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Exploring the Impact of Bibliotherapy and Family Literacy Bags on Elementary Students Experiencing Divorce

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**EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF BIBLIOTHERAPY AND FAMILY
LITERACY BAGS ON ELEMENTARY STUDENTS EXPERIENCING
DIVORCE**

by

SIMONE ELIZABETH SMITH

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the major Program in Elementary Education
in the College of Education and Human Performance
and the Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida**

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Thesis Chair: Sherron Killingsworth Roberts, Ed.D.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research project was to use picture books to create family literacy bags surrounding the topic of divorce, in order to explore their impact on children and families. Divorce is on the rise and so many children are facing, or may face divorce, in their preadolescent lives. This thesis involved creating a tool that will help enrich family support and guidance with issues or stressors that arise from the divorce. As educators, caregivers and school personnel consider the use of family literacy bags, my research has the potential to impact these students and their families. Through my research, I was able to create six family literacy bags that included a book, with a lesson plan and activity. While creating these six family literacy bags, I considered how the child may feel before, after or during a divorce. I included a variety of different picture books about divorce to ensure that the story would be relevant to each family. I used activities in my lesson plans that would give the parent or guardian and child the opportunity to share their feelings with one another, while spending time together. Two families participated in my research study. I allowed the students to choose two family literacy bags with their family and allowed them a week's time to complete the family literacy bag. In addition, survey results of the participating parent or guardian after completing both family literacy bags with their child will be included.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I can only begin to express my gratitude toward my astonishing committee who were ready and willing to support me through this journey: Dr. Sherron Killingsworth Roberts, Dr. Rita Buchoff, and Dr. Yolanda Hood. Although it was tough, your patience, understanding, and knowledge are what gave me the drive and motivation to keep going. Without your help this would have not been possible and I appreciate every moment of your time that you have given to me. I'm forever thankful and grateful for all of your help.

Thank you to the amazing staff at the Central Florida Elementary School and the incredible families that made my study possible. I would also like to thank the staff at the Institutional Review Board for helping me get through the vigorous process of research approval.

Thank you to the staff of the Burnett Honors College for your guidance and patience, and for offering this wonderful opportunity to me.

DEDICATIONS

This work is dedicated to the children and families who have experienced challenges and have had the strength and courage to strive and make it through their difficulties.

To separated families who work their hardest to do the best for their children, by providing them with love, support, and guidance every day.

To all of the hardworking single parents, that support their child's education. Even with limited time, difficulties and struggles they are always there for their children.

To my family and friends that have helped me through this journey, and provided me with love and support, and encouraged me to never give up on my dreams.

To all of my mentors, who without their love, guidance and understanding beyond belief, I would not be the success that I am today.

To my beautiful daughter who has given me the drive and strength to never give up. For being my motivation day in and day out. My love for her over powers all, and I will stop at nothing to have the best for her.

And, to my wonderful students who have inspired me to teach, and provide excellence in our education system and instill a life of learning amongst them.

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CHAPTER ONE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

“Every child deserves a champion – an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be.”

Rita Pierson (2013)

As a future educator, I want to be my students’ champion. In deciding upon a topic for my thesis, I realized I wanted to make a difference in the lives of children of divorce.

Personal Rationale

I grew up in a single parent home raised by my mother. I sometimes wondered what it would be like to have my father around, but it was not a big concern to me because it was something that I never had, so I did not miss it. Being in a single parent home was not the easiest but my mother did all that she could. My grandmother was a huge part of my life, she raised me until I was five, then I went to live with my mother. My father would write sometimes and we would talk on the phone throughout my childhood years, but I have never had a bond or deep connection with him. Even though I would see my friends and family enjoy time with their fathers, it did not really bother me much. I feel like my grandmother filled the void of my father not being around.

As a future educator, I have had many conversations with people on divorce related issues and single parenting, but one of my friend’s stories really stood out to me. Divorce for her

really impacted her life. She and her husband were married two years before they decided their marriage was not working. Her children were eight and four, and the divorce was very hard on them. She stated that even at the age of 14 and nine they still have difficult with the divorce, but with the healing process has not been as difficult due to support from their church family and therapy. She told me that her and her family used a program called Divorce Care to help with bibliotherapeutic healing but she wished she had more books to read to them. She said post-divorce is still difficult for her and her family and co-parenting is even harder. She struggles every day, but tries to be the bigger person about her family situation. Having this conversation with her made me even more dedicated to do something to help and support families of divorce.

I am a single parent now, and although it is not easy, I do my best to make sure my daughter has all the love and support she needs. I love spending time with her and one of her favorite things is having me read stories to her. She always seems to feel comforted from me reading her a story. We read before she goes to bed and when she wakes up in the morning, so I feel that literature gives her a sense of joy and happiness. I will soon be an elementary School teacher, and I am now interning at a school that I love. During my time at the elementary school, I noticed that many of the students in my intern classrooms were from divorced or separated families. There were many different situations, but some of the students had behavioral and emotional problems. I feel that these students need an extra support system and resources to help them cope with divorce.

Rationale for Studying Children of Divorce

In 2009, statistics showed that a least 1 million children will experience divorce within their family (Howell, 2009, p. 10). Howell (2009) noted that children's lives are turned upside down by divorce; meanwhile their parents may see new opportunities in life. Studies provide evidence that children from divorced families face, emotional, social, and academic problems. Children from divorced families are more likely to have conduct problems and show signs of maladjustments, students of divorced families have low self-esteem, and poor academic achievement (Howell, 2009). I feel that students need more support from the school system when going through this type of life change.

The goal of my thesis project is to help students cope with divorce, and I would like to this by introducing children's literature that relates to the challenges they may be facing, while dealing with divorce. I want to create family literacy bags for students containing books their family identifies with, and could help them cope with divorce through bibliotherapy. As stated by Roberts and Crawford (2008), children develop coping skills through a positive classroom environment, the consistent modeling of prosocial skills, and secure relationships with caring adults. "In addition, reading high-quality literature is crucial in helping children better understand and manage life's daily challenges" (Roberts & Crawford, 2008, p.2). I want to help teachers understand that they can provide more than just academic support for students, but also emotional support for them and their families. As stated by Barbour (2012), parent-child conversations that are prompted by reading books together provide rich learning contexts, and enable children to extend many other understandings on personally meaningful level.

As, I stated earlier, the purpose of this research project is to use picture books to create family literacy bags surrounding the topic of divorce, in order to explore their impact on children and families. Divorce is on the rise and so many children are facing, or may face divorce, in their preadolescent lives. The following chapter will provide a literature review that supports this thesis, while Chapter Three outlines the methodology.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of the research related to this thesis. Therefore, the following subheadings will guide this chapter of the review of the related research. Divorce and its impact on preadolescents. . I feel that these students need an extra support system and resources to help them cope with divorce.

Divorce and its Impact on Preadolescents

Divorce has been widespread in many countries, in the past 30 years. Divorce usually occurs within the first ten years of marriage, which means most of the children involved are in early childhood. In general, children of divorce have a hard time dealing with intimacy and building relationships, and suffer from anxiety and confusion (Mo, 2007). McMillian and Pehrsson (2010) stated that divorce has negative impacts on a child's academic, social, behavioral, and physical well-being. According to Mo (2007). It is developmentally difficult for children to have cognitive control of their complexities, and because of this, they do not have the emotional vocabulary to express themselves. Preadolescents are particularly vulnerable to negative consequences of divorce for several reasons. Relationships and social components are key to a healthy psychological growth. Divorce brings transitions, challenges, feelings of insecurity, and disruptions of important relationships (McMillian & Pehrsson, 2010). Living in different family situations can have a strain on children because they are now living under two different sets of rules. Things like bedtime, dinner, and homework could be altered. One parent also might be more lenient than the other. This situation is called being binuclear, when post-

divorce families adapt to living in two different worlds (Howell, 2009). Compared to intact families, children of divorced families, exhibit more conflictive behaviors, from depression, stress, anxiety, and withdrawals (Miller, Ryan, & Morrison, 1999).

Teachers and children of divorce

Teachers should understand what divorce means to the individual child, and that some students may experience behavioral problems, while other will struggle academically. (Miller, Ryan, & Morrison, 1999). Miller et al. (1999) also stated that some students of divorce might feel abandonment so the teacher should make sure the students feels that they have a secure relationship with them. According to Lowe (2009), educators are required to help pave roads of healing, to help cope with issues, to enable students to progress emotionally and academically, through hardships and difficulties. Teachers should not be expected to assess children's emotional problems; they can provide useful screening, an information gathering role (Carlson, 1987).

Teachers can help by allowing students to get involved in classroom procedures and activities (Miller, Ryan, & Morrison, 1999). Many types of literature can help support children to confront emotional challenges in their daily lives, according to Roberts and Crawford (2008). Teachers, counselors, or parents can use literature to explore difficult issues by encouraging students to make personal connections with characters in the book, allowing the reader to evaluate their own emotions and behaviors (Rozalski, Stewart, & Miller, 2010). Bibliotherapy

also known as therapeutic reading is known to help children relate to characters, and cope with their emotions on a variety of issues (Lowe, 2009).

Bibliotherapy: How Children can cope with divorce using literature

Bibliotherapy helps children who are experiencing emotional or developmental behavior after a traumatic event, such as divorce (McMillian & Pehrsson, 2010). According to Rozalski, Stewart, and Miller (2010) bibliotherapy is a projective indirect intervention that uses literature for personal growth. Since children lack the emotional vocabulary to express themselves, picture books can offer them an opportunity to communicate their feelings (Lowe, 2009). Bibliotherapy helps promote self-awareness, and can help children develop an empathetic understanding of others (McMillian & Pehrsson, 2010). As stated by Lowe (2009) bibliotherapy defines the importance of reading when a student is going through a crisis. Literature invites us to remember personal tribulations, encourage the importance of hope, and offer avenues of practical support. Literature also teaches life lessons to assist us through our own obstacles (Lowe, 2009).

Kramer and Smith (1998) describe bibliotherapy as a process growing toward emotional good health through literature, and the assistance of facing challenges with the interactions with literature. Two types of bibliotherapy can be used: clinical or developmental. Clinical bibliotherapy is used by therapists and counselors in a clinical setting, and developmental bibliotherapy is used in a classroom setting by teachers to promote positive attitudes for children going through challenging situations (Kramer and Smith, 1998). Bibliotherapy is identified in three principle process stages. According to Rozalski, Stewart, and Miller (2010), the three

principle process stages of bibliotherapy are identification, catharsis, and insight. Identification occurs when the reader relates to a character or situation in a story; catharsis happens when the reader connects to the characters in the story and invites feeling that were repressed; insight is when the reader understands and sees the situation in a new light and feels positive and motivated to make good behavioral changes (Rozalski et al. 2010). Picture books provide therapeutic interventions for children. Some nonfiction picture books directly connect to students of divorce. These books provide coping skills and adaptive strategies. Fiction picture books offer children an alternative channel of interpreting divorce through the characters in the story (Mo, 2007).

Picture books: Fiction and nonfiction

“The beauty of sharing good fiction when working with children affected by divorce is that they do not necessarily have to be ready to admit they are having problems” (McMillen, 2010, p. 33). As stated by Mo (2007) picture books are great to help explain what divorce is and how it may change their lives. According to McMillen (2010) fiction books may be preferable to children who have not openly acknowledged that the divorce situation is causing problems. Sometimes children are overwhelmed and numb by the changing events in their lives, so fiction books can be the furtiveness approach to help children cope and feel better about the feelings they are burying inside (McMillen, 2010).

“Nonfiction picture books are solely for the purpose of teaching them adaptive strategies or coping mechanisms” (Mo, 2007, p.26). Nonfiction books are beneficial for students because

they are usually self-help books, and they have information about the facts related to changing family structures. Students must be at the point of acknowledgment of the issues they are facing, and the text selection must be appropriate for the child (McMillen, 2010). Nonfiction picture books also provide straight talk for young readers about divorce issues. The illustrations provide visual appeal to the book, and the scenarios can help children understand what causes divorce and how to go on with their lives (Mo, 2007). Parents need to constantly encourage and explain to their children that divorce did not occur because of them, but rather because of adult choices and relationship problems (Miller & Morrison, 1999, p 289). Parents can continue to encourage their children and be more involved by spending time with them, and family literacy bags will be just the tool to use to help them.

Using family literacy bags to enhance literacy through family involvement

Family literacy bags can contain a book or a collection of books, including activities that can encourage parents and children to read and discuss books together (Barbour, 1998). Literacy picture book reading has been noted as being related to children's increased motivation and desire to interact with books (Dever & Burts, 2002). "Children's literature not only offers salient information but can also provide comfort within the lines of print" (Roberts & Crawford, 2008, p.3). Family involvement, interest, and support play a critical role in children's school achievement and educational success (Dever and Burts, 2002, p.16). Family literacy bags have the potential to reach all families, even those who are not able to, or who do not particularly participate in school events.

As stated by Martin, Daughenbaugh, Shaw & Burch (2013), family literacy bags offer opportunities for family discussions about what students are learning in school and also could be an extra dose of practice interacting with books for ELL students. “When selecting books the following must be considered: the books should provide positive parent-child interaction and meet their needs, enhance conversation between parent and child, and create high interest and discussion” (Richardson, Miller, Richardson & Sacks, 2008, p.4). In addition, Richardson et al, (2008) stated that parents want their children to be successful readers and play an important part in their success as their role models. Given the tools and strategies they need by educators they can accomplish this. “Parents increased their understanding of the importance of time spent reading and interacting with their children. Literacy bags exposed them to the variety and breadth of children's literature. Children and parents learned about each other's interests and abilities, while children made positive progress in becoming lifelong readers” (Richardson, Miller, Richardson, & Sacks, 2008, p.7). After the completion of my literature review, I had a better idea of how to design my research, which is included in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this research project was to use picture books to create family literacy bags surrounding the topic of divorce, in order to explore their impact on children and families. Divorce is on the rise and so many children are facing, or may face divorce, in their preadolescent lives. This thesis involved creating a tool that will help enrich family support and guidance with issues or stressors that arise from the divorce. With the use of family literacy bags, along with educators, caregivers, and school personnel, I was able to help students cope with divorce related issues, and enhance their literature development, while spending more time with their families. As I stated earlier, I want teachers to understand that they can provide more than just educational or literacy support for their students, but through family literacy book bags, they can provide emotional support, also. Family literacy bags offer a means to develop a lifelong learning experience for children and their families on how to work through, and face difficult challenges in their lives, such as divorce.

Population and Sample

The suburban school that I conducted my research project at serves about 700 students. The students of this school are mostly from middle class families, who are involved AND engaged within this community. The school also has a strong PTA presence. The school also serves those of different religions and backgrounds. The school population consist of 85%

Caucasians, Hispanics are 16% , Asian/Pacific Islanders are 5% , Multi-racial is 5% , Black students are 4%, and non-Hispanic are 84%. There are 51% females in the student population and 49% male students. There are 20% of students that are eligible free and reduced lunch, 9.2% are ESE students, and 2% are ELL students.

With the help of the classroom teacher and school counselor, I narrowed the target population to two family households. I sent out five consent letter and these were my consented participants.

Family A: White middle-class family that consisted of the mother, aunt, and child. The child is in the 3rd grade.

Family B: White middle-class family that consisted of the mother and child. The child is in the 3rd grade.

Family Literacy Bags

The family literacy bags were created by me for students in my internship classroom. The family literacy bags were created to contain one picture book related to divorce or separation, either nonfiction or fiction, and appropriate for third grade students. The students were allowed to choose the book and related activity to facilitate interaction, reflection, and discussion with guardians who are residential and/or non-residential. Activities included drawing pictures, role playing, writing letters, or arts and crafts, and something to promote healthy discussion. Instructions to guardians and parents with needed materials and writing utensils were also included. The family literacy bag will also include a brief parent survey which will inquire as to the usefulness, effectiveness, and /or helpfulness of the family literacy bags. Additionally, a checklist of the contents are attached to the baggie for a quick check in.

On the next few pages you will see the family literacy bags that I created. While choosing the books for my literacy bags, I thought about how each individual bag could provide support for each family. As I stated earlier, non-fiction picture books are ideal for children are open about their feelings of divorce. Fiction books may be preferable to children who have not openly acknowledged that the divorce situation is causing problems. Sometimes children are overwhelmed and numb by the changing events in their lives, so fiction books can be the furtiveness approach to help children cope and feel better about the feelings they are burying inside (McMillen, 2010). From this research, I went to the Curriculum Materials Center, and worked with the librarian to choose books on divorce that would suite these participants. My criteria for the books that I chose, were that they had to be related to the topic, age appropriate,

applicable to the specific needs of the family. The activities that I choose for the family literacy were tied directly to these books. Refer to Appendix D pictures of the books and family literacy bags, also for the six books that I used to conduct my research and for additional book resources.

Family Literacy Bag lesson plans LESSON ONE

<i>Title</i>	<i>My Family is Changing</i>
<i>Genre/Year</i>	Non-Fiction/1998
<i>Author/Illustrator</i>	Pat Thomas
<i>Number of pages</i>	29
<u><i>Summary of Story</i></u>	<i>My Family is Changing</i> is a non-fiction story about divorce and how families change during this time. First, the book explains what divorce means and how this change in the family may have occurred. Then the story goes on to explain the different procedures in the divorce process and the first initial changes in the family. Finally, the book describes different family situations and how children can cope with the feelings they have about the divorce. The story includes questions that you may ask your child while reading with them, a guide on how to use the story, and a glossary.
<i>time duration</i>	45 minutes to one hour
<i>Lesson Plan Procedure</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Parent or guardian will get the book out of the family literacy bag.2. Parent or guardian should preview the “How to Use Book Guide” on page 28 in story.3. Parent or guardian should review the vocabulary with the child, which is located in the glossary on pg. 284. Parent or guardian should read the story with child. The parent should read a page, then the child should, and so on.5. After the parent or guardian and the child have finished the story; they should review the glossary terms again.6. After the terms are reviewed, the parent or guardian should start the activity with the student.
<i>Activity</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Parent or guardian will get a piece of paper and pencil out of the family literacy bag and give it to the child.2. The parent or guardian will read pgs. 10-11 again to the child, then read the “What About You?” box on pg. 11 and tell them to answer the question on the piece of paper about how they feel about the “What About You?” question. * Parent should give the child at least two minutes to respond.3. Then the parent or guardian will do the same on pgs. 14-15, 18-19, and 22-23.4. After the parent or guardian has finished reading all of the “What About You?” sections and the child has finished writing, the child will share their response to each question if they feel comfortable doing so.5. Once answered, the parent or guardian and child have completed this family literacy bag.

Materials

1. Instruction sheet
2. Book
3. Pens or pencil
4. Paper

Family Literacy Bag lesson plans LESSON TWO

<i>Title</i>	<i>Please Come Home</i>
<i>Genre/Year</i>	Fiction/1985
<i>Author/# of pages</i>	Doris Sanford/34 pages
<i>Summary of Story</i>	This story is about a girl named Jenny whose parents do not get along and will be soon getting a divorce. Her parents always argue and never agree and Jenny feels like it is all her fault and that nobody loved her. Jenny confides in her teddy bear, who gives her advice and tells her to stay strong and that she will not always feel unloved. At the end of the story, Jenny realizes that divorce isn't so bad after all, and that she is loved.
<i>Time duration</i>	45 minutes to one hour
<i>Lesson Plan Procedure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read all of the procedures and activity direction before beginning.1. Parent or guardian (without the child), will read the last page of the book before reading the story.2. Parents should introduce the book to the child and tell them that they are going to be reading a story together.3. Parent or guardian will read the story with the child/children4. After reading the story, the parent or guardian will do the activity with the child that is listed below.
<i>Activity</i>	Letter writing <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Parent/guardian and child will write an informal letter to each other about their favorite family outdoor activities, and why they like to do those activities with their family (Allow up to 10 minutes for the child to write their letter).2. After completion of the letter, the parent/guardian and child will share with one another.3. The activities that are shared can be something you do in the, future together if you enjoyed doing this activity. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Paper for letter writing2. Pens or Pencils3. Book

Family Literacy Bag lesson plans LESSON THREE

<i>Title</i>	<i>Pricilla Twice</i>
<i>Genre/Year</i>	Fiction
<i>Author/Illustrator</i>	Judith Caseley
<i>Number of Pages</i>	28 pages
<i>Summary of Story</i>	The story <i>Priscilla Twice</i> , is about a little girl named Priscilla who loses herself when her parents tell her that they are going to be getting a divorce. When Priscilla's parents tell her that they are getting a divorce, she first blames herself and tries to be the best behaved child. She feels that she is not fully herself because she spends a week with her mother then a week with her father. She starts to act out because she is confused, then at the end of the story she comes to the realization that her parents love her despite the divorce.
<i>Time duration</i>	45 minutes to one hour
<i>Lesson Plan Procedure</i>	Read all of the procedures and the activity directions before beginning. Parent or guardian will introduce the story to the child by reading the title. Parent or guardian will read the story with the child. After reading the story, have a short discussion on how you both felt about the book. Then the parent or guardian will do the activity with the child.
<i>Activity</i>	Write a letter to Pricilla! The child will write a letter to Pricilla, and the letter should start like this; I just read your book and I know your life seems so hard right now. I have kinda been in your shoes, and I wanted to tell you that I think it might get better. Here's some advice I have for you: After the child writes the letter to Pricilla, they will share the advice they gave to her with their parent or guardian.
<i>Materials</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Paper2. Crayons/ Markers3. Pens or Pencils4. Instruction List5. Book

Family Literacy Bag lesson plans LESSON FOUR

<i>Title</i>	<i>Two Homes</i>
<i>Genre/Year</i>	Fiction/2003
<i>Author/Illustrator</i>	Claire Masurel/Kady MacDonald Denton
<i>Number of pages</i>	27 pages
<i>Summary of Story</i>	The story <i>Two Homes</i> is about a little boy named Alex whose parents are divorced and live in two separate homes. Alex spends time with his mother and father and shares all of the things that he has at both of his homes.
<i>Time duration</i>	45 minutes to one hour
<i>Lesson Plan Procedure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read all of the procedures, and the activity directions before beginning. (without child).1. Parent or guardian will introduce the story to the child by reading the title.2. Parent or guardian will read the story with the child.3. After reading the story, have a short discussion about how you felt about the book.4. Then the parent or guardian will do the activity with the child.
<i>Activity</i>	It's Your Choice: <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Parent or guardian can enjoy a nice walk 10 minute walk with the child; the child can assist with making dinner or help with cleaning up; or you can also watch one of your favorite shows together.2. On a piece of paper located in the Family Literacy Bag, the parent and child each will share a few sentences about what you did and how it made you feel.3. Put the pieces of paper back in the bag.4. Activity complete.
<i>Materials</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Writing paper2. Pens or pencils3. Book4. Instruction sheet

Family Literacy Bag lesson plans LESSON FIVE

<i>Title</i>	<i>Why Are We Getting a Divorce</i>
<i>Genre/Year</i>	Non-Fiction
<i>Author/Illustrator</i>	Peter Mayle/Arthur Robins
<i>Number of pages</i>	28 pages
<i>Summary of Story</i>	<i>Why Are We Getting a Divorce</i> , is a non-fiction picture book about things that happen before, during, and after divorce. The book starts off by telling facts on how many people get divorced and how they are from all different backgrounds. Then the book explains how people meet and reasons why they may have fallen in love with each other. Then the book goes on to tell what may go wrong in a relationship and why people get divorced. Following those statements, the book explains how divorce may affect families and that different people may come into your life. The book provides ways to help these situations and how to cope with divorce.
<i>Time duration</i>	45 minutes to one hour
<i>Lesson Plan Procedure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read all of the procedures and the activity directions before beginning.1. Parent or guardian will introduce the story to the child by reading the title.2. Parent or guardian will read the story with the child.3. After reading the story, have a short discussion on how you both felt about the book.4. Then the parent or guardian will do the activity with the child.
<i>Activity</i>	A Weekend With the Family <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Student will write a list of activities that they would like to do one weekend with a family member.2. After the student has completed the list the child will share the list with the parent or guardian, and tell the parent or guardian who they would like to spend time with doing the activity.
<i>Materials</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3. Book4. Pens or Pencils5. Paper6. Instruction Sheet

Family Literacy Bag lesson plans LESSON SIX

Title	<i>When my parents forgot how to be friends</i>
Genre/Year	Fiction
Author/Illustrator	Jennifer Moore-Mallinos
Number of pages	31 pages
Summary of Story	<i>When my parents forgot how to be friends</i> , is a fiction picture book about a little girl whose family used to do everything together. They would have family nights and play board games. Then, all of a sudden the little girl noticed that her parents stopped talking to each other and they seemed sad and angry with each other all the time. In, addition they stopped having family nights, and eventually her dad moved out. The little girl felt sad when her parents spilt up and blamed herself. Then, she started to realize that her parents seemed happier and she still got to see her father and talk to him on the phone. She realized that even though her parents didn't live together that they still loved her.
Time duration	45 minutes to one hour
Lesson Plan Procedure	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Parent or Guardian will Read all of the procedures and the activity directions before beginning.6. Parent or guardian will introduce the story to the child by reading the title.7. Parent or guardian will read the story with the child.8. After reading the story, parent or guardian and child, will have a short discussion on how you both felt about the book.9. Then the parent or guardian will do the activity with the child.
Activity	Make a collage out of pictures from old magazines that remind you of your family. <ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Parent or guardian will take out the magazines, scissors construction paper, and glue from the family literacy bag.8. Parent or guardian and child, will look through the magazines and find about six to eight pictures in the magazine that remind them of their family and things that they do or should do together.9. Parent or guardian and child will then cut out the pictures that they have chosen and glue them on the construction paper.10. After parent or guardian and child have finished cutting out or gluing their pictures on the construction paper, they will share

Materials

their collage with one another and describe what they thought was important about each picture.

1. Book
2. Pens or Pencils
3. Construction Paper
4. Instruction Sheet
5. Scissors
6. Magazines
7. Glue

Parent/Guardian Survey

The parent/guardian survey is a survey is done upon completion of the family literacy bags. The parent or guardian will complete the survey on their own. The survey includes questions about family involvement, divorce, and their reflection of the family literacy bags. Refer to Appendix E for the results of the parent/guardian survey.

1. How often does your family read together? Circle your answer

Every day

Once a week

Once a month

Sometimes

Never

2. How often does your family do activities together? Circle your answer

Every day

Once a week

Once a month

Sometimes

Never

3. Did you feel that this activity enhanced your family involvement? Circle your answer

Highly agree

Agree

Somewhat agree

Highly disagree

Disagree

Somewhat disagree

4. Did you feel that this Family Literacy Bag helped you with coping and expressing your feelings with your child about divorce-related issues?

Highly agree

Agree

Somewhat agree

Highly disagree

Disagree

Somewhat disagree

5. Would you recommend Family Literacy Bags to others going through stress or challenges in their lives? Circle your answer

Highly agree

Agree

Somewhat agree

Highly disagree

Disagree

Somewhat disagree

6. Has your family gone through a divorce, separation, or changing family structure?

Circle your answer

1-3 years ago

4-6 years ago

7-10 years ago

Other

7. How did you explain the divorce, or separation situation to your child? Please explain.

8. What was the best thing about this book bag? What was the worst thing? Please explain.

This survey was completed by:

Circle one: Mother, Father, or other guardian

IRB and District Approval Forms

Before I could include participants in my research I had to get approval from the Institutional Review board. This process took much longer than I intended and set my thesis project way back. After about two months I received approval from the IRB to conduct my research, to only find out that I had to also seek the School District Approval. The School District Approval did not take as long, only about two weeks. My study was supposed to be conducted over a four week period and I intended on have five to ten participants, but because of the time permitted to seeking approval, I had to narrow my study down to one week. I was told that not many people receive District Approval, so I was grateful to be able to conduct my study even though I had a time limitation.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through my study of exploring the impact of bibliotherapy and family literacy bags on elementary students experiencing parental divorce, I learned that the topic was emotionally heavy for newly divorced families. Working with families of divorce was difficult because of the daily issues that they face. I gave my participants a week to complete the family literacy bags.

Participant A: This family was recently separated by divorce. Participant A completed family literacy bags three and four. The participant was very excited about the opportunity to be involved with my research. Although I did not receive the bags from the participant until two weeks later, the participant's family member gave me positive feedback throughout the time their relative had the bags. When I received the family literacy bags from Participant A, they expressed that their family read together every day. The family engages in activities together once a week, and that felt that the family literacy bags somewhat enhanced their family involvement. Additionally, the family stated that the family literacy bags helped the family with coping and expressing their feelings. The participant stated that they would recommend family literacy bags to others going through stress and challenges in their lives.

Participant B: This family was newly divorced as a result of an infidelity. Participant B selected family literacy bags two and five. Participant B stated that "I feel that the books were too heavy." The Participant also felt uncomfortable with the details of the stories. She stated, "I feel that a counselor's help would be better suited when reading these stories, as the reaction could be one of sadness and hurt." The participant did not complete the family literacy bags. The

participant reads with the child every day; they do activities once a week together, and the participant felt that the family literacy bags somewhat enhanced family involvement. The participant disagreed that family literacy bags helped with coping and expressing feeling. In addition, the participant would not recommend family literacy bags to other families going through challenges as a result of divorce.

The families that I worked with had limited time to complete the family literacy bags due to research approval processes. The participants confided in me to about a good deal of stressors in their lives, and consequently, I felt myself engaged in the role of a counselor. In the next chapter, I will discuss future research and educational implications.

CHAPTER 5: FUTURE RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

After the feedback from the participants, I realized that I could have provided support services at the school, in a group setting, in addition to the family literacy bags. I would have spent more time with the participants and their families. I would have liked to build more of a relationship with the families so that I would have known more about them to dive deep into their needs. Overall, my research was successful and I would like to build upon Family Literacy bags in the future. Family Literacy bags can not only be for helping families cope with divorce related issues but they can also be used in the classroom.

Teachers could use family literacy bags as a tool to help students who are struggling in different content areas. For example, If a student is struggling with math, a teacher could create a family literacy bag for the student to take home, including an age appropriate book that interest the child that is on the topic, and include a math lesson or activity that they could work on at home with their family (the same could go for reading, language arts, science and social studies).

My growth as person, researcher, and teacher

This research project has changed me as a person. I have become more confident, and I am not afraid to accept challenges. Before doing this research project, I had no idea how to conduct a research project of this sort, and I had not even heard of the IRB. Now I can say that I am an experienced researcher, and my writing skills have improved drastically. As an educator, I have a better relationship with my students. I understand that a child's learning abilities can be hindered by challenges that they face at home, and that as a teacher I need to be aware of my student's needs and problems. By really getting to know my students, I understand their individual learning styles and how I can better encourage them to become independent while they strive and grow through learning. This research project has helped me build relationships throughout the community, and have better communication with parents. I have also become a better presenter, and this thesis project has given me the aspiration to present in showcases. This project has instilled in me that the best qualities a person can possess are confidence, determination, and persistence.

**APPENDIX A: UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA INSTITUTIONAL
REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FORM**

University of Central Florida Institutional Review
Board Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Human Research



From: **UCF Institutional Review Board
#1 FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Sherron E. Roberts and Co-PI: Simone Smith**

Date: **October 02, 2014**

Dear Researcher:

On 10/2/2014, the IRB approved the following human participant research until 10/1/2015

inclusive: Type of Review: UCF Initial Review Submission Form
Project Title: Exploring the impact of bibliotherapy and family literacy bags
with elementary students experiencing
divorce Investigator: Sherron E Roberts
IRB Number: SBE-14-10503
Funding Agency:
Grant Title:
Research ID:
N/A

The scientific merit of the research was considered during the IRB review. The Continuing Review Application must be submitted 30 days prior to the expiration date for studies that were previously expedited, and 60 days prior to the expiration date for research that was previously reviewed at a convened meeting. Do not make changes to the study (i.e., protocol, methodology, consent form, personnel, site, etc.) before obtaining IRB approval. A Modification Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at <https://iris.research.ucf.edu>.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 10/1/2015, approval of this research expires on that date. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

Use of the approved, stamped consent document(s) is required. The new form supersedes all previous versions, which are now invalid for further use. Only approved investigators (or other approved key study personnel) may solicit consent for research participation. Participants or their representatives must receive a copy of the consent form(s).

All data, including signed consent forms if applicable, must be retained and secured per protocol for a minimum of five years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained and secured per protocol. Additional requirements may be imposed by your funding agency, your department, or other entities. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator

Manual. On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:



IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX B: SEMINOLE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRICT
APPROVAL LETTER



WALT GRIFFIN
Superintendent

Educational Support Center 400 E. Lake Mary Boulevard Sanford, Florida 32773-7127
Phone: (407) 320-0000
Fax: (407) 320-0281

SCHOOL BOARD

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Board Member



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www.scps.us

October 26, 2014

Ms. Simone Smith
P.O. Box 620781
Oviedo, FL 32762 Dear Ms.

Smith,

I am in receipt of the proposal and supplemental information that you submitted for permission to conduct research in the Seminole County Public Schools. After review of these submissions,

it has been determined that you are granted permission to conduct the study described in these documents.

I appreciate you resubmitting your Research Permission Request form. As indicated in your proposal, you will include the expiration date of the IRB form on your parent approval letter.

Best of luck with your research. Please provide me with a copy of your study upon completion.

Respectfully,



Anna-Marie Cote, Ed.D.

Deputy Superintendent, Instructional Excellence and Equity

cc Dr. Marian Cummings, Executive Director, Elementary Schools
Dr. Beth Sharpe, Executive Director, Elementary Schools
Mr. Michael Pfeiffer, Principal, Walker Elementary School

APPENDIX C: APPROVED CONSENT FORM



Exploring the impact of bibliotherapy and family literacy bags with elementary students experiencing divorce

Informed Consent

Principal Investigator(s): Sherron Roberts Ph.D.

Co-Investigator(s): Simone Smith

Investigational Site(s): Joan Walker Elementary School
3101 Snow Hill Rd. Chuluota, FL 32766

How to Return this Consent Form: Return a signed copy of the Informed Consent to the teacher if you and your child wish to take part in the study. Keep the unsigned copy for your records. The teacher will be advised to put the consent document Mrs. Conway's guidance mailbox. Angie_Conway@scps.k12.fl.us

Introduction: Researchers at the University of Central Florida (UCF) study many topics. To do this we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. You are being asked to allow your child to take part in a research study which will include about 10 children and their parent or guardian. You and your child are being invited to take part in this research study because he or she comes from a divorced or separated household.

The person doing this research is Simone Smith an undergraduate researcher in affiliation of the Burnette Honors College. Because the researcher is a undergraduate, she is being guided by Sherron Roberts PH.D School Teaching, Learning & Leadership.

What you should know about a research study:

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- A research study is something you volunteer for.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You should allow your child to take part in this study only because you want to.
- You can choose not to take part in the research study.
- You can agree to take part now and later change your mind.
- Whatever you decide it will not be held against you or your child.
- Feel free to ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Purpose of the research study: This thesis seeks to use picture books to create family literacy bags surrounding the topic of divorce, in order to explore their impact on children and families. Divorce is on the rise and so many children are facing, or may face divorce, in their preadolescent lives. This thesis will involve creating a tool that will help enrich family support and guidance with issues or stressors that arise from the divorce.

What you and your child will be asked to do in the study: You and your child will be asked to complete a family literacy bag over three (3) weekends. Your child will be given a Family Literacy Bag on Friday. The bag will contain one picture book, either nonfiction or fiction, and appropriate for third grade students. Your child will be allowed to choose the book or one related activity to facilitate interaction, reflection and discussion with you. Activities may include drawing pictures, role playing, writing letters, or arts and crafts, or something to promote healthy discussion. Instructions with writing utensils will also be included. The last weekend, the family literacy bag will also include a brief parent survey for you to complete and return with the bag on Monday. A checklist of the contents will be attached to the baggie for a quick check in. Your child does not have to answer every question or complete every task. You or your child will not lose any benefits if your child skips questions or tasks.

Location: Joan Walker Elementary School, 3101 Snow Hill Rd. Chuluota, FL 32766 and the home of the parent or guardian.

Time required: We expect that your child will be in this research study for 1 month and for no more than 60 minutes each session. The total time will be 4 hours.

Risks: There are no reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts involved in taking part in this study.

Benefits: There are no expected benefits to your child for taking part in this study, but children and families may find that this will help them open up or cope with divorce related issues. This study also proposes family time, and literacy development.

Compensation or payment: There is no compensation or other payment to you or your child for your child's part in this study.

Confidentiality: We will limit your personal data collected in this study. Efforts will be made to limit your child's personal information to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB and other representatives of UCF.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt your child, please email Angie Conway the guidance counselor at Angie_Conway@scps.k12.fl.us, Simone Smith the co-investigator at s.simone.ucf@knights.ucf.edu, or Dr. Sherron Roberts the principal investigator at Sherron.Roberts@ucf.edu.

IRB contact about you and your child's rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901. You may also talk to them for any of the following:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Withdrawing from the study: You may decide not to have your child continue in the research study at any time without it being held against you or your child. If you decide to have your child leave the study, contact the investigator so that the investigator can remove you from the study. The person in charge of the research study can remove your child from the research study without your approval.

Your signature below indicates your permission for the child named below to take part in this research.

DO NOT SIGN THIS FORM AFTER THE IRB EXPIRATION DATE BELOW

Name of participant

Signature of parent or guardian

Date

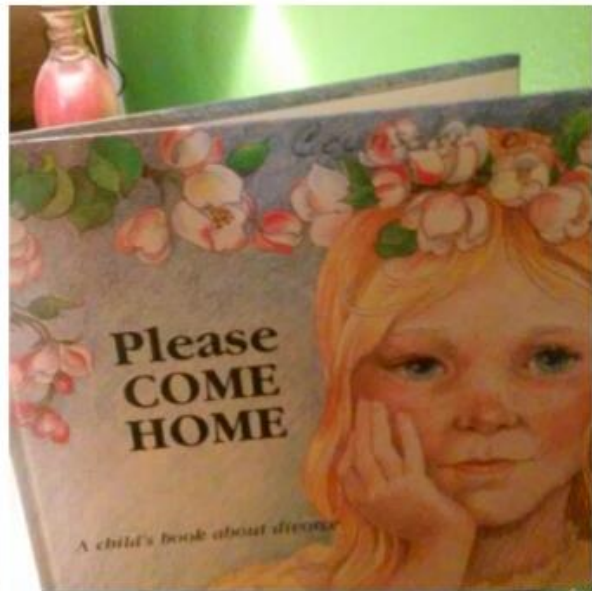
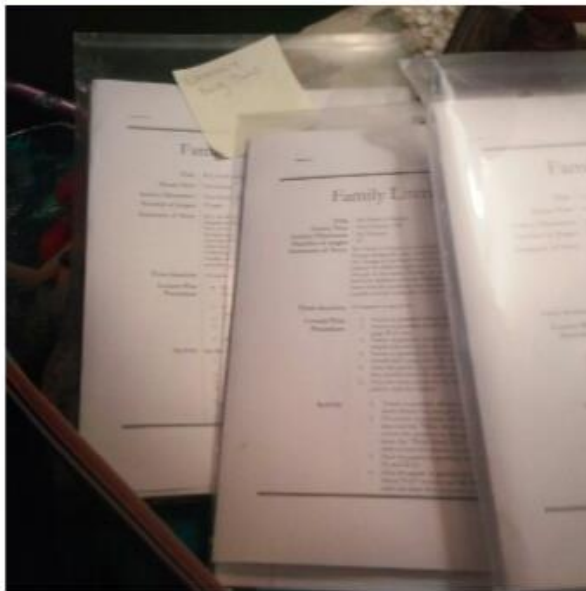
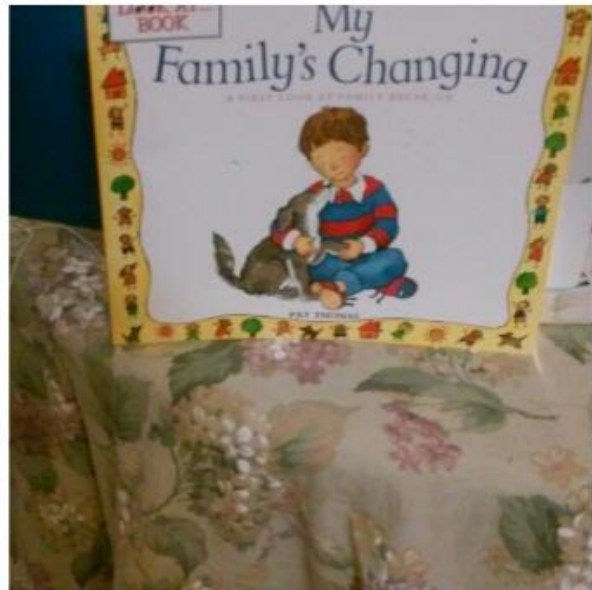
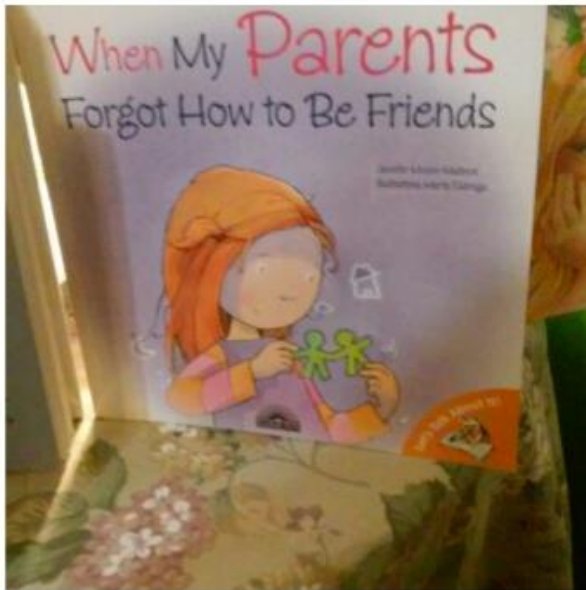
Printed name of parent or guardian

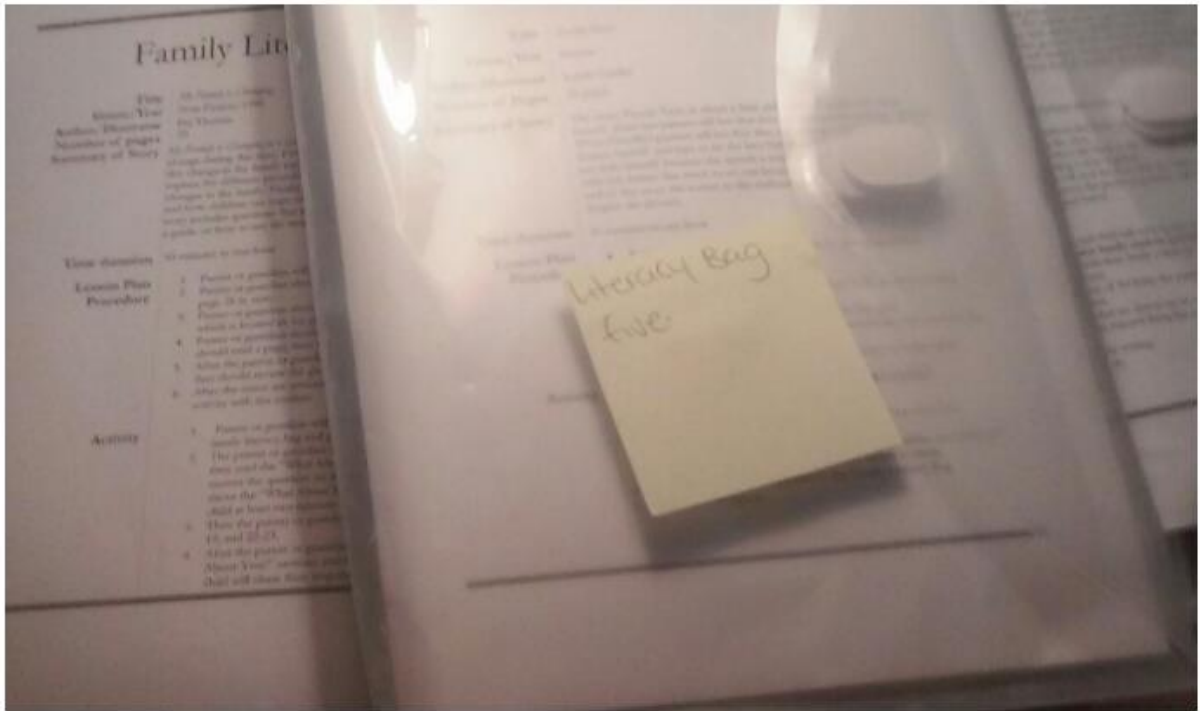
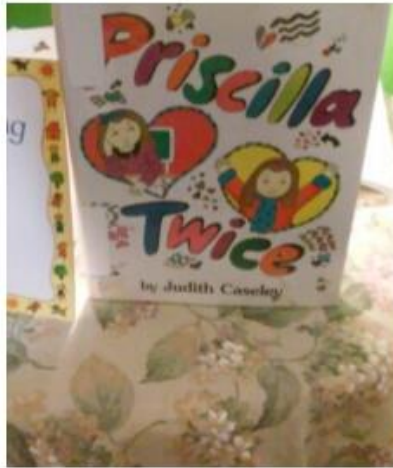
- Parent
- Guardian (See note below)

Assent

- Obtained

**APPENDIX D: PICTURES OF BOOKS ,THE FAMILY LITERACY BAGS
AND ADDITIONAL BOOKS CITED FOR RESOURCES**





Books used in family literacy bags

- Caseley, J. (1995). *Priscilla twice / by Judith Caseley*. New York : Greenwillow Books, c1995.
- Fabrega, M., & Moore-Mallinos, J. (2005). *When my parents forgot how to be friends*. Barron's.
- Sanford, D. (1985). *Please come home : [a book about divorce and learning and growing / the story by Doris Sanford and pictures by Graci Evans]*. Portland, Or. : Multnomah Press, c1985.
- Thomas, P., & Harker, L. i. (1999). *My family's changing: a first look at family break up*. United States of America: Barron's Educ. Server
- Masurel, C., & Denton, K. i. (2001). *Two homes*. Candlewick Press.
- Mayle, P. (1988). *Why are we getting a divorce: Divorce can happen to the nicest people*. New York : Harmony Books

Additional books for resources

- Bauer, M. D. (1994). *A question of trust*. New York: Scholastic.
- Beaty, D., Collier, B., Bart-Horvath, S., & Little, Brown and Company,. (2013). *Knock knock My dad's dream for me*.
- Birdseye, T. (1990). *Tucker*. New York: Holiday House.
- Blume, J. (1972). *It's not the end of the world*. Scarsdale, N.Y: Bradbury Press.

- Christiansen, C. B., & Trivas, I. (1989). *My mother's house, my father's house*. New York: Atheneum.
- Cleary, B., Zelinsky, P. O., & Juvenile Collection (Library of Congress). (1983). *Dear Mr. Henshaw*. New York: Morrow.
- Cleary, B., & Zelinsky, P. O. (1991). *Strider*. New York: Morrow Junior Books.
- Danziger, P. (1995). *Amber Brown goes fourth*. New York: Putnam's Sons.
- Danziger, P., & Ross, T. (1996). *Forever Amber Brown*. New York: Putnam.
- Grimes, N. (2013). *Words with wings*.
- Howell, M. L. (2009). *Divorce and children*. Farmington Hills, MI: Greenhaven Press.
- Jong, E., & Tanz, F. (1984). *Megan's book of divorce: A kid's book for adults : as told to Erica Jong*. New York: New American Library.
- Klise, K. (2012). *Homesick*. New York: Feiwel & Friends.
- Krohn, K. E. (2001). *You and your parents' divorce*. New York: Rosen Pub. Group.
- Rodowsky, C. F. (2001). *Clay*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux.
- Willhoite, M. (1991). *Daddy's roommate*. Boston: Alyson Wonderland.

APPENDIX E: PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

Participant A: Results

Parent Survey

~~Participant B~~

1. How often does your family read together? Circle your answer

Every day

Once a week

Once a month

Sometimes

Never

2. How often does your family do activities together? Circle your answer

Every day

Once a week

Once a month

Sometimes

Never

3. Did you feel that this activity enhanced your family involvement? Circle your answer

Highly agree

Agree

Somewhat agree

Highly disagree

Disagree

Somewhat disagree

4. Did you feel that this Family Literacy Bag helped you with coping and expressing your feelings with your child about divorce-related issues?

Highly agree

Agree

Somewhat agree

Highly disagree

Disagree

Somewhat disagree

5. Would you recommend Family Literacy Bags to others going through stress or challenges in their lives? Circle your answer

Highly agree

Agree

Somewhat agree

Highly disagree

Disagree

Somewhat disagree

6. Has your family gone through a divorce, separation, or changing family structure?

Circle your answer

1-3 years ago

4-6 years ago

7-10 years ago

Other

7. How did you explain the divorce, or separation situation to your child? Please

explain. Explained jointly that we care about and love them very much and that we would be separating into different homes as we decided it is what is best for the family.

8. What was the best thing about this book bag? What was the worst thing? Please

explain.

This survey was completed by:

Circle one: Mother, Father, or other guardian

I feel the books were too "heavy" in the sense that I felt uncomfortable with the details of the story. I feel that a counselor would be better suited reading these stories as the reaction could be one of much sadness and hurt. I was recently divorced and it was due to infidelity therefore discussing "daddy has a girlfriend" was not appropriate for his age and comprehension of what that really means this early on. Writing a letter about things we like to do is better suited as it connects us but does not incur the same level of intensity as writing about divorce and ~~the~~ the emotions that go with it. I feel it is

Participant B: Results

Parent Survey

1. How often does your family read together? Circle your answer

Every day

Once a week

Once a month

Sometimes

Never

2. How often does your family do activities together? Circle your answer

Every day

Once a week

Once a month

Sometimes

Never

3. Did you feel that this activity enhanced your family involvement? Circle your answer

Highly agree

Agree

Somewhat agree

Highly disagree

Disagree

Somewhat disagree

4. Did you feel that this Family Literacy Bag helped you with coping and expressing your feelings with your child about divorce-related issues?

Highly agree

Agree

Somewhat agree

Highly disagree

Disagree

Somewhat disagree

5. Would you recommend Family Literacy Bags to others going through stress or challenges in their lives? Circle your answer

Highly agree

Agree

Somewhat agree

Highly disagree

Disagree

Somewhat disagree

6. Has your family gone through a divorce, separation, or changing family structure?

Circle your answer

1-3 years ago

4-6 years ago

7-10 years ago

Other **NOW**

7. How did you explain the divorce, or separation situation to your child? Please

explain. Mommy and daddy need a break from one another. Like sometimes your friends and you need a break. But we still love you.

8. What was the best thing about this book bag? What was the worst thing? Please

explain.

This survey was completed by:

Circle one: Mother, Father, or other guardian

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- Lowe, D. F. (2009). Helping children cope through literature. *Forum on Public Policy Online, 2009*(1), 1-17.
- Martin, S., Daughenbaugh, L., Shaw, E., & Burch, K. (2013). It's in the Bag!: Going beyond the science classroom with take-home literacy bags. *Science Activities, 50*(1), 21-30.

- McMillen, P. S., & Pehrsson, D. (2010). Contemporary children's literature recommendations for working with preadolescent children of divorce. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 36(2), 27-34.
- Miller, P. A., Ryan, P., & Morrison, W. (1999). Practical Strategies for Helping Children of Divorce in today's classroom. *Childhood Education*, 75(5), 285-89.
- Mo, W. (2007). The divorce culture and picture books for young children. *International Journal Of Early Childhood*, 39(2), 23-35.
- [Chicago/Turabian: Author-Date ???](#)
- Roberts, S. K., & Crawford, P. A. (2008). Literature to help children cope with family stressors. *Young Children*, 63(5), 12-17
- Rozalski, M., Stewart, A., & Miller, J. (2010). Bibliotherapy: Helping Children Cope with Life's Challenges. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 47(1), 33-37.
- Richardson, M. V., Miller, M. B., Richardson, J. A., & Sacks, M. (2008). Literacy bags to encourage family involvement. *Reading Improvement*, 45(1), 3-9.
- Pierson, R. F. (2013). Every kid needs a champion. *TED Talks Education*. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/speakers/rita_f_pierson

