



Apr 14th, 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

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The Impact of Divorce on Adolescent Students

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Purpose:

➤ To help educate and inform parents, teachers, and administrators about the negative effects divorce has on adolescent students.

Research Questions:

1. How does a new family dynamic impact adolescents' perception of school?
2. How does divorce impact adolescent student's academic achievement?
3. How does divorce affect students' behavior in the classroom and outside school?

Methodology:

➤ Reviewed and analyzed ten studies found through Google Scholar and JSTOR. The studies included quantitative and qualitative data on the subject of divorce.

Literature Review:

- Children's adolescent years are spent creating a personal identity and creating a self-image (Dykeman, 2003).
- Nearly 50 % of all first-time marriages end up in a divorce (Americans for Divorce Reform, 2012).
- 40 % percent of all children growing up in the U.S. are raised without their fathers in the home (Life Discoveries, 2010).

Findings:

Family Dynamic and Perception of School:

- Adolescent students living in one parent families experience a decrease in educational attainment (Kalil, 2002).
 - Lack of motivation, less resources, mind is occupied with other things
- Closeness of one parent tends to fade away (Amato, 2007).
 - Life at home changes perception or importance of priorities. (school work becomes a 2nd thought)

Academic Achievement:

- Subject to declines in academic achievement in terms of the core subject areas (Magnuson and Berger, 588).
 - Reading, Science, Social Studies, Math
- Struggle to make sense of middle level class work, homework, English exams, and math tests (Hines, 2007).
- Tendency to receive lower grades in middle school due to the inability to fully adjust (Sun and Li, 2004).

Problem Behavior:

- Children residing in a single mother family due to divorce showed increases in behavioral problems (Magnuson and Berger, 2009).
- Increased tendency to act out to get attention from peers, teachers, parents (Wood, Repetti, and Roesch, 2004).
- Lower rates of high school graduation, eventual college attendance, and participate in higher risk activities. (Deleire and Kalil, 2002).
 - Smoking, Drinking, Sexual Activity



(Picture of my sister and I standing by the Christmas tree, 2011)

Conclusions:

- Divorce is a negative influence to America's youth.
- Changes family dynamic
 - Can tear apart parental relationships
 - Ability to change student perception of school.
 - Alters student motivation and attitude.
- Divorce hinders an adolescent student's success in school.
 - Outside variables keep students from reaching academic potential.
- Negative influence on problem behavior.

Implications:

- This information can help parents and educators understand how adolescent children are affected by divorce. The research can also be used to inspire others to help children find successful ways to cope and adjust to divorce.
- Research Suggests teachers should discuss this issue with their students.
 - Be someone they can talk to or come to for help