The remainder of the pre-survey consisted of statements that determined the teachers' levels of agreement. The levels were *Strongly Disagree*, *Somewhat Disagree*, *Undecided*, *Somewhat Agree*, and *Strongly Agree*. The results of this pre-survey are reported in Table 1, which is found on the next page.

Teacher Pre-Survey Statements

A	These students display more behavioral problems in the classroom than other students do.
B	The divorce situation is negatively impacting my students' academic success.
C	These students display feelings of anger, loss, grief and sadness within my classroom.
D	I have had parents refuse to conference if their ex-spouse was going to be present or parents who have openly spoken badly about their ex-spouse to me.
E	I feel well-equipped to handle the different emotions and questions that result from my students' divorce situations.
F	I feel that I could benefit from further strategies and resources related to divorce, its impact on my students, and how I can help.

Table 1

Teacher Pre-Survey Results

Survey Statement	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Un-decided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
A			1	11	3
B			2	12	1
C			1	13	1
D	6				9
E	4	8	2	1	
F				2	13

In regards to pre-survey statement A, 73% of teachers (11) somewhat agreed that students who have experienced or are experiencing their parents' divorce display more behavioral problems in the classroom.

Comparable results can be noted regarding pre-survey statement B. Eighty percent (12) somewhat agreed that their students' academic success was being negatively impacted by the divorce situation at home. Similarly, statement C revealed that 87% of teachers (13) somewhat agreed that these students experience feelings of loss, grief, and sadness within the classroom setting.

Pre-Survey statement D represents a varied response to whether or not teachers have ever had parents refuse to conference if an ex-spouse was going to be present or have spoken badly about their ex-spouses to them. Statement E also represents a wide range of teacher responses. Twenty-seven percent of teachers (4) strongly disagreed and 53% (8) somewhat disagreed with feeling well-equipped to handle the emotions and questions that result from divorce situations that students experience at home. Thirteen percent of teachers (2) were undecided, while 7% (1) somewhat agreed.

Finally, statement F shows that 13% of teachers (2) somewhat agreed and 87% (13) strongly agreed that they would like additional divorce-related strategies and resources made available to them.

Post-survey Results

Once the implementation stage was completed, a post-survey was given to the same participating teachers. The purpose of this post-survey was to determine whether or not teachers found a need to refer to the Resource Guide. Additionally, the post-survey was used to evaluate the effectiveness and usefulness of the Resource Guide in the classroom setting. Finally, the post-survey allowed for teacher comments and feedback.

Teachers were given a compilation of post-survey statements to respond to by checking boxes labeled *Strongly Disagree*, *Somewhat Disagree*, *Undecided*, *Somewhat Agree*, and *Strongly Agree*. Teachers were asked whether or not they had the opportunity to use the Resource Guide during the four-week implementation period. All fifteen teachers responded "Yes" to this question. Results of the post-survey are displayed in Table 2, which is found on the next page.

Teacher Post-Survey Statements

G	I benefited from the Resource Guide.
H	My students benefited from the Resource Guide.
I	The guide had useful strategies and resources that I could use with my students.
J	The guide had useful strategies and resources that I could use with parents.
K	I felt well-equipped to handle the different emotions and questions that result from my students' divorce situations.
L	Other teachers could benefit from having a copy of this Resource Guide.

Table 2

Teacher Post-Survey Results

Survey Statement	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Un-decided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
G				6	9
H				8	7
I				3	12
J			2	9	4
K			6	7	2
L				5	10

All participating teachers reacted positively to the post-survey statements, "agreeing" or "strongly agreeing" with most of those included in the post-survey. Some remained "undecided" in regards to feeling well-equipped to handle the many emotions and questions that students may experience during a divorce situation.

Based on Table 1 and Table 2 data, teachers had students who were experiencing parental divorce in their classrooms. Furthermore, these teachers were interested in learning new ways to help support these students.

The results from statement G on the post-survey indicated that 40% of all teachers (6) somewhat agreed and 60% of all teachers (9) strongly agreed that they benefited from the Resource Guide. Additionally, 53% of teachers (8) somewhat agreed and 47% (7) strongly agreed that their students benefited from it. According to results from statement I, 25% of participating teachers (3) somewhat agreed and 75% (12) strongly agreed that the Resource Guide contained useful strategies and resources to use with students.

The results from statement J revealed that while 60% of teachers (9) somewhat agreed and 27% (4) strongly agreed that the Guide also had useful strategies and resources for parents, 13% (2) were undecided. In regards to feeling well-equipped to handle the emotions and questions from students surrounding their divorce situations, 40% of teachers (6) were undecided while 47% (7) somewhat agreed and 13% (2) strongly agreed. Finally, 33% of participating teachers (5) somewhat agreed that other teachers could benefit from this Resource Guide.

Sixty-seven percent (10) strongly agreed that other teachers could benefit from it.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this project was to design and implement a Resource Guide for teachers to use within their classroom settings in order to provide support for their students experiencing parental divorce. Specifically, it included a collection of divorce-related strategies, warning signs, communication tips, websites, and literary suggestions. After analyzing the data derived from surveys given before and after the implementation of this Guide, I have come to many invaluable conclusions regarding divorce issues in the classroom and how teachers can help support students.

The data from my action research indicated that sixth grade teachers in my building felt that students who have experienced their parents' divorce display more behavioral problems and more feelings of loss, grief, and sadness than other students do. In addition, these teachers felt that divorce situations are negatively impacting student academic success. Because a significant number of these teachers did not feel well-equipped to handle divorce-related feelings and questions from students, 100% of them felt that they could somehow

benefit from further strategies and resources related to divorce.

When evaluating the professional literature as well as personal data, it was obvious that many students were affected by their parents' decision to divorce.

Furthermore, it was clear that teachers were also being impacted by the students' situations. All teachers needed to be familiar with the effects divorce had on children's classroom behavior and performance simply because unlike some other stressors, divorce-related problems can be ongoing sources of stress for students for up to eight years after the initial separation. Also, divorce impacts a wide range of students, regardless of where they live, what district they belong to, their race, and/or their socioeconomic status.

The results from this project supported the research and confirmed that while not all teachers had students that were currently experiencing their parents' divorce, all teachers did have students in their current classroom whose parents were involved in divorce-related issues such as visitation, child support and custody. Whether the divorce is in the past, present, or eminent future, it affected students' lives. I believe that this Guide made other teachers better aware of this reality.

Studies have shown that effective teaching of students who have experienced or are experiencing their parents' divorce requires a supportive environment, safe channels for them to communicate feelings and problems, instruction on building coping and self-regulation skills, and resources to help parents. My Resource Guide took the first step in helping teachers provide all of these things to their students and their students' families.

The findings of various researchers revealed that students from divorced families were more likely to have academic problems. Whether you use student grades, standardized test scores, or dropout rates, those whose parents divorced generally had poorer scores. Though this study did not examine academic achievement, the Resource Guide did acknowledge this important finding and encouraged teachers to use the resources available to them to support students during a parental divorce.

While the primary goal is always learning, this is a difficult task to accomplish without helping the student to first feel supported and emotionally intact. As teachers, we can serve as the first line of defense and, in time, hopefully change some of the negative statistics that surround students of divorce.

While research in the field of divorce and its implications for students does exist, future research in this area may be advanced by focusing more on the role of the teacher. While there is an ample selection of professional literature that discussed student performance and well-being after a divorce, very few closely examined the role of the teacher as it pertains to the divorce situation. As teachers, we must acknowledge our responsibility in helping students traverse smoothly through their parents' divorce. More research involving the teacher's role could, in turn, help educators to be better-prepared and more effective in helping their students.

Throughout my teaching career, I have been concerned by those students whose family lives were unstable. Specifically, I have been disturbed by the prevalent number of divorcing families in my community and by the negative social, emotional, and academic effects experienced by the students caught in the middle.

Often times I have found that these students are the ones being brought to Building Team, the ones being discussed at team meetings, the ones who struggle with organization, and the ones whose self-esteem appears to be the most fragile. Sadly, I have even received e-mails

from past students expressing a plea for someone to talk to because they had just found out that their parents were divorcing. It is because of instances such as these that I saw the need to create a Resource Guide for teachers who I am quite sure have experienced similar situations.

As teachers, we are often honored to have students trust us with their most personal thoughts and experiences. We become students' confidants as a result of spending so much time with them and caring so much about them. We can best serve these students by taking advantage of every resource we have available to us and providing as much support as possible so that divorce does not interfere with their academic and social/emotional achievement. It is my hope that this guide provided some of these supports to other teachers and encouraged them to reach out to others in order to help a student in need.

When reflecting back on the action research process, I found that the pre-survey verified a need for the Resource Guide and helped determine teachers' attitudes before the implementation phase. The post-survey results provided significant support for the creation and implementation of the Resource Guide for teachers of

students experiencing their parents' divorce. Overall, the results confirmed that divorce impacts many students and consequently, many teachers. How teachers respond to and support their students during a divorce situation can make all the difference in the life of that student.

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Appendix A

A Resource Guide for Teachers

Providing Support for Students Experiencing Parental Divorce

A Resource Guide for Teachers



A Graduate Project by
Jamie K. Anderson
2006

Introduction

Did you know that one-half to two-thirds of all first marriages will end in divorce (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2003)? As teachers, we continue to find that our students are heavily impacted in the classroom by these divorces. Fortunately, we have the capacity to serve as the first line of support for these students, as long as we have the appropriate skills and resources available to us.

This Resource Guide outlines strategies, websites, and literature that teachers and other school professionals can benefit from when working with a student who is experiencing divorce. Why is such a guide necessary? Because divorce hinders learning and achievement, children who are experiencing their parents' divorce also experience school-related problems. "Divorce impedes learning by disrupting productive study patterns and by increasing anxiety and depression in both parents and children. Because of its impact on stable home life, divorce can diminish the capacity to learn" (Fagan & Rector, 2000, p.3). "Children from divorced families are more likely to have academic problems. Whether you use children's grades, standardized test scores, or dropout rates, children whose parents divorce generally have poorer scores" (Hughes, 2006, p.2).

As an educator, you undoubtedly have students in your classroom who are being impacted by their parents' divorce. Please use this Resource Guide as you continue to help your students strive for academic and social/emotional success within the school setting.

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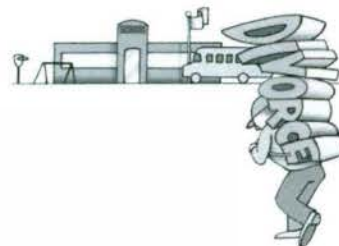
Dealing With Divorce in the Classroom

Whether the teacher helps the student directly or indirectly by supporting the parents and guiding classmates, there are some key points to remember when talking about loss related to divorce inside the classroom (Perry, 2006).

- ◆ Tune in to every student, but especially to one who has recently experienced a loss. Pay close attention to the content and mood of his/her verbalizations, play themes, stories, and drawings. The better you understand the student's feelings, the easier it will be for you to comfort and support him/her.
- ◆ Each student who has experienced loss should be free to communicate his/her pain and bewilderment when ready. Forcing the issue is likely to cause feelings to go underground.
- ◆ If a student senses your discomfort with the topic, he/she may not bring it up even when ready to. Consider your own feelings of sadness to avoid discouraging a student's readiness to express his/hers.
- ◆ Be sensitive to any inappropriate remarks or teasing from other students. In a discreet way, you can help them to respect the grieving process and avoid their classmate's "tender spots."

By being attentive, sensitive, and supportive, a teacher can become an important emotional bridge for a child during a divorce situation.

- ◆ Provide opportunities for students to discuss their feelings.
- ◆ Allow students privacy, within reason, when needed.
- ◆ Recommend and then encourage the use of age-appropriate resource materials.
- ◆ Provide a stable environment.
- ◆ Maintain consistent expectations and routines.
- ◆ Engage in supportive communication.
- ◆ Inform parents about child's progress or difficulties.
- ◆ Encourage parents to be honest, direct, supportive, and firm with their child.
- ◆ Be aware of language that may be insensitive to divorce.
- ◆ Plan and label events for parents, rather than specifically for mothers or fathers.



Early Warning Signs

Be aware of the early warning signs that indicate a student is having a difficult time adjusting to their new family structure (DeBord, 2006).

Elementary students often do not understand divorce and think that their parents will get back together. Look for the following warning signs in elementary classrooms:

- ◆ Feels deceived and a sense of loss.
- ◆ Hopes and says that parents will get back together.
- ◆ Feels rejected by the parent who left.
- ◆ Ignores school and friendships.
- ◆ Worries about the future.
- ◆ Fears nobody will be there to pick him/her up from school.
- ◆ Complains of head or stomach aches.
- ◆ Experiences loss of appetite, diarrhea, or frequent urination.

While a **middle school student** understands divorce more than an elementary-aged one, he/she certainly does not accept it. Possible reactions for this age group include:

- ◆ Feels angry and disillusioned.
- ◆ Feels abandoned by the parent who is leaving.
- ◆ Tries to take advantage of parents' low energy and high stress levels.
- ◆ Tries to take control over the family.
- ◆ Shows extreme behavior (good and bad).
- ◆ Becomes moralistic, or becomes involved in high-risk behaviors (drugs, shoplifting, skipping school).
- ◆ Feels like he/she will never have a long-term relationship.
- ◆ Worries about finances.



How to Communicate with Challenging Parents

We have all experienced a difficult parent at some time or another. Keep these tips in mind as you deal with challenging parents, especially ones experiencing a divorce (Fiore & Whitaker, 2006).

- ◆ Keep your emotions in check.
- ◆ Choose your words carefully.
- ◆ Maintain eye contact.
- ◆ Be friendly and direct.
- ◆ Acknowledge the fact that while parents might be different than we think they ought to be, they are not necessarily wrong.
- ◆ View parent involvement as a continuum, rather than categories (uninvolved vs. involved). This helps develop partnerships with parents. This means taking the perspective that all parents are involved in some way.
- ◆ Offer parents resources (websites, literature) to help them transition to co-parenting as it pertains to their child's achievement in school.
- ◆ Include all parents in on school mailings, special events at school, parent/teacher conferences, etc. (unless there are custodial issues).
- ◆ Stay out of the divorce and focus on what is best for the student.
- ◆ Do not try and handle an especially challenging situation alone. Include the student's other teachers, guidance counselor, social workers, principal and/or assistant principal. Work together.



Websites

In today's age of computer technology, students spend a tremendous amount of time on the Web. Encourage them to put their computer skills to good use and check out the following kid-friendly sites that help with divorce-related issues. There are also many sites available for adults.

Students

- ◆ www.kidsinthemiddle.com
- ◆ www.bonusfamilies.com
- ◆ www.billsarena.com
- ◆ www.pbskids.org

Adults

- ◆ www.focusonyourchild.com
- ◆ www.helpguide.org
- ◆ www.talk-aboutit.com
- ◆ www.divorcemag.com
- ◆ www.scholastic.com
- ◆ www.divorceinfo.com
- ◆ www.parentingtime.net



Students and Adults

- ◆ www.kidshealth.org
- ◆ www.kidsturn.org

Teachers

- ◆ <http://www.plsweb.com/resources/articles/hot/2000/05/19/divorce/>
- ◆ <http://www.athealth.com/consumer/disorders/childrendivorce.html>
- ◆ <http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/hesguide/humanrel/gh6611.htm>

Using Literature to Help Students Cope

Through literature, children can perceive how others have encountered and resolved problems that cause sadness, anger, stress, fear, and uncertainty. More importantly, children can use conflict resolution strategies to deal with these problems. The following literary works can enable teachers and students to work together to find different solutions for problems and help students to realize that they are not alone in encountering these problems. These books can also heighten the awareness of other students about these sensitive issues, as well as serve as a resource for teachers.

Children's Books

Bienenfeld, Florence. *My Mom and Dad are Getting a Divorce*. Description of typical feeling experienced by children who experience divorce. Ages 4-12

Blume, Judy. *It's Not the End of the World*. Karen and her sister cope with their feelings after divorce in a way that would seem quite real to suburban children. Ages 4-7

Brown, Marc. *Dinosaurs Divorce*. The story and explanation of divorce through a dinosaur's eyes.

Byars, Betsy. *The Night Swimmers*. A young girl tries to take care of the house as well as her father and two brothers. She realizes this is not her role when her father remarries. Ages 10-14

Cleary, Beverly. *Dear Mr. Henshaw*. In his letters to his favorite author, 10-year-old Leigh reveals his problems in coping with his parents' divorce, being the new boy in school, and generally finding his way in the world. Ages 8-10

Cleaver, Vera, and Cleaver, Bill. *Lady Ellen Grae*. A girl in Appalachia survives the aftermath of her parents' divorce even though she does not live with either of them. Grades 5-8.

Corcoran, Barbara. *Hey That's My Soul You're Stepping On*. While her parents confront their marital problems, Rachel is sent to her grandparents who live in a residential motel with other retired couples. A new friendship helps her to gain perspective on her family responsibilities and loyalties and to come to terms with her parents' divorce. Grades 5-9.

Dolmetsch, Paul, and Shih, Alexa. *The Kids Book About Single Parent Families* (By Kids for Everyone). A look at the single-parent family experience through the eyes of adolescents. Grades 7+

Danziger, Paula. *The Divorce Express*. The story of a ninth-grade girl who lives in upstate New York during the week and travels on the "Divorce Express" to visit her father on weekends. Phoebe initially expresses her confusion and distress by acting out in school, but comes to some sense of calm and acceptance. Ages 10-14

Fisher, Lois I. Rachel Vellars, *How Could You?* A story of friendship between two sixth-grade girls living with their divorced fathers. It presents two very different divorced families. Ages 9-12

Gardner, Richard. *The Boys and Girls Book About Divorce*. A straightforward discussion with children whose parents have divorced. The author, a child psychiatrist, offers children practical suggestions about handling themselves and making the best of their situations. Grades 4+

Gerson, Corine. *Son for a Day*. A humorous and moving novel about a street-savvy boy who creates adventure and perks up his family life in the process. Grades 5-9

Harris, Mark Jonathan. *With a Wave of the Wand*. Marlee, with the help of her brother, tries to unite her parents after their divorce. She finds another solution, however, and realizes that their divorce has not diminished her parents' love for her. Grades 5-8

Klein, Norma. *It's Not What You Expect*. A "liberated" family weathers Dad's three-month "absence." Grades 6+

Krementz, Jill. *How it Feels When Parents Divorce*. Very thoroughly and logically explores the myriad of emotions children of divorce experience.

LeShan, Eda. *What's Going to Happen to Me?* Answers many questions children have about divorce, discusses feelings, and suggests ways of coping. Grades 3-7

List, Julie Autumn. *The Day the Loving Stopped*. Julie describes her reactions to her parents' divorce from initial shock to acceptance. Although she misses her father, visitation works and the bonds with her mother and sister are strengthened. Grades 8+

Mann, Peggy. *My Dad Lives in a Downtown Hotel*. After a struggle, Joey realizes that his father's leaving is not his fault, and Joey learns how to cope with life as it is. Grades 3-6

Park, Barbara. *Don't Make Me Smile*. Charlie, the eleven-year-old hero, tells the story of his parents' divorce and his efforts to reunite them. After disastrous results, he concedes that the divorce is final and he must adjust. Grades 4-7

Perl, Lila. *The Telltale Summer of Tina C*. Trying to untangle the confusing relationship of divorce and remarriage, Tina begins to understand her loved ones. Positive, open relationships with both parents are portrayed. Grades 5-9

Perry, Patricia, and Lynch, Marietta. *Mommy and Daddy are Divorced*. This is the story of two young brothers who visit with their father every Saturday following their parents' divorce. Ages 3-7

Reilly, Natalie June, and Pavese, Randi. *My Stick Family*. A thoughtful tale about the complex issue of divorce. It is a story that focuses on the love of family, and how that love transcends divorce.

Richards, Arlene, and Willis, Irene. *How To Get It Together When Your Parents Are Coming Apart*. A self-help book for adolescents with examples of what young adults and teens may need to cope with during and after their parents' marital troubles, separation, and divorce. The emphasis is on awareness of feelings, coping skills, and reassurance that young people are able to take responsibility for their own lives. Grades 8+

Slote, Alfred. *Matt Gargan's Boy*. The hero of this baseball story is an eleven-year-old boy whose parents are divorced and whose father is a major league baseball player. Although the boy's relationship with his dad is essentially a long distance one, he fantasizes about his father's return to the marriage while trying to discourage his mother's relationships with other men. Ages 9-13

Snyder, Zilpha Keatley. *Headless Cupid*. Curiosity and fun occur when stepbrothers and sisters begin adjusting to each other and to their new parents. Grades 5-8

Stenson, Janet Sinberg. *Now I Have a Stepparent and It's Kind of Confusing*. Discusses the variety of feelings children have when parents remarry. Ages 6-11

Books for Adults

Diamond, Susan Arnsberg. *Helping Children of Divorce*. Clearly answers teachers' questions on "What should I look for?" and "How can I help?" Chapters on preventing potential problems and handling specific behavior problems.

Francke, Linda Bird. *Growing Up Divorced*. A journalist's comprehensive look at children and divorce that includes a major chapter on divorce and the schools.

Wallerstein, Judith, S., and Kelly, Joan Berlin. *Surviving the Breakup*. Report and analysis of the clinical research findings from the Children of Divorce Project, a five-year longitudinal study of 60 Northern California divorcing families and their 131 children. Includes a chapter entitled, "The Child in the School Setting."

Wallerstein, Judith S., and Blakeslee, Sandra. *What About the Kids? Raising Your Children Before, During, and After Divorce*. Takes parents through the entire divorce process.

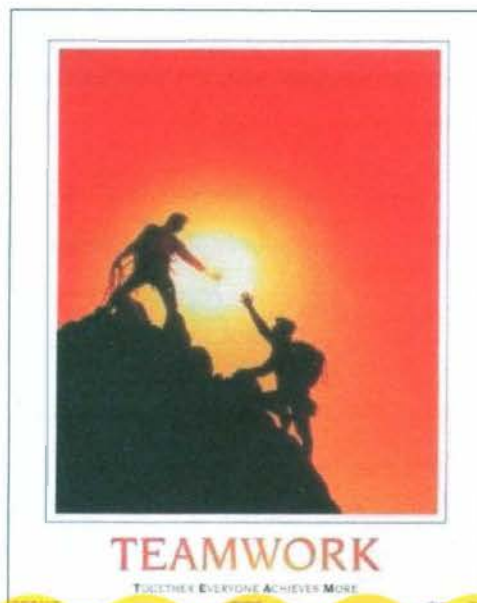
Good Reads for Teachers

- ◆ *The Crisis Manual for Early Childhood Teachers: How to Handle the Really Difficult Problems*, by Karen Miller
- ◆ *Home, School, and Community Relations: A Guide to Working with Families*, by Carol Gestwicki
- ◆ *Beginnings & Beyond: Foundations in Early Childhood Education*, by Ann Miles Gordon and Kathryn Williams Browne
- ◆ *Divorce, Family Structure, and the Academic Success of Children*, by William Jeynes

You are not alone!

One of the best aspects of working in a school setting is that there is a large network of professional school personnel who are available to help you support your students in the most effective way. Please utilize their expertise and don't be afraid to turn to others:

- ◆ Teachers
- ◆ Administrative staff
- ◆ Psychologists
- ◆ Social workers
- ◆ Guidance counselors
- ◆ Building Team



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Thank you for taking the time to implement this Resource Guide into your classroom and evaluate its usefulness.

Appendix B

Pre-Survey Results

Dear Sixth Grade Teacher, THANK YOU for taking the time to help me complete my graduate studies at SUNY Brockport. Your participation in this action research is truly invaluable and I appreciate your support. Please take a moment to complete this survey and then return it to my mailbox. You do not need to include your name. Thank you again, Jamie ☺

1. I have students in my classroom who have experienced or are experiencing their parents' divorce (yes/no). _____

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
2. These students display more behavioral problems in the classroom than other students do.					
3. The divorce situation is negatively impacting my students' academic success.					
4. These students display feelings of anger, loss, grief, and sadness within my classroom.					
5. I have had parents refuse to conference if their ex-spouse was going to be present or parents who have openly spoken badly about their ex-spouse to me.					
6. I feel well-equipped to handle the different emotions and questions that result from my students' divorce situations.					
7. I could benefit from further strategies and resources related to divorce, its impact on my students, and how I can help.					

Appendix C

Post-Survey Results

THANK YOU once again for your continuous help. This is the final step in the action research process and it is your opportunity to evaluate the Resource Guide and its effectiveness in your classroom. Please complete the survey below, include any comments, and return to me by Friday, October 6th. Thanks again, Jamie ☺

1. I used the resource guide sometime during the implementation period (yes/no). _____

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
2. I benefited from the Resource Guide.					
3. My students benefited from the Resource Guide.					
4. The Guide had useful strategies and resources that I could use with my students.					
5. The Guide had useful strategies and resources that I could use with parents.					
6. I feel well-equipped to handle the different emotions and questions that result from my students' divorce situations.					
7. Other teachers could benefit from having a copy of this Guide available to them.					
Additional Comments:					