DIVORCE AND CHILDREN’S DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

A Project

Presented to the faculty of the Department of Childhood Development

California State University, Sacramento

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Child Development

(Theory and Research)

by

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SPRING 2013
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Department of Child Development
Abstract

of

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by

Ashley Elaine Wilson

Despite the vast research on divorce, many parents are continuing to make the same mistakes in regards to their children. The overall notion that emerges from the literature points to divorce as a negative experience for all involved, most importantly the children. Children are continually faced with lower quality relationships with their parents, more hostile relationships with siblings, and lower grades in school, as just some of the consequences of divorce. Many parents do not have the correct tools or access to text that is understandable, to make the transition to the divorced household smoother for their child. In an effort to reduce some of the negative aspects of divorce for children the book, “Parenting After Divorce: Becoming the Exception to the Rule” was written. This book offers parents the knowledge that is found within the research, along with tips for parents, such as co-parenting, forgiveness, and mediation, to help alleviate some of the negative consequences. The book was found to be a useful source of information that was concise,
easily understood, and user friendly. This book will hopefully be the beginning of parents
taking a stand and becoming the exception to the divorce rule.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Karen Horobin, Ph.D.

_______________________
Date
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was a tedious and long journey. It would never have been accomplished if I didn’t have the love and support from my friends and family throughout the past two years. I would first like to thank God for his love and guidance in all that I do. No matter what I do I know you are smiling down on me. To the love of my life Scott, thank you for making my life complete. Words can never express what you mean to me. I love you more, always. To my wonderful mother, thank you for encouraging me to make the best out of life. I know life was not always the easiest for you and I want to thank you for all that you have done for me, it has not once gone unnoticed. My little sister Audrey, I am so proud of the woman you have become. Each new day I am amazed at the smart, kind, generous, beautiful person you are becoming. Keep striving for more; I know you can do it!

Most importantly, to my wonderful sponsor, Dr. Karen Horobin, thank you for making this experience so great. You have helped me make something that I am proud to call my own and I am forever grateful. Thank you for your patience, understanding, encouraging words, and for being such an amazing human being throughout this time. I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with you. To my amazing second reader, Dr. Juliana Raskauskas, thank you for all the great suggestions and hard work you put into this. I appreciate all that you have done for me throughout my time at CSUS, I
know I would not be where I am today without your guidance. Tiffany, thank you for spending countless hours with me writing, laughing, complaining, and talking me off the ledge. Without you I would have been heavily sedated throughout this entire experience! You will forever be in my heart. Lastly, thank you to all my girls at CSUS. You have made this journey in my life unforgettable!
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Divorce was once an unknown process in the United States; unfortunately, that is not the case in today’s society. According to the National Vital Statistics System in 2010 there were 2,096,000 marriages and 872,000 divorces (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). This number equates to an annual divorce rate of 41%. Given that many of these divorces occur in families with children, then it is clear that many children are being affected by divorce. Exposure to divorce and continual conflict between parents can result in negative consequences that may be life-long for the child. This includes risk for emotional, social, and behavioral problems, such as disruptive conduct, anxiety, depression, and emotional maladjustment (Taylor, Purswell, Lindo, Jayne, & Fernando, 2011). This in turn impacts several areas within the child’s environment, including the relationship with their parents and siblings and academic achievement. Divorce is never an easy process for a family to undergo, but there are things which parents can do to help prevent negative impacts for themselves and, more importantly, for any children in the family.

This project focused on the need for empirically-based parent education resources. Many parents are unaware of the findings from current research and the type of behaviors, such as continuous conflict, that may be influencing their child’s development. Recent research indicates that early intervention designed to improve
marital conflict knowledge and behavior over a 2-year period of time showed an increase in positive changes including parenting practices and child adjustment (Faircloth, Schermerhorn, Mitchell, Cummings, & Cummings, 2011). This means that intervention addressing conflict within the household benefits both the child and parent on a long-term basis. Programs such as these reduce the harmful effects of marital conflict on the child; however, these types of programs are not always available to the entire population. This project will help to fill this gap between parents’ need for information and the data-based knowledge researchers have acquired in the child development field.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to create a book for families going through a separation or divorce, and to educate parents about the negative effects that divorce can have on a child’s development. This includes the relationships between the parents, the parent and child, the siblings, and academic achievement. The book included strategies to help families make a smoother transition from an intact household to a divorced household for the benefit of the child. In addition, information was provided to make parents more aware of the impact that ongoing negative behaviors may have on their child. The format of the book was concise, easy to read and user-friendly for parents. The content of the book was based on an in-depth review of empirical studies related to separation and divorce, the effects on families, and potential strategies for helping families make a smoother transition through this life event.
Significance of the Project

Divorce is something the child has no control over; however they can be affected greatly by divorce (Bing, Nelson, & Wesolowski, 2009; Crowell, Treboux, & Brockmeyer, 2009; Taylor et al., 2011). Parental separation can have negative effects that are life-long. Researchers Finley and Schwartz (2010) equate many of these negative life-long effects to the idea that the child has divided worlds. The child in a divorced family occupies one world that encompasses the mother’s principles and rules and a second world, which reflects the father’s ideals. Typically these two worlds differ greatly in regards to nurturance and involvement, which Finley and Schwartz (2010) state may lead to the child’s experience of distress, low self-esteem, and troubled ruminations about parents. It appears divorce may impact the child in many ways, including emotionally and socially, and although divorce has been around for many years the negative implications of separation have continued. The proposed project would provide parents with the information and resources to help combat the negative consequences for children after a separation.

Divorce or separation can lead to a disruption in the family system. One theory that explains this is The Family Systems Theory, which emphasizes the importance of a family unit and the idea that each member within the family affects one another interdependently. It is described as a theory consisting of two main components: triangulation and differentiation (Dallos & Vetere, 2012). Triangulation is defined as the need for a third person within a relationship in order to balance tension and to maintain closeness. This is typically seen after a separation in which tensions rise and conflict
ensues for the couple. Dallos and Vetere (2012) describe this as the point at which parents rely on the child to help maintain a balance. Differentiation is defined as the ability to separate one’s emotional and intellectual spheres. When this component is equal there are no physical signs of stress within the relationship; however if it becomes unbalanced, as frequently seen in divorce, then the third member is thought to absorb the extra energy and reduce the tension. It may be that over time the conflict between parents is conveyed to the child, which creates tension throughout each of the relationships (Dallos & Vetere, 2012).

Conflict between parents, which creates triangulation, often has negative consequences for the child (Bing et al., 2009; Riggio, 2004). The consistent fighting and battling that is seen within many divorces affects the parent-child relationship. This is seen in research by Noller, Feeney, Sheehan, Darlington, & Rogers (2008), in which it was found that conflict between parents was absorbed by the child, thus creating a decrease in parental support and the loss of contact with a parent. This was thought to impinge on the child’s self-efficacy, coping skills, and social support structures when compared to children living in an intact household. Additionally, as seen in research by Riggio (2004), a poor quality of relationship between child and parents may continue into adulthood, even when child is no longer directly exposed to the conflict. The child’s experience of parental conflict may also be mimicked in their personal relationships as an adult. This continued conflict viewed throughout the separation process can have many lasting negative consequences for the child and their future relationships with others.
Further research indicates that this continued conflict may influence the relationship siblings have with one another and with their parents. Researchers Poortman and Voorpostel (2008) found that siblings whose parents had conflict within their relationship showed higher levels of conflict between siblings. Additionally, it was found that children of divorce showed a 50% increase in conflict with siblings when compared to intact households. It is thought that as hostility and conflict decrease after the divorce between parents, the conflict between siblings will also be reduced. Wallerstein and Lewis (2007) discovered that if conflict continued between parents then typically one sibling will bear the brunt of the continued parental conflict. This leads to disparate treatment of the siblings, which is thought to be a product of the stresses of divorce, such as economic deprivation and the difficulty of maintaining adequate parenting without the support typically found in a marriage.

Conflict between the parents not only changes the relationship the child has with family members, but influences their academic achievement. Sun and Li (2009) found that divorce and academic achievement were closely linked. In studies done with 14-year-olds it was found that divorce affected the child’s academic performance in all four main areas of education at an accelerated rate over a 4-year time span, compared to those children in continuously married families. The instability within the divorced household did not curb the overall academic performance once stability was achieved, however it did save the child from less positive trajectories in math and social studies. The poor academic performance is described in research by Potter (2010) as a result of the diminishing psychosocial well-being seen after divorce. The instability within a divorced
household and decrease in well-being are seen as two factors associated with a decrease in the child’s academic performance.

Divorce may influence several aspects of a child’s life, including the surrounding relationships, the feelings they have towards themselves, and their academic performance. Divorce rates within the United States are a direct indication that many parents are most likely to be faced with divorce and in need of additional resources to help guide them in making better choices for their child. In preparation for this project it was found that inadequate resources are available for parents going through divorce. When looking on the shelves at the library or local bookstore there are very few options available and those that exist may seem overwhelming for parents to read. Many of the books are too complex, consist of over 150 pages and, even at this, are not research-based. Parents are in need of more accessible information that is shorter, more accessible, and based upon recent empirical research in the divorce field. This will help parents going through a divorce make more well informed choices for their children.

**Methods**

**Design of the Project**

The researcher created an informational book designed to educate parents on the negative effects of divorce on their child’s development and ways in which they can help make the divorce transition smoother for the child.

**Population of Interest**

The population of interest for this book is parents who are separated, who are thinking about divorce, in the middle of a divorce, or who have had a divorce.
Procedures

The creation of the book began with extensive research about divorce and its impacts on children, and the behaviors with potentially negative consequences that are often seen in parents. Once a sufficient amount of research was accumulated an outline was drawn up for the book. This consisted of the template used to create the book itself and the specific topics that were included in each chapter.

The book consisted of multiple chapters. Each chapter provided research-based information on the subject, including the positive and negative aspects, accompanied with tips for the parents on how to promote healthy development of the child. The first chapter presented the researcher’s background on divorce and her life story. Furthermore, this chapter encompassed the many overall negative aspects of divorce found in today’s research. The second chapter addressed the parent-parent relationship during and after a divorce and how it can create a hostile environment for the child. This chapter also included strategies for helping families promote forgiveness and a co-parenting style for a divorced couple. The third chapter focused on the parent-child relationship, both with the mother and the father, and how a good relationship with both parents creates a healthier environment for the child. The fourth chapter covered sibling relationships and how divorce changes the sibling dynamic negatively and what may be done to improve the relationship. It also focused on the school relationships, including academic performance and how certain behaviors may begin to arise in this setting in connection with the divorce. This will include relationships with peers and teachers and what may be done to improve the child’s school relationships. Lastly, the book closed with the main protective
factors for a child after a divorce and additional resources for the parents, including books that cover other aspects of divorce for both the child and parent.

Once the book had been completed an evaluation was performed. This assessment consisted of questions to help identify if there were any gaps in the review of the research in the book, as well as to discover if there was a need for the book within the publication world. The questions within the assessment were based on what a publisher will be looking for when reading the book, such as accuracy, purpose, and content. These questions were in survey form, with both quantitative rating scales and open-ended questions requesting further information from participants. The evaluation and book was given to eleven people who volunteered to read the book; eight of them returned the survey. This included professors within the child development field, parents of divorce, children of divorce, and peers within the child development community. Once the survey was returned a review of the quantitative and qualitative responses was performed to discover if there were areas that needed improvement, or topics omitted that could have been included. The questions that were included within the survey addressed the usefulness of the book, whether it was based on facts or opinion, if the book adequately covered the topic, and would it be recommended to others.

After improvements were made to the book, the last step in the development of the book was to create a query letter, accompanied by the completed surveys from the participants, which will be sent to multiple publishers. This will begin the process to get the book published and on the bookshelves for parents to read.
Definition of Terms

*Divorce* is described as the legal separation between two individuals. Researchers typically identify three stages, pre-, in-, and post-, that surround divorce. These time periods are associated with negative impacts on children’s development (Kim, 2011; Wallerstein et al., 2007).

- *Pre-divorce* is the time period that leads up to the divorce. This is typically where continuous conflict between the parents is seen to begin. This marital strain and interpersonal conflict are seen to affect the children negatively before the divorce (Kim, 2011).

- *In-divorce* is the central impact point of divorce. Negative consequences of divorce are most apparent during this period. For example children show a relative decline in the ability to express feelings, ideas, and opinions during this time period (Kim, 2011).

- *Post-divorce* is the reconstruction of the differing family unit. This is the time that children either “bounce” back from the previously negative outcomes of divorce or worsen (Kim, 2011).

*Interparental Conflict* pertains to opposition or disagreements between two individuals who are or once were partners (Wallerstein et al., 2007).

*Co-parenting* is described as a parenting partnership that is cooperative and shares the responsibilities for guidance, care, and the upbringing of the child (Durst, Wedemeyer, and Zurcher, 1985).
Project Limitations

There are several limitations within the design of this project, which may decrease its effectiveness. First, the researcher may not be able to get the book published, which means that parents may not have access to the book. Additionally the book is intended to be short with a minimal number of pages. Hence the researcher will not be able to cover every aspect of divorce and the influence it has in all areas of children’s development. This means that the parents reading the book will only get a short summary of the main areas the researcher chose to focus on and will not be informed of all the other different aspects influenced by divorce. Another limitation to this project is the fact that the parents will not be able to be evaluated on the knowledge that was acquired from the book and how helpful it may be. This means that the researcher will not know the effects of the book on the parent’s behaviors or the way it might be able to influence the child’s development. Lastly, the evaluating tool of the books effectiveness and necessity is only being given to eight participants. This is not typically seen as a large enough sample size, which may alter the ability to generalize the conclusions that are found.

Organization of Project

Chapter one presents an outline of this project on the effects of divorce for children’s development. Furthermore, it shows the need for additional resources for parents and the effectiveness of intervention programs for parents, aimed at lessening the harmful effects of divorce on children’s development. Chapter two provides a current literature review of (a) the theories that support this project, (b) the current negative influences of divorce on children’s development and the relationships that surround their
lives, and (c) factors to combat the negative consequences of divorce. Chapter three
describes the methodology used in order to produce the project. Chapter four presents a
discussion of the finalized project and the possibility of uses. Attached is Appendices A-C,
which include the written book, the evaluation surveys, and the query letter sent to the
publishers.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

As a parent gazes into their child’s eyes, the last thing they imagine is hurting that child. In many cultures it is the belief that a parent is put on this earth to protect, love, and nurture their child; sadly, life is not always that simple. Complications arise and parents make their best effort with the tools they have. One of those complications of life is divorce. In the United States, divorce was once an unknown process; unfortunately, that is not the case in today’s society. According to the National Vital Statistics System in 2010 there were 2,096,000 marriages and 872,000 divorces (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). This number equates to an annual divorce rate of 41%. Given that many of these divorces occur in families with children, it is clear that many children are being affected by divorce.

Exposure to divorce and continual conflict between parents can result in negative consequences that may be life-long for the child. This includes risk for emotional, social, and behavioral problems, such as disruptive conduct, anxiety, depression, and emotional maladjustment (Taylor, Purswell, Lindo, Jayne, & Fernando, 2011). This in turn impacts several areas within the child’s environment, including the relationship with their parents and siblings and also academic achievement. Divorce is never an easy process for a family to undergo, but there are things which parents can do to help prevent negative impacts for themselves and, more importantly, for any children in the family.

While divorce is a widely studied topic in the research world, many parents are unaware of the findings from current research and the negative behaviors, such as
continuous conflict, that may be influencing their child’s development. Recent research indicates that early intervention designed to improve marital conflict knowledge and behavior over a 2- year period of time showed an increase in positive changes including parenting practices and child adjustment (Faircloth, Schermerhorn, Mitchell, Cummings, & Cummings, 2011). This means that intervention addressing conflict within the household benefits both the child and parent on a long-term basis. Programs such as these reduce the harmful effects of marital conflict on the child; however, these types of programs are not always available to the entire population. This project, in which a short book will be developed, will enable parents in all areas of the population the opportunity to receive the beneficial information found in today’s research.

This literature review will focus on many aspects of divorce that affect the development of the child, both positively and negatively. This will include both the negative and positive effects of divorce on the social, emotional, and cognitive development of the child throughout early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence. Furthermore, the literature reviewed explores protective factors for the child throughout the divorce process in the hopes that negative consequences of divorce may decrease for the child. All of the information found within the following review will be used to formulate the short book.

**Theoretical Perspective on Divorce and Children’s Development**

The development of this book is grounded in an understanding of theory and research in divorce and the developing child. As a child grows from infancy through adolescence, each child proceeds through differing developmental stages. Each child may
progress through stages at a different pace, but one thing remains a constant and that is the influence of the environment in which the child lives on each stage of growth. When speaking of the environment, one of the factors that may influence and disrupt the child’s development is divorce (Riggio, 2004; Taylor et al., 2011). This idea is framed by two theories, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and the Bowen Family System’s Theory.

**Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**

Maslow developed a theory in which basic needs must be met in order for individual development to proceed to a higher level. Maslow’s hierarchy (Maslow, 1943) begins with physiological needs that must be met, which include water, food, shelter, and warmth. Once these needs have been met the child may then proceed to the next level, safety, further described as security, stability, and freedom from fear. After this is fulfilled, the child moves to belonging and love, self-esteem, and then finally to self-actualization. In order to reach complete fulfillment Maslow believed that all other areas within the pyramid must be completed, however such progress may be difficult if outside forces, such as divorce, disrupt the child’s progress.

The first three levels within Maslow’s theory, according to Maslow (1943), are typically satisfied throughout infancy. An infant learns that food and shelter is given when needed, that someone will be there to protect them when they are afraid, and that they are loved. The next stage of self-esteem is one in which many children work through for many years. If a divorce occurs during this period, children may be disrupted at this level. If nurturance or parental involvement decreases, and these are connected with Maslow’s second and third levels, the child’s self-esteem decreases as well (Finley &
Schwartz, 2010). As the child’s basic needs are interrupted, development in other areas may also be disturbed and placed on hold so that they may tend to their basic needs once again, this in turn disrupts their development.

**Family Systems Theory and Triangulation**

The Bowen Family Systems Theory, originated by the findings of Murray Bowen, consists of the family as a single unit that is interconnected and continually influencing one another (Brooks, 2011; Dallos & Vetere, 2012). Contained within the theory are two main components consisting of triangulation and differentiation. Triangulation occurs after marriage and is defined as the need to have three participants in a relationship in order to balance tension and maintain closeness. This third party within the family system is typically brought into the relationship during times of stress to provide an equalization of forces, characteristically consisting of the mother-father-child dyad. The term differentiation, in Family Systems Theory, is defined as the ability to separate one’s emotional and intellectual spheres. Dallos et al. (2012) proposed that Bowen believed the true fusion between two people occurred after a deep commitment, such as marriage. When differentiation is termed as equal, no signs of anxiety or stress may be found within the relationship; however, if stress occurs and the two become unbalanced the third member is believed to absorb the extra energy to reduce the tension.

The importance of the family unit members affecting one another emotionally is stressed within the Family Systems Theory (Dallos et al., 2012). It is believed that family members are interconnected emotionally and rely on one another for attention, approval, and support. In a divorced or separated household the family unit may be undergoing
much stress, which Murray Bowen would look at through the lens of triangulation. The Family Systems Theory relies on the use of relationships mimicking a triangle, in which each corner or member interdependently affects one another. In a divorce the father-mother dyad is under stress and enlists a third member to form the triangle, this is typically the child. The stress and anxiety caused by the relationship between the two parents is counterbalanced and projected onto the child in an effort to relieve stress from the father-mother dyad (Dallos et al., 2012).

Over time, the conflict between the parents may be passed onto the child, which creates tension between all members within the family unit. Researchers Gagne, Drapeau, Melancon, Sanit-Jacques, and Lepine (2007) found this to be concurrent with their findings. Children from separated families experienced increased parental conflict, including triangulation within the family unit, when compared to intact families. Consistent with further research, this study found both male and female children to have issues with internalizing their behaviors due to triangulation within the family unit. Brooks (2011) states that these internalizing problems typically arise as the child’s sense of emotional security decreases, due to parental conflict. As the Family Systems Theory proposes, the family unit impacts one another and when in stress may result in negative consequences for the child’s emotional development.

**Negative Consequences of Divorce**

Parental divorce is frequently linked to negative outcomes for children. For example, Taylor et al. (2011) found that children are at risk for emotional, social, and behavioral problems, such as disruptive conduct, anxiety, depression, and emotional
maladjustment. These issues, which are correlated with parental divorce not only affect the child in the present, but in the future as well. This is further shown in a study conducted by Riggio (2004) in which young adults were administered several questionnaires in response to their parents’ divorce and the effect the divorce had on their personal relationships. Riggio found that those children from divorced families felt their parents showed less affective quality and emotional support, which in turn lead to more dysfunctional relationships in the child’s future. Furthermore, the dysfunctional intimate relationships children of divorce demonstrated often resulted in their own subsequent divorce. Crowell, Treboux, & Brockmeyer (2009) argued this was in direct relation to the divorce the child experienced with their parents and the negative ideals portrayed about marriage.

The negative consequences of divorce exist in all areas of a child’s life and influence and disrupt the development of the child in a multitude of ways. Wallerstein (2005) documented in her research those adults whose parents divorced when they were of a young age showed deficits in social skills and problems in handling conflict in their relationships as adults. For example, Noller et al. (2008) found that conflict seen between parents created triangulation between the parents and the child, which created a decrease in parental support, the loss of contact with a parent, and financial difficulties. These were thought to impinge negatively on the child’s self-efficacy, coping skills, and social support structures when compared to those from intact two parent households. After a divorce the triangle that can form continues to be negatively associated with the parent-
child and the parent-parent relationship, consequently affecting the development of the child socially, emotionally, and cognitively.

**Consequences of Divorce on Relationships Surrounding the Child**

Divorce is associated with problems in many areas of a child’s life, no matter the age of the child. These problems affect the family unit and the relationships surrounding them. Divorce places stress on all members of the family, which creates tension within the individual relationships. For the child, the relationship between themselves and those in their immediate environment tends to be affected, in most cases negatively. The parent-child relationship becomes strained due to the added pressure subjected upon them through triangulation, the sibling relationship becomes wrought with anger, and problems at school tend to arise (Dallos et al., 2012; Riggio, 2004; Wallerstein, 2005).

Divorce, as stated in the research, is important for children to understand, as it is a significant life event for them to undergo. It was found that children felt divorce to be unfair to them; it was something that they had no control over, and brought about feelings of being unwanted (Maes et al., 2011). These types of feelings were influenced by the relationships they had with both their parents and those surrounding them throughout the divorce. These negative feelings influence the decisions and the behaviors the child makes in the future (Dowling & Gorell-Barnes, 1999). That is, the relationships they have are essential to the perspective the child will have on their world and subsequently their actions and behaviors. In the following paragraphs the relationships that may be affected negatively by divorce will be discussed in detail.
**Relationship with Father**

Research indicates that the father-child relationship after a divorce can be detached and lacking in emotional support. For example, Peters and Ehrenberg (2008) found through the use of self-report questionnaires that as a child, contact with their father, father involvement, and nurturance decreased after divorce. Additionally, the children from divorced households reported lower levels of affective fathering and less physical contact when compared to intact households. This is consistent with previous research by Durst, Wedemeyer, and Zurcher (1985), which states that when comparing divorced and intact families, the fathers were reported as being minimally involved and the contact made infrequent or inconsistent. This shows that in 20 years the research has remained consistent concerning the father-child relationship following divorce, which is one of the reasons the proposed book will fulfill a need in today’s society. Fathers are seen to be continually disappearing from their child’s life. Yu, Pettit, Lansford, Dodge, and Bates (2010) described this separation to be in response to the idea that most men link their role as a husband to being a father and as that role is disrupted it was found that men tend to distant themselves from their child.

The distance formed between the father and child has been seen to create insecure attachments. Gologer-Tippelt and Konig (2007) conducted a study in Germany with intact families and divorced families in which the child resided with the mother. Many of the children in this study, primarily around the age of six, were found to have insecure attachments with their fathers. The insecure attachment was found to be a result of the father’s lack of involvement in the child’s life resulting in fears of abandonment, lower
self-esteem, and anxiety. This further led the child to feelings of loneliness and neglect, which influences their behaviors in other areas of life.

Fathers are found in recent research to be inconsistent in their contact, which creates insecure attachments along with a lack of emotional support or quality of relationship (Golgoger-Tippelt et al., 2007; Yu et al., 2010). Additionally, research shows that fathers of divorced families show lower levels of socio-economic status and lower levels of education (Nair & Murray, 2005; Peters et al., 2008). That is, divorced fathers are involved on average very little in the lives of their children, as consistently demonstrated in research for the past 20 years. There are many factors contributing to the lack of visitation fathers have with their children, including lack of education. The proposed book will give fathers an understanding of their own behavior and how they are affecting the relationship they have with their child. Fathers have the opportunity to become active participants in their child’s lives, with the right education, so the next 20 years of research can show changes in this regard.

**Relationship with Mother**

Research indicates that following divorce the quality of the mother-child relationship is often compromised (Brenner & Hide, 2006; Cohen & Finzi-Dottan, 2005; Faber et al., 2010; Nair et al., 2005). For example, Brenner et al. (2006) found that after a divorce mothers are more likely to exert negative control over their children and show less emotional support. This can influence the relationship that the child will have with their mother, which is of particular importance to the child as the mother is typically the primary caregiver of the child. Cohen et al. (2005) found that within the first year of
divorce mothers were irritable, impatient, and lacked emotional support with their child. This type of attitude exhibited by the mother puts strain on the relationship she will have with her child. This is thought to be a consequence of the divorce, the continued strained relationship with the spouse and the need to make social, economic, and emotional adjustments.

As the mother continues to have changes in her life, the perspective of the family being a unit disappears. Mothers are seen to be less responsive to their child’s needs due to the fact that they have become more concerned with themselves (Faber et al., 2010). This was consistent with the research by Nair et al. (2005) in which 58 mother-child dyads were examined in regards to attachment and security. It was found that mothers who were divorced were younger, had lower annual income, and were less educated when compared to those mothers from intact households. The mothers described this as being a contributor to the daily stress felt, a higher tendency to become depressed, higher levels of helpless feelings, and higher inter-parental conflict. These indirectly affected the child and the relationship between them, which fostered an insecure attachment with the child.

Mothers are found to be overwhelmed with divorce and the changes that this brings about emotionally, socially, and economically (Cohen et al., 2005). These factors alter the parenting style of the mother, which may result in the child feeling less secure. The mother tended to be less nurturing and positive when communicating to the child (Nair et al., 2005). Again, this shows the need for parents to be more educated on their
own behaviors and how they may be affecting the interactions they have with their child and how this is altering the child’s development.

**Sibling Relationship**

Research indicates that following a divorce the relationship between siblings is altered (Poortman & Voorpostel, 2009; Wallerstein & Lewis, 2007). For example, Poortman et al. (2009) found that siblings from divorce were associated with more conflict than those siblings from intact households. This was thought to be in relation to the high conflict seen throughout divorce by the parents and the instinct to imitate their parent’s behavior. This was supported by the research of Noller, Feeney, Sheenhan, Darlington, and Rogers (2008), in which it was found that not only are siblings of divorce showing higher levels of conflict, but that they tended to use more aggressive tactics within conflict. These findings were consistent with past research by Mackinnon (1989) in which high conflict between siblings was apparent, along with high levels of competition, arguments, use of higher amounts of name calling, and abusive behaviors. These negative behaviors were thought to foster harmful relationships between siblings and create more conflict in the child’s life. The conflict seen between siblings is thought to continue into adulthood and contribute to lower quality sibling relationships (Wallerstein et al., 2007). Sibling relationships are important in the development of a child and if this relationship is unbalanced, due to divorce, the child will be subjected to lower quality sibling relationships.
**Academic Relationship**

Research indicates that after divorce children are faced with changes in their academic setting. Many children are forced to move after a divorce, which creates a change in their schooling. In addition, children are faced with trying to adapt to new family dynamics, new teachers, and new peers. Researchers Sun and Li (2009) conducted a study in which they performed a longitudinal study examining students, aged 14, on their academic performance after divorce. This study showed a decrease in math and social studies over the years and an overall decrease in academic progress when compared to children from intact households. Similarly, Potter (2010) found this to be consistent with his data on those aged 5 to 12, in which it was found that math and reading scores had decreased after the divorce. This was believed to be due to the decline, seen after divorce of the child’s psychosocial well-being.

It is thought that poor academic performance seen after divorce is interconnected with the internalizing and externalizing problems found in many children after divorce (Lansford, Malone, Castellino, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 2006). Lansford et al. (2006) found that academic performance and the decrease shown may be linked to the age of the child at the time of divorce. Children in elementary school and younger are found to have more adverse effects on internalizing and externalizing behaviors as opposed to older children, who were found to be more impacted through a decrease in grades. This decrease in academic performance may lead to the risk of the child dropping out of school, which is thought to be linked to a decrease in parental involvement (Kelly & Emery, 2003; Potter, 2010). Divorce is a life event that can dramatically influence the
child’s academic performance, which is negatively impacting the development of the child cognitively.

**Parent-Parent Relationship**

Research indicates that following a divorce the parent-parent relationship changes dramatically (Durst et al., 1985; Kapinus, 2004). Ultimately, it is thought that this relationship can influence how the parent interacts with their child, which indirectly impacts the other relationships in the child’s developmental sphere. The conflict seen between the parents creates tension between all other relationships in the child’s life (Durst et al., 1985; Faber et al., 2010). It is thought that the parenting partnership is imperative to creating a better environment for the social and emotional development of the child.

In a qualitative study conducted by Durst et al. (1985) five types of parenting partnerships were proposed to occur after a divorce. Each of these has a differing effect on the relationship between the parents and the relationship with the child. These five types are considered to be the foundation to the understanding of divorced parental roles in a child’s life. The first partnership was labeled as mother and nonparent father. This was described as the father being removed from the parenting role and contact with the child being infrequent. The relationship between the parents was categorized as nonexistent and typically led to conflict. The second type of parenting partnership was marked as mother and father as friends. This was described as a father who maintained a minimal amount of involvement with his child, possible twice a month. The relationship between the parents tended to be based around sentimental feelings and sometimes led to
failed reconciliation. The next partnership was categorized as mother and restricted father. This was depicted as the father attempting to be involved in the child’s life, however feeling as though he was not getting sufficient time as a parent. The relationship between the parents was very aggressive and categorized as the most hostile out of the five relationships. The fourth type was termed timesharing parents. These parents were considered to be equal parents who were given equivalent amounts of time with the child. The relationship between parents was thought to be infrequent, distant, and guarded. The final partnership was labeled co-parents. These parents work together to ensure that the child is put first. The parents are cooperative and respectful of one another.

The first four types of partnerships were predominant in the findings by Durst et al. (1985) and characterized as containing high amounts of conflict. This conflict was thought to be transferred to the relationship the parent had with the child, as seen in triangulation. This toxic relationship is then transferred to the other relationships the child has, resulting in negative developmental outcomes for the child (Crowell et al., 2009; Riggio, 2004; Wallerstein, 2005). The relationship the parents have with the child directly impact not only how they will behave towards their child, but influences how the child will view divorce. Kapinus (2004) found that children of divorce are more apt to be pro-divorce than those from intact households. This is thought to be associated with the negative feelings the parents feel towards one another, which are relayed to their children through their actions and behaviors. Parents are in need of ways in which to parent their children more successfully through a divorce, which will be the best for the development of their children, and subsequently might lead to fewer divorces.
Ultimately, divorce is a difficult time for both spouses and many emotions may surface during the transition, such as anger or feelings of hurt. Among the many emotions felt is grief, which can interrupt the relationship the parent has with their child. Unlike the death of a spouse or parent, divorce leaves many feeling incomplete or without a sense of closure (Baum, 2006). Parents are unsure of how to mourn the loss of their role within the family or the loss of their former spouse, especially when they may see them on a regular basis. In this instance their lack of ability to mourn or lack of understanding may lead to a disengagement from their child or an emotional disconnect, as seen in the research by Baum (2006). It was found that the participant, a father, was unable to move past the mourning stage and be a father figure to his child, which can lead to lower quality parent-child relationships.

Grief is a part of the healing process of all that was lost due to the divorce and includes many emotions, such as shock, anger, anxious bargaining, depression, and acceptance (Hagemeyer, 1986). It is described as a cyclical process, which can continue around, usually resulting in frustration for the parents. This cyclical process occurs after divorce for several reasons, such as the possibility of reconciliation or becoming stuck on a component of grief, such as depression (Emery & Dillon, 1994). Hagemeyer (1986) terms grief as a series of losses after divorce. These losses consist of intimacy, dreams, physical accessibility, parenting role, loss of money, community, legal standing, and property. These many losses can cause harm to the parent-parent relationship, which in turn will create stress on the parent-child relationship. Parents dealing with grief, as seen in the research, have a difficult time being available for their child as they are consumed
with emotions that are weighing them down. Parents need ways in which to handle their grief and move forward, which will create a healthier environment for their child.

**Factors to Combat Negative Consequences**

There are many negative consequences of divorce for children but there are also ways to combat those negative consequences. With the right knowledge and tools parents have the ability to change their child’s developmental trajectory and to become the exception to what is typically seen in divorced households. The following are protective factors or positive actions that have been shown to decrease the negative factors, consequent on divorce, for children’s relationships. These factors will be included in the book in an effort to give parents suggestions for how to parent after divorce and to create a more positive environment for their developing child.

**Coparenting**

In a typical divorce the child is caught in the middle of the parents’ conflict thus becoming the third member of the triangle according to the Bowen Family Systems Theory (Dallos et al., 2012). In order to bring conflict away from the child the parents must create a co-parenting partnership, which will take away the need for the child as the third member of the triangulation process (Durst et al., 1985; Dallos et al., 2012). Co-parenting is defined as a parenting partnership that is cooperative and shares the responsibilities for guidance, care, and the upbringing of the child. According to McHale, Kuerston-Hogan, and Rao (2004), co-parenting is defined by three core features. These features are the degree of support given by each parent, the extent of opposition present, and the amount of direct engagement each parent has with the child. These components
are thought to be the inner workings of co-parenting and must be maintained with boundaries and conformed to each particular child’s unique qualities. Ultimately, this parenting partnership relies on a positive parent-parent relationship and is thought to provide the most desired and beneficial parent-child relationship (McHale et al., 2004).

Co-parenting has been seen to provide many benefits for the child’s developmental outcome in a divorced household, such as an improved parent-child relationship and less anxiety (Durst et al., 1985; McHale et al., 2004; Taylor et al., 2011). This type of parenting partnership is thought to be established by developing respect for each other as parents, separating roles of parents and former spouses, and by resolving conflict. Durst et al. (1985) found that those who were labeled as co-parents were able to redefine their relationship and provide clear and respectful boundaries between each other. The continued cooperation between the parents allowed for the conflict that is typically between members of a divorced household to be lessened. The lack in conflict between the parents gives the child opportunity for a smoother and more positive transition into the single-family household.

**Forgiveness Intervention Model**

In order for parents to have a better, more cooperative relationship it is thought that parents need to learn to forgive one another, which is the last stage in the grieving process. This is believed to be the beginning of learning how to parent without hostility, which will create less stress for the child. Bonach (2007) proposed a conceptual framework, titled the Forgiveness Intervention Model (FIM), to promote forgiveness between parents and work towards a co-parenting partnership. The model consisted of a
three-stage process, the first being the crisis stage. This stage focuses on the self-care and self-preservation of the individual parent and includes ideas such as creating a good support group and learning how to express one's emotions in a healthy manner. The second stage is the transition stage. This stage focuses on looking at the divorce objectively and learning why the marriage failed, in an attempt to move on from the devastating life event. The last stage is titled the readjustment stage. This is the recovery stage and focuses on the new co-parenting relationship between the former partners. Bonach (2007) stated that these three stages are a tool in which spouses learn to forgive, which will reduce conflict in their relationship.

Further researching this model, Bonach (2008) used the FIM as a conceptual framework in a study consisting of 135 divorced families. This model was presented to former spouses with children in an effort to move beyond the hostilities towards one another to a mutually cooperative co-parenting partnership. Analysis of the data indicated that by forgiving the other partner both parties had the ability to “move on” and redefined their family structure as co-parenting, which was found to be the most beneficial for the child (Bonach 2008; Durst, 1985; McHale et al., 2004). This would enable parents to alter the more commonly observed, but potentially more disruptive, parenting styles to a more cohesive and cooperative parenting style, such as co-parenting.

Forgiveness can be accomplished once the parent has been able to move past their feelings of grief and the many emotions within that process (Hagemeyer, 1986). For many families social support is a key component in learning how to deal with the frustration and continue to the forgiveness stage. Social support may come in many
forms, such as family, friends, and professionals knowledgeable in divorce. Children can benefit greatly from having at least one steady person within their life, such as a counselor, in which they can form a supportive bond (Kenny, 2000). In a study on social supports and coping after divorce it was found that children, aged 8 to 17 years benefited the most from counseling services. It gave children the opportunity to express themselves without judgment or fear of parent’s disapproval and gave them a sense of reassurance and comfort (Halpenny, Green, & Hogan, 2008). Forgiveness within the parent-parent relationship provides the parents and the children a smoother and more unified transition into the divorce household.

**Divorce Proceedings**

The divorce process can be difficult and parents are unaware of what is the most beneficial to their child’s needs. Divorce proceedings can be very intense and hostile for all participants. Children are used as pawns and bargaining tools to obtain what the parent may want out of the divorce. Throughout the proceedings, children reported feeling isolated and lonely and unaware of the decisions being made (McIntosh, Wells, Smyth, & Long, 2008; Schoffer, 2005). Many wonder if children should be active participants within the proceedings. Schoffer (2005) found that the main reasons children were excluded were to avoid undue pressure, loyalty conflicts, to avoid children observing parents outbursts, and the parents feeling uncomfortable allowing children to participate, particularly young children. By not allowing children the opportunity to be an active participant the divorce process typically produces unintentional negative effects. Supporters of child inclusion believe that the benefits, maintaining focus on children’s
needs, positive reinforcement of parenting, informing children, providing children a voice, and expanding parents thinking outweigh the reasons for exclusion (Schoeffer, 2005).

In order to include a child in the proceedings, the parent must decipher which is the most beneficial route of divorce, through court or mediation. Researcher Shaw (2010) in her review of previous literature quantitatively found that mediation was a positive alternative to attorney negotiations or litigation. Litigation was thought to be costly, take much time, and depend on negotiations made by the attorneys on your behalf. This at times can escalate conflict due to the take everything mentality of the attorney. Mediation, in contrast, was thought to encourage the parents to create their own laws of fairness and made to fit the family’s needs and not rely on what is fair in the eyes of the courts. That is, mediation enabled the parents to work together and create what was best for their family.

Mcintosh et al. (2008) suggests the main benefit of child inclusion is that it allows parents a shared perception of the child’s needs. In this study, assessing the use of mediators and child inclusion, it was found that by having a mediator children felt as though they were able to get their feelings out and understood, there was a continued reduction in conflict, and parents were able to alter their behaviors about their ex-partner. This enabled the fathers to feel equal in the divorce proceedings as well as the child felt included and informed about the divorce. Furthermore, Emery, Sbarra, and Grover (2005) found that mediation showed an increase in the contact between the nonresidential parent and the child. Mediation is a way in which parents can save money, be more informal,
and have a more cooperative approach to disputes, which creates a positive environment for their developing child.

**Low Conflict Atmosphere**

Conflict is extremely common in the divorcing household and can be very damaging to the child (Bing, Nelson, & Weslowski, 2009). For example, Bing et al. (2009) found that children who experience high levels of conflict before and during divorce will have lower levels of adjustment after the divorce. When there are low amounts of conflict the relationship between the parent and the child improves and leads to more positive adjustment after the divorce. In the 6 month follow up of the divorced couples with high conflict Bing et al. (2009) found that the couples continued to have negative behaviors and arguments about each spouse’s role in the child’s life. This is consistent with the findings of Durst et al. (1985) in that those couples with high conflict had disagreements over the role of the parent and the amount of time spent with the child.

A low conflict atmosphere is seen to be more beneficial for the child’s adjustment after the divorce. Less hostility and conflict enables the child to create a more positive, quality parent-child relationship (Yu et al., 2010). Those children who experience chronic marital conflict have been found to have low quality relationships with their custodial parent and a difficult time maintaining good relationships with their noncustodial parent. Furthermore, negative sibling relationships are linked to high levels of parental conflict and it is likely that when parents get along in a positive manner it influences the sibling relationship toward more positive interactions (Brooks, 2011). Conflict is linked to many
negative consequences for children and if the conflict can be decreased it has been shown to improve the child’s relationships with parents, siblings, and school.

High conflict within the family negatively influences the parenting style parents adopt. Marital conflict is thought to distort parent’s perspectives about their parenting alliance, quality, and function (Lamela & Figueiredo, 2011). This means that the conflict seen within the parent-parent relationship makes it difficult for the parents to co-parent and make decisions for their child together. Strohschein (2005) states that if parents are unable to decrease the conflict in the family children may be at a higher risk for mental health problems, such as anxiety or depression. Chronic conflict within the child’s environment can be very damaging for the child and can give them an increased risk for multiple complications within their life.

**Parents Educated Regarding Negative Consequences**

Parent education is important in combating the negative consequences for children of divorce. If parents are aware of their actions and behaviors that are influencing children to react negatively to divorce then they may be able to make changes in their lives to protect their children. Several researchers have addressed the idea that the creation of intervention programs and parent education programs are the key to informing parents about their behaviors. For example, Velez, Wolchik, Tein, and Sandler (2011) created an intervention, consisting of both group and individual sessions, to address the four empirically supported mental health issues typically seen after divorce for mothers; the mother-child relationship, effective discipline, father’s access to the child, and inter-parental conflict. It was found, through a series of interviews and questionnaires, that
participation in the intervention created improved relationship quality and discipline, which led to an increased coping ability within the child.

This is consistent with other intervention programs that focus on the conflict seen within the parental relationship and the improvement of child adjustment (Deutsch, 2008). Faircloth et al. (2011) showed that not only are intervention programs beneficial to the parents in the first few months, but over a 2-year period as well. Parents who were participants in the Happy Couples and Happy Kids program, which addressed marital conflict knowledge and marital conflict behavior, had the ability to participate in constructive conflict and problem solving more efficiently than before the program two-years prior. These findings are thought to be linked with improved inter-parental conflict management, parenting practices, and child adjustment. This means that parents who are educated about the issues that are linked to negative consequences for children have the ability to change their behaviors to improve their child’s adjustment.

**Conclusion**

Divorce is a life-changing event that does not only concern the parents. The child is impacted by the decisions the parents make and their continued actions, whether they are believed by them to be positive or negative. If parents do not make changes to the kinds of negative behaviors observed in the research, children will continue to suffer, in ways that could be avoided, from parental divorce (Finley et al., 2010). The research states that intervention programs addressing similar types of behaviors can inform parents in an effort to eradicate the negatives seen, such as high amounts of conflict, decrease in parenting, and relationship strain after divorce. Taylor et al. (2011) found that after
participating in a program parents were able to become more effective parents, which created positive changes in their child’s behavior. This is consistent with similar research that found programs to be beneficial for the adjustment of the parents and the child, (Faircloth et al., 2011; Velez et al., 2011).

Well-documented information about divorce is available for parents, however it appears that it has not typically utilized. Unfortunately, parents are continuing to make the same mistakes over and over again. Children are showing a decrease in, or complete lack of positive parental relationships, hostility within sibling relationships, a decrease in academic stability, and an increase of anxiety and depression (Brenner et al., 2006; Nair et al., 2005; Poortman et al., 2009; Sun et al., 2009). These are just some of the changes and potentially harmful consequences a child faces after divorce. With the right tools and knowledge parents have the ability to change their behavior or make the correct decision to encourage positive development of their child. This book is one of those tools.
Chapter 3

METHODS

This chapter provides information on the methods used to develop the project, which encompasses the developmental consequences associated with divorce for children. Information found in this chapter includes: a) the purpose of the project; b) the phases in planning and implementing the project; c) the chapters within the book.

Project Purpose

The aim of this project was to provide information for parents who are in need of resources to enable them to make more informed choices for their children while going through a divorce. The book that was created consisted of several main areas in which negative outcomes for children are associated with divorce. These areas were examined and the negative outcomes, as well as protective factors, were put into simpler terms for readers of the book to understand.

The intended audience of this project is individuals with children, who are divorced or separated, going through a divorce, or thinking about a divorce. The audience will be those parents who are searching for ways in which to make the transition from an intact household to a divorced household smoother for their children.

Phases in Planning and Implementing Project

Phases in Planning

The first phase in planning this book was for the researcher to gather the needed information on divorce, both the negative and positive outcomes for children. This included information on the relationships associated with negative outcomes and those
behaviors that could decrease the negatives. The information gathered consisted of over 30 empirical studies, statistics of the current divorce rates, overview of the available books about divorce in today’s market, and excerpts from books used throughout the researcher’s graduate courses. As a result of the review of the literature a detailed outline was created for the book. This outline included the specific topics, layout of each individual chapter, the title of both the book and the chapters, and the program that would be used to create the template of the book.

The second phase consisted of the creation of the book from the generated outline. This first began with the cover of the book, including the title “Parenting After Divorce: Becoming the Exception to the Rule”. This was followed by the creation of the index, the dedication, and each individual chapter. Each chapter consisted of the negative consequences associated with divorce and things that could be done to negate those consequences. At the end of each chapter a review of the key findings and the protective factors that were found in the research were given. The book ended with a list of references, which included articles that were used, along with other books that could be read about divorce for parents and children (See Appendix A).

The third phase was an evaluation of the book and the effectiveness of the content within. A survey was created and given, along with the book, to eleven individuals; of those eight returned the survey (See Appendix B). These individuals, both male and female, consisted of professors, divorced parents, children of divorce, and peers within the child development community. The survey consisted of questions using Likert-style rating scales as well as open-ended questions. Once the survey was returned it was
analyzed to reveal the effectiveness and need for the book in today’s market. This survey helped the researcher to make final improvements on the book, to write the query letter that would be sent to publishers (See Appendix C), and prepare it for the publishers, which was part of the dissemination process. The results of the survey will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Gathering Information

The purpose of this project was to create a book for parents to educate and inform them of the typical consequences that contribute to the potentially disrupted development of their child throughout the divorce period. In order to establish the need for the book, the researcher first examined the books on divorce available to parents. This was done both online and at the bookstores. The researcher found that the books available were limited in number and the majority consisted of 150 pages or more. Statistics from the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, which conducted a study in 2002 to find the level of prose literacy for adults in America, found that over 40% had skill levels of basic or below in prose literacy (See Figure 1). Prose literacy is defined as the knowledge and skills needed to perform prose tasks, such as searching, comprehending, and using information from continuous text. This showed the researcher that there was a need for a change in the literature available for parents on divorce. Books of over 150 pages could appear to be very challenging or daunting for a large population of Americans who may have difficulty in reading and comprehending information. In an effort to help those individuals who have a difficult time comprehending continuous text, or do not find the prospect appealing in this age of the soundbite, the researcher thought that a smaller size
of book might be more appealing and easier to read. This is particularly important due to the fact that a large portion of adults who divorce have a high school diploma or less (Nair et al., 2005). The book created will enable more parents the ability to receive the information within the book, due to its length in pages and accessibility.

The next step in gathering information was to establish the negative and positive consequences of divorce, which was accomplished with a thorough study of the research literature. This literature consisted of many empirical studies and excerpts from child development education books focusing on divorce. From this initial broad topic of divorce more subtopics began to emerge, which were the consequences of divorce and the protective factors. These two areas became the main focus of this project and what would be included within the book.

Figure 1. The number of adults in 2002 divided into each prose literacy level according to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy. Below basic level has no more than the most simple and concrete literacy skills. Basic level can perform simple and everyday literacy activities. Intermediate level can perform moderately challenging literacy activities. Proficient level can perform complex and challenging literacy activities. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. (2003). National Assessment of Adult Literacy. Retrieved from nces.ed.gov/naal/kf_demographics.asp
The literature for this project was gathered and obtained from the California State University Sacramento online library, through suggestions of professors and peers, and through statistics found on the Center for Disease Control. Once the researcher had selected the information she intended to use, she began the process of reviewing each piece of information thoroughly. Each of the selected sources was used to establish trends associated with divorce and the development of children, which were simplified and developed into a short book.

**Implementing Project**

The gathering of information was specific to the planned content of the book and essential in the creation of the outline for the book. In analyzing divorce and its consequences for children, the researcher found common trends within the literature, which she then used to develop main areas that were associated with divorce outcomes. The first section developed were those that included all the aspects of divorce that are associated with impacting children’s development negatively. Those key areas were found to be the parent-child relationship, the sibling relationship, the school relationship, and the parent-parent relationship. These topics were further investigated and from that the researcher was able to find the common negatives associated with each of those four topics. The literature surrounding divorce was readily available and with this it was found that the divorce rates were stable over the past few years, as well as the negative consequences for children. The negatives associated with divorce and children’s development were continuing regardless of the abundance of information available on the consequences of divorce. All of these topics were researched in-depth and compiled into
the book to provide parents with a detailed reference when going through the divorce period, in an effort to make the transition smoother and with less negative consequences for the child.

**Chapters within the Book**

Each of the five chapters within the book highlights key areas in which negative consequences are seen. The chapters consist of around five pages each and give a description of the negative consequences of divorce with tips that can help the parent to negate these consequences. At the end of each chapter the main topic was reviewed and key points were put into a small paragraph. The protective factors or positive consequences were put into a bulleted format after the key points paragraph. Each chapter is scattered with quick tips and quotes from the researcher to help keep a positive flow throughout the book. All of the information within this book was derived from the empirical literature and books reviewed.

Chapter one is the introduction chapter and is titled “Divorce is Everywhere”. In this chapter the term divorce is defined along with the other key terms used throughout the book. The next part consisted of the author’s life story with divorce, both as a child of divorce and as a divorcee. Lastly this chapter overviewed the divorce trends, prevalence, and statistics over the last 20 years. The chapter ends with the conclusion that the negative outcomes for children associated with divorce are continuing to happen and that there needs to be a change made, which starts with the parents.

Chapter two, titled “The Relationship with Your Ex”, is the starting point for parents. This chapter challenges the parents to look at their own behaviors and how these
may be affecting their child’s development. This started with what the typical relationship after divorce looks like and the anger that may consume parents. Furthermore, it relays the information that conflict can be very damaging for the child and that forgiveness of their partner is essential to changing their behaviors. Lastly, this chapter addressed some important protective factors of divorce, which include co-parenting, forgiveness, and learning to grieve.

Chapter three, titled “The Relationship with Your Child”, addressed the alteration of the relationship between parents and child seen after divorce and how that may affect the development of the child. This included information on parenting style and what the best type of parenting style may be after divorce. Furthermore, both the relationship with the mother and the father were gone over in more depth and the changes that are typically seen. This chapter ended with the things parents could do to make their relationship with their child better.

Chapter four, titled “What Else is Affected” covered some other areas in which might be negatively associated with divorce. The first section covered sibling relationships and the hostility that is typically seen after divorce. The second section examined the child’s relationship with school and academic performance in which negative consequences are also observed when divorce occurs. This chapter ended with things that parents could do to improve these areas of the child’s life in reference to their own behavior.

Chapter five, titled “Divorce Can be a Good Thing”, was the chapter that explained about the overall positive factors of divorce. This included the idea that
continuous conflict causes more damage to the child if the parent stays married. Also incorporated in this chapter is information about how negative consequences can be decreased if the parents change their own behaviors, such as co-parenting their children or having positive social supports in their lives. This chapter explains to the parents that divorce does not have to be a bad experience for the children, which impacts them throughout the rest of their lives. Additionally this chapter provides the parents with a list of key resources for further reading, questions to ask themselves, as well as a list of books that can be obtained to learn more about divorce for parents, children, and adult children of divorce.

This chapter has provided a description of the methods used to develop and create the book, “Parenting after Divorce: Becoming the Exception to the Rule”. Materials related to the project are included in the attached Appendices A-C; these include the book, the survey and completed surveys, and the query letter. The following chapter provides discussion and conclusions about the survey and the changes made to the project, as well as future directions for its use including the publication process.
Chapter 4

DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

The purpose of this project was to provide parents with information on the negative effects of divorce on children’s development. This was done through the creation of a short book that gave parents a brief overview of the main areas that are associated negatively with divorce and suggestions for ways in which to make the transition smoother for the child. The book was developed with the idea that the literature available to parents is lacking in many areas. Many of the books available to the public can seem overwhelming due to the difficulty of the text, the large amount of pages, and the lack of empirical research within the book to support its findings (Department of Education, 2003). For these reasons it was found that the public was in need of something in the market today that was simpler, shorter in length, and research based.

The book extended over many areas of divorce that are associated with negative behaviors in children, for example a lower quality parent-child relationship, a more hostile sibling relationship, and a decrease in academic performance (Dallos et al., 2012; Lansford et al., 2006; MacKinnon, 1989; Taylor et al., 2011). Many of these negative behaviors were found to be associated with the parental relationship and the presence of an increase in conflict throughout the divorce process (Durst et al., 1985; Noller et al., 2008). Many parents are unaware of the behaviors that are influencing their children negatively and continue to make the same mistakes. In an effort to make the research on the negative consequences of divorce on children’s development and the ways in which
to combat those more accessible to parents, a short, more concise, and understandable text was created.

To ensure the accuracy within the content of the book it was piloted with 8 participants who volunteered to read the book and fill out a survey. These participants were individuals who had been through a divorce, who had been a child of divorce, and others with experience in the child development field. The book gave extensive background on the negatives of divorce and the multitude of ways that parents could decrease those negatives, such as forgiveness, co-parenting, and mediation.

**Suggestions for Improvement and Implementation**

Information from the participant evaluation provided the researcher with a variety of suggested ways for improving the project for future use. Participants were given the completed book along with a survey to complete in an effort to help the researcher evaluate the effectiveness of the content of the book. The survey consisted of several questions, some open-ended and others structured as rating scales that could be numerically analyzed. These questions allowed the researcher to make changes to the book that would help increase the likelihood of publication in the future.

**Survey Analysis**

The survey focused on many different areas of the book, most importantly its ability to help those parents in need during a divorce. The survey was used as a tool to measure not only the content of the book, but the accuracy and ability to inform those parents who are struggling with divorce and parenting. Additionally, the survey helped
inform the researcher what areas needed improvement and whether the book would be a valid and useful tool on the book shelves today.

The first section of the survey addressed the need for the book in today’s society and whether the information was useful. Participants responded on a 5-point rating scale to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that there is a need for this book within today’s society (See Table 1). Many participants found that the information was useful within the book and gave them insight into the damage that parents could possibly be doing to their children. One participant responded that the information was very useful and made them think about ways that they could have made their divorce easier on their child. This information confirmed for the researcher that the book and its content will fill a need for parents within the community.

The second section focused on the ability to distinguish whether the book consisted of research or opinion and the accuracy of the information provided. All of the participants concluded that the information provided within the book was accurate (See Table 1) and consisted of research. They responded that they believed it to be research based on to the wording used within the book and the references included at the end. The responses received from the participants supported the researcher’s intent to communicate that the book was accurate and based on research, not solely opinion.

The third section of the survey concentrated on the content of the book and its ability to adequately cover the topic of divorce. Seven of the 8 participants concluded that the book adequately covered the divorce topic, while 1 participant left this question blank (See Table 1). Furthermore, many participants had suggestions or ideas to improve the
book, which were analyzed by the researcher and adapted within the necessary areas of
the book. These suggestions enabled the researcher to examine the book once more and
create new areas that may have been missed and make additional improvements within
the content of the book. These additions included creating a final question and bullet
point section at the end of the book, adding an about the author section, and incorporating
the theme throughout each section further.

Table 1

*How Can This Book be Improved*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Is there a need for this book?</th>
<th>Is the book accurate and up to date?</th>
<th>Does the book adequately cover divorce?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lastly the survey asked the participant's if they would recommend this book to
others. Overall, 7 of the participants agreed that they would recommend this book to
others, while 1 participant left that question blank (see Table 2). Many felt that this book
was a tool that would benefit parents and increase their knowledge on behaviors that may
be creating negative environments for their child. The participants felt that the book was
short, concise, and used words that were easily understood. This showed the researcher
that the book and the overall content within the book could be useful to parents within the
community.
Table 2

Recommendation of Book to Others

| Would you Recommend This Book To Others? |  
|------------------------------------------|---|
| Yes                                      | 7 |
| No                                       | 0 |
| Maybe                                    | 0 |

The recommendations suggested within the survey enabled the researcher to pinpoint the areas that needed improvement. Each participant had examples or ideas in which the book could help parents further. These included adding more information in certain sections, for example continuing the theme throughout the entire book more efficiently and adding bullet points wrapping up the entire book at the end. Suggestions such as these resulted in the researcher creating another draft of the book, which included many new features, such as adding a final question section for parents, which then became the final draft of the book. This change included questions that required the parents to focus on the relationships they have with their former spouse and their child, which made the overall book a more interactive tool. The suggestions within the survey were useful to the researcher and increased the content and quality of the overall book.

**Limitations**

The limitations within the book are many. The largest limitation is the ability for the public to get the information within the book. Part of the dissemination process is to
send the book to publishers in an effort to get it published. If the publishers do not feel that there is a need for the book, then the book will never have the opportunity to provide parents the knowledge within the book. Ultimately, this would mean that the book would not make it on to the bookshelves for parents to read.

The second limitation within this project is the content of the book. The book covers only the areas that the researcher felt were the most important based on the extant research. This means that many areas within the divorce topic were omitted and the parents will not get the complete picture of divorce. Furthermore, the parents will not have the ability to see all of the protective factors of divorce due to the page limits of the book.

The last limitation within this project is the sample size of the participants who filled out the survey. Eight participants are not enough to fully support or negate the content of the book or the findings found within the survey. In order to make the survey more useful the sample could have been larger, and more representative of the diversity of the target population of parents who were going through a divorce at the time of reading the book. This would have given a more accurate view on whether the information presented was beneficial to children during the divorce process.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

The creation of this book was to provide parents with the proper tools to help parent their child after divorce. The book allows the reader to learn about the main areas in which are impacted by the divorce and how as a parent they can make the process much smoother and with less negative outcomes for their child. The survey confirmed the
researchers belief that this was a needed book within society and that it might help parents to make better educated decisions throughout their divorce. Although the book is short, it conveys information that is beneficial to the parent and enables the parent to read it in a short amount of time. Unlike the books available on the divorce topic in today’s market, this book was developed for the general public, who in many cases, have difficulty in understanding extended text. Furthermore, this book used text that was easy to understand that was based upon research in child development. This allows the reader to feel confident in the information they are being given and their ability to understand the content.

For the final step within this process the book will be sent to several publishers with the hope that it will get published in the future. The query letter outlines the general idea of the book, the reason it is needed, and hopefully captures the attention of those publishers reading it. Additionally, the book in its entirety will accompany the query letter, which will give the publisher a chance to become familiar with the researchers writing style. The book will be the beginning of a long line of future possibilities for parents and divorce.

This book can expand in many different directions for the public such as, more books created, workshops, or a workbook. If this book is a success and becomes published future books could be written, such as short books written on the individual topics such as the parent-child relationship or the father-child relationship. This would give the author the ability to give more in depth information on specific topics and would
allow the reader to pick and choose which areas they feel they might need the most help in.

Another direction this book could expand into is workshops. This book could be the beginning of a workshop built around parents who are divorcing and are looking for additional help. The workshop would allow time for the participant to ask questions more specific to their own situations. This workshop could eventually be a program that is required of parents when going through a divorce from the courts. That would increase the knowledge of many parents and hopefully decrease the negative behaviors seen in children after divorce.

Lastly, a workbook could be created to accompany the book. It would give parents the chance to analyze the situation they were in and give them more things that could be done to create a better environment for their children. This could also be incorporated into the workshop that could be given. This book has many options for further research.

In conclusion this project was created to help parents construct a better environment for their children after a divorce. It was found throughout the years of research that many parents were still lacking in the knowledge needed to help their children and were continuing to make the same mistakes. This book created enables parents to make those better choices and with the positive feedback received from the participants, the researcher feels that the book can and will be a successful tool for divorced parents. Hopefully this book will be the beginning of those, within the divorced community, who will become the exception to the divorce rule.
APPENDICES
Appendix A: Book “Parenting after Divorce: Becoming the Exception to the Rule"
Parenting after Divorce

Becoming the Exception to the Rule

Ashley Wilson
Parenting after Divorce

Becoming the Exception to the Rule

Ashley Wilson

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California State University, Sacramento
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Acknowledgements

This book is dedicated to the many who have influenced me over the years...

To God, without your guidance and love I don’t know where I would be today.

To the love of my life Scott, thank you for your patience.
    I will always love you more.

To my Mom, you have been my rock in life and I appreciate everything you have done for me. Thank you for your unconditional love.

To my Sister, I am so proud of you and what you have become.
    You are my favorite sister!

To my Dad, thank you for instilling in me a love for Christ.

To the professors at CSUS, thank you for all your tough love.
    You have made me into a better, more educated individual.
It is literally everywhere. There is not one place I go where I come into contact with others where the word divorce does not come up. For me, it is a constant reminder of -not only my own mistakes in life but also those of my parents. Divorce has been used as a negative word in society, which has plagued me for what feels like my entire life. As a child of divorce and a divorcé myself I understand the hurt and pain it can cause, and as a child development researcher I understand that it doesn’t have to. It is my hope that I can relay that information to you, so your children do not end up with the type of damage it typically causes. This is what I like to call becoming the exception to the rule.

I would like to begin by giving a little bit of
background about myself. I am a woman in my late twenties, about to complete my M.A. degree in Child Development. I like to think of myself as a divorce expert, which I began examining at the young age of five when my own parents divorced. Like many other children of divorce I lived with my mother, had a hostile relationship with my sister, and my father was for most of the time non-existent. My childhood consisted of more bad then good, or at least that is how my mind has categorized it. I was a quiet child who strived to be perfect and of course that came with its own mess, anxiety, depression, anorexia, and self-esteem issues. I truly believed if I were perfect all the other negative things in my life would go away. I married at a young age, I think to escape, and after six years of marriage I was divorced, something I never thought would happen. Luckily for me I had no children.

After many years of studying children’s development I have come to some conclusions. The first being that, yes, much of the bad in my life was primarily
influenced by my parents’ divorce and the many complications that come with that and secondly that I could use this information to help other parents. I am not saying that my parents are horrible people, they are not at all. I commend them for everything they did with my sister and I. With that being said, they could have done some things differently, which I would love to share with you.

Divorce rates, as of 2008, were around 41%. That is a pretty high number, which tells me that many people are being affected by divorce. Divorce is a life event that changes everyone in your family dramatically, especially children. Many of those changes seen in children are negatively affecting their development. What I mean by this is that the negative influences of divorce create tension, and sort of like the domino effect, that tension continues to influence other areas in your child’s life. This book is going to help you determine if your divorce is influencing your child negatively and what you can do to change that.
Now a few short things before we begin, first, when I reference divorce I am meaning any parent who is separated or divorced from their spouse or thinking about it. Secondly, this book was created as a tool to help parents, not to put them down or make them feel that they are not doing a good job. If you have picked up this book and are reading it, how could you be a “bad” parent? You can’t. Furthermore, each child is different and reacts differently to a divorce. The findings within this book are the behaviors that are typically seen within a divorced household, which means that they may not necessarily apply to your family and more importantly your child. Lastly, each chapter will contain information that is completely research based, it is not my opinion, but based on evidence from studies that have previously been conducted. My hope is that you will find this information useful, informative, and easily applied to your own life.
Review

This is the point in each chapter where I will review and sum up the key findings of each individual chapter. This chapter included a little of my history and a lot about divorce. It is quite prevalent in the world today and comes with a negative connotation. Divorce can be an ugly situation, for you as the parent, but most importantly for your child. It is my wish that this book can encourage you to become the exception to the divorce rule.

Helpful Tips

This section will include things that you, as a parent, can do to create a healthier environment for your child.

- Keep an open mind when reading this book and think of ways in which it relates to your situation.

- Do not get defensive, this book is here to help you.

- Every child is different, so some of this may not apply to you. Take this time to learn more about your child.
2

Relationship with Your Ex

*It’s not always pretty*

This will be the most difficult chapter to digest. It focuses solely on you and your ex, which can be a touchy subject. The relationship you once had with your spouse changes after divorce. Typically leading up to the divorce the relationship is wrought with anger and hostility. Everything your spouse does becomes questionable and the trust that was once there is gone. As time continues and the divorce process begins it consumes your life. The only things that you can think of are the negatives of your spouse and the long list of things that person has done to you over the years. This type of relationship in the divorce world is very common and the anger you feel can negatively influence the relationship you have with your child, even if you feel as though you are hiding it.
Researchers have found several different parenting partnerships or relationships that are typical after divorce. The three most common are those that contain aggression, hostility, and conflict. This is the point where you, as a parent, need to ask yourself do you feel hatred towards your spouse. Do you display that hatred in front of your children? In a child’s book geared towards divorce it states “You don’t have to listen when parents say bad things about each other”. This is a book that was published in 2009, not too long ago, which means that this negative behavior is more common than you think. You may be unaware that you are even doing this or it may be intentional, but you have to think about your children and how this may be affecting them. This type of behavior leads to feelings of sadness and insecurity in your child. If you are talking negatively about their parent, how are they going to feel when they see that parent? Think about what type of position you are putting your child in. Conflict between parents is one of the worst situations for a child to
be in. Conflict usually occurs out of frustration. You are frustrated that life is not going as you had planned. You are frustrated over the things your ex has done. You are frustrated that you feel as though you are alone. Frustration and anger can consume you and it is completely understandable. These feelings are part of the grieving process that everyone must go through in order to push past the negative and on to happiness. For many parents they have a difficult time grieving for their losses, especially when they see what they have lost on a regular basis. It is difficult to be reminded of the lost relationship with your spouse, your life, money, home, and so much more. Divorce, unlike death, leaves you without closure or an exact way to mourn. Many friends and family desert you at this time and without the social supports surrounding you it can be hard. For these reasons alone, grief is where many get stuck. You are unable to handle the loss and unsure of how to make the hurt, pain, or anger
disappear.

Don’t let the sadness that you feel take over your life. Don’t spend your time wondering about getting back with your ex, or going into a deep depression over it, use your time wisely. Think about all the positive aspects of your life and the biggest of those being your child, focus on them. Surround yourself with positive influences, such as family members or a counselor. Find a healthy way to mourn your losses, whether that be crying, going to church, or the gym. Find a way to move past the shock, anger, and depression you may be feeling and on to living the new and better life you are creating for you and your child.

Grief is a process that can continue to go round and round, unless you stop it. In order to overcome these negative feelings you might have towards your life and your spouse and to move towards a healthier relationship with your child, the key is forgiveness. I know this might sound impossible, but this situation is not solely about you.
Your divorce is to make your life better and that includes the bettering of your child’s life too, right? While doing research I came across a workshop that was used for parents to learn to forgive. The parents concluded after multiple sessions that they were able to begin to forgive their spouse and they saw positive changes in their child’s life because of this. It is possible to forgive, you just have to start small and remember to not include your child in the negative feelings you may have towards your ex. Once you are able to begin to forgive, a coparenting partnership should be established to ensure the healthiest environment for your child. A coparenting partnership is cooperative and shares the responsibilities for guidance, care, and the upbringing of your child. This means that every decision made for your child should be discussed together, as if you were still married. This creates stability in your child’s life and ensures that each place the child stays will be consistent. Consistency between parents is needed in your child’s life, while everything else appears
to be upside down. Furthermore coparenting must be maintained with boundaries and conformed to each particular child’s unique qualities. Ultimately, this parenting partnership relies on a positive parent-parent relationship, which creates a better parent-child relationship and less anxiety for your child.
Review

This chapter relays information regarding your relationship with your ex and how that may be influencing your child negatively. Most relationships after divorce are consumed with hostility, which places the child in a bad position. Conflict creates feelings of anxiety and instability within the child, which creates tension within the parent-child relationship. In order to overcome these negative influences you must mourn your losses and learn to forgive, which helps lead to a coparenting partnership between you and your ex.

Helpful Tips

- Always watch what you say about their other parent when you are around your child. Keep it positive, no matter what!
- Forgiveness is the key to moving on and getting past the negatives and the grief.
- A coparenting partnership creates the best environment for your child. Work towards this.
After a divorce it is found that the relationship you have with your child changes dramatically. The overwhelming process of divorce and the idea that you are beginning again can take hold of you and ultimately pull your attention away from your child. Divorce can be a long process and consists of several steps, such as finding a new place to live, getting an attorney, or figuring out how you will survive. I understand that it can consume your life, but remember that this process is not forever; it is only a snippet of your life. Unfortunately, the damages to the relationship with your child can be forever, or, at least, for a long time. This chapter will be divided into two sections, the mother-child relationship and the father-child relationship, as there are dramatic differences with each of
these according to the research.

**Mother-Child Relationship**

As a mother the relationship with your child after a divorce is altered. Typically the mother is the child’s primary caregiver, which means that it is imperative that this part of the child’s life remains consistent. Unfortunately, it is found that many mothers show less emotional support, exert more negative control, and are less responsive to their child’s needs. This means that as the divorce process continues and everyday life becomes more difficult the attention begins to focus on the divorce, and the factors surrounding that, and less on your child. The researchers find that mothers tend to focus on themselves and the idea that they are now single, which means they are on a mission to find a man. This type of change can be hard for your child, especially if you are continually bringing home new potential father figures.
This can lead to abandonment issues in your child. Rule of thumb, only introduce your child to a new man if you are seriously involved.

Many mothers report these changes in their behavior to the stress that they feel after the divorce and the social, economic, and emotional adjustments that are being made. The first year of divorce can be very difficult and is a time of drastic changes, but remember that your child is going through the same process and needs you to be there for them. Don’t succumb to the pressures of divorce and become impatient or irritable with your child. Make yourself emotionally available to them and able to help them get through the changes your divorce is bringing to the family.

Father-Child Relationship

This is a difficult topic, most of the research in this section points towards the lack of participation of the
father. It is my hope that this is not the case with you. The lack of a father in a child’s life can cause many issues, most of which are difficult for the child to overcome. This list includes fear of abandonment, lower self-esteem, separation anxiety, loneliness, neglect, and many more. All of these are products of the type of attachment, or lack of, the child has with their father. If you are an active participant in your child’s life, regardless of whether their primary custody is with their mother, this will help get rid of the negative factors that may affect children experiencing their parents’ divorce. Men, researchers found, equate fatherhood to being a husband and after the husband tie is separated men tend to separate themselves from the role of father as well. These are two separate entities and you should never put them in the same box. Your role as a father is to help nurture and support your child. This does not stop, ever, regardless of your marital status.
This can be difficult at times due to the relationship with your ex, but realize that the relationship you have with your child is more important than the negative feelings you might have for your ex. Try everything and anything to be with your child, make it a point to see them often and strengthen the bond that you have with them. Fight for your child and the opportunity to be a part of their life because if you miss these times with them, you might never get them back. Fathers do not have to be put in a negative light; let’s change the rules of divorce for fathers.
Review

The relationship you have with your child is very important to their development. If your child has fears of abandonment or fears that they are not important this will wear on their emotions. Mothers need to focus more on their children and less on the new stresses of their world. Fathers need to be a part of their child’s life, no matter what. These times you share with your child are short and as a parent you don’t want to miss out on anything.

Helpful Tips

- Don’t let the stress of divorce take the focus off your child. They should always be a priority.

- Be an active participant in your child’s life, no matter what.

- Don’t EVER withhold your child from their other parent for petty reasons.
4

What Else is Affected

Divorce has its hands in many areas

Divorce can affect many other areas in your child’s life, including the relationship they have with their sibling and their academics. These two areas are important in your child’s development, from preschool age all the way through high school. After divorce, many children have issues in both of these areas, which are related to the conflict seen in the parent-parent relationship.

Conflict, as discussed in previous chapters, can be very harmful to your child. Typically children get caught in the middle of the conflict between their parents. Researchers describe this as “triangulation”, or rather the idea that in order to alleviate issues between two parties a third person must enter to absorb the extra tension. Typically the third person is the child, who then tries to
restore the balance between their two parents and equalize the situation. This conflict between the parents causes there to be strain on not only the relationship the child has with their parents, but also their surrounding relationships, including the relationship with their sibling and academics. These will be further discussed in the next two sections.

**Sibling Relationship**

The sibling relationship is changed after a divorce, in many cases negatively. Typically, due to the conflict between parents, sibling relationships also show higher levels of conflict. Researchers state conflict between siblings after divorce increases by 50%, which is a huge jump. This jump is due to the stresses caused by the parent’s relationship, which puts strain on the siblings. In an effort to alleviate some of that stress arguments ensue and unfortunately they can be quite brutal.
Sibling’s fights after divorce are typically more aggressive, as that is how they see conflict resolved by their parents. Siblings may become more competitive, argumentative, use higher amounts of name-calling, and abusive behaviors. These negative behaviors foster harmful relationships between siblings and create even more conflict in the child’s life. The conflict seen between siblings is thought to continue into adulthood and create lower quality sibling relationships. Siblings are considered in many instances to be life-long friends, but when divorce happens it puts unwanted strain on the relationship. This strain can be alleviated by less conflict within the parent-parent relationship, see Chapter 2 for tips on how this may be accomplished.

Academic Relationship

After a divorce it is seen that children have issues within their academic setting. Many children are forced to
move after a divorce, which creates a change in their schooling. In addition children are faced with trying to adapt to new family dynamics, new teachers, and new peers. These changes, the loss of teacher and peer relationships, can weaken the support network that surrounds them. This causes much strain and can be seen negatively through several problems manifested by your child, such as disruptive behavior, a decrease in grades, or anxiety problems. The biggest area parents see issues arise in the school setting is a decline in your child’s overall academics, which research shows, is common. Math and social studies appear to be the academic areas that show the most declines and this is consistent throughout all ages of children. Additionally if your child is in junior high or high school you may see a decrease in their letter grades. If your child is in elementary school or younger you might see feelings of anxiety and disruptive behavior at school to be more prominent after divorce.

Researchers have shown that this decrease in
academic performance may lead to the risk of the child dropping out of school. This is believed to be due to an increase in conflict and decrease in parental involvement, which we know is very important after a divorce. Divorce is a life event that can dramatically influence the child’s academic performance negatively if you as the parent do not make the efforts to be an active participant in your child’s life.
Review

The conflict within the relationship with your ex can strain the relationships that surround your child, including the sibling relationship and their academic relationship. The sibling relationship is seen to be more aggressive and have higher levels of conflict after divorce. Additionally, your child will suffer overall academically, including higher levels of anxiety, disruptive behaviors, and grades. In order to combat this you must be involved in your child’s life.

Helpful Tips

撂 Don’t let the conflict between you and your ex include your child. Seek help outside of the home.

撂 A high amount of conflict is not good for your child. They may imitate this negative behavior in other relationships.

撂 Be an active participant in your child’s academics.
Divorce can be a positive experience. You could be escaping from a violent or abusive relationship, a cheating spouse, or an unhappy relationship. I understand that divorce is sometimes inevitable and, at many times, the only way to escape a harmful relationship. These negative relationships actually do more harm if you stay in a marriage filled with conflict than if you leave. So don’t feel as though you must stay in an unhappy situation for your children. Chances are they know you are unhappy and are looking to escape from the conflict-ridden situation as well. There are many ways in which we can look at divorce in a positive light. These next few sections will highlight things that parents are doing to make a better environment for their children and things that you can hopefully mimic.
Low Conflict Environment

Researchers have found repeatedly that a high amount of conflict is harmful to your child’s emotional well-being. This includes putting them at risk for a higher chance of depression, disruptive behaviors, and anxiety. Conflict is additionally a determiner for the relationship you might have with your children. A high conflict atmosphere has been linked with lower quality parent-child relationships. Conflict is the number one issue found in divorced parents that negatively influence the child. As discussed earlier in the book it can be combated with several things, such as learning to forgive and establishing a coparenting partnership.

I understand there will still be conflict within the relationship, so you both must learn how to have constructive conflict. This is conflict that is not destructive and that generates productive, mutually beneficial, shared decisions. Parents who have been shown to have the ability
a low conflict environment for their child have established better quality relationships with their child. This included those relationships with their parents and their siblings. This can be a very positive aspect of a divorce, especially if the child experienced much conflict while you were with your ex. In this instance divorce may be a good thing not only for you but, most importantly, for your child.

**Legal Proceedings**

For many parents the divorce process can be very difficult. The divorce is a time for negotiations and dividing up everything in your life. Unfortunately many parents forget that their children are not pawns or a way for you to control your ex, they are your children, living human beings who are not yours to use as a bargaining tool. Too often parents choose to go this route in a divorce and when lawyers and courts get involved, it can be very traumatic for a child to experience and typically leads to
negative consequences. During this experience children feel as though their voice does not matter, that they are caught in the middle of this mess, and that they are alone and unaware of what is happening. These are emotions you do not want your child to feel.

An alternative to this, which researchers have found to be much more beneficial to the child, is mediation. This is a process in which mediators encourage parents to create their own laws of fairness that are made to fit the family’s unique needs, as opposed to relying on the lawyers or courts to decide. This gives the parents a shared perception of their child’s needs and what would be the best for their child. Research on this topic shows children were typically included in parts of this process and felt as though they were able to get their feelings across and that they were a part of the decision. This ultimately led to a decrease in conflict within the family, which as we know is very beneficial to the child’s development.
Social Supports

Those surrounding you, such as your family and friends, can be very important in helping to create a smoother transition for you and your child. Having someone near you that can help when making life-altering decisions, or help when you are having a moment of weakness can be very beneficial to your sanity. In order to get through the divorce process you need to be surrounded by those who are positive, that love and support you. Friends and family are great for this and can help to lift your spirits in times of need or be a sounding board when you want to complain about the negatives in your life. This should never be your child’s duty. If those surrounding you are not the most positive people in the world, maybe it is time to seek out a counselor. This will not only benefit you, but the relationship you have with your child. Additionally, your child can benefit greatly from seeing a counselor as well. The research has found that children
who see a counselor fare better throughout the divorce. Counselors give children the chance to vent out their frustrations about their lives, without feeling judged or worried of disapproval. This enables the child to feel comforted and reassured that things will improve. Grandparents can be exceptional social supports in this situation as well. Make sure you and your child have someone positive in your life that provides a sense of safety and comfort throughout this difficult time.

**Positive Factors**

In conclusion there are many things, which you as a parent can do to help create a smoother transition from an intact family to a divorced family for your child. First, make sure to think about your child before you make any large decisions. They are a part of this situation and need to feel as though they are heard. Second, create a better relationship with your ex that can work towards a
co-parenting partnership. This ultimately will enable you to have a better relationship with your child, for them to have a more positive sibling relationship, and be more successful in school. Lastly, keep the destructive conflict to a minimum by using constructive ways to resolve arguments.

You do not have the ability to control what the other parent chooses to do; however you have the ability to change your behaviors. Do not let the negative emotions that you may feel for your ex take control of you. Instead, become the exception to the rule and escape the negative spiral that often revolves around divorce. Lets make a change and save your children from the anxiety, depression, loneliness, emotional issues, negative relationships, and educational consequences that typically come with the tag of divorce. Lets make a new rule.
Review

Divorce does not have to be a bad thing for your children. If you as the parent make changes you have the ability to change the outcome. You can do this by learning how to have constructive conflict, instead of destructive conflict and by using mediators instead of allowing a judge to make a cookie-cutter decision about your family. Surround yourself with positive social supports, such as friends, family, or a counselor. There are so many things you can do to make the divorce process a more positive experience for your child and with less negative consequences.

Helpful Tips

- Learn how to be constructive in conflict, not destructive.
- Mediation is the way to go. Say no to court!
- Become the EXCEPTION to the rule.
Resources for Parents

In the following you will find a list of resources that you can use to increase your knowledge on the different aspects of divorce that have been discussed in this book. The first section relays a few of the many research articles I used in order to write this book and the journals they come from. The second section will give a list of outside resources that can be used to further your knowledge about the positive factors within a divorce and how you may mimic those items, such as coparenting and forgiveness.

Following the resources for you are a list of books that can be used to help your child understand the divorce process and enable you to begin a discussion with them about what will happen throughout the process. Take this time to learn more about your child and how they feel about these changes. I hope these, along with this book, will help enable you to make a better environment for your developing child.
Research Studies and Articles

*For further reading*

**Journal Of Divorce and Remarriage**

Noller, Feeney, Sheehan, Darlington, & Rogers (2008).

*Parental Divorce and Mother-Child Interaction.*

*The influence of Parental Separation and Divorce on Father-Child Relationships.*

*The Interactive Effects of Marital Conflict and Divorce on Parent-Adult Children’s Relationships.*

**Conflict Resolution Quarterly Journal**

*Divorce Mediation Outcome Research: A Meta-Analysis.*
Shaw (2010).
Resources for Parents

For further reading

*The CoParenting Survival Guide*
Elizabeth Thayer and Jeffrey Zimmerman

*From Pain To Peace*
Robin Gilbert Luftig
Resources for Teens

For further reading

The Divorce Workbook for Teens
Lisa M. Schab

Now What Do I Do?
Lynn Cassella-Kapusinski
Resources for Elementary

For further reading

What in the World Do You Do When Your Parents Divorce?
Kent Winchester & Roberta Beyer

The Divorce Helpbook for Kids
Cynthia MacGregor
Resources for Preschool

For further reading

Two Homes for Tyler
Pamela Kennedy Young

Mama and Daddy Bear’s Divorce
Cornelia Maude Spelman
Questions to Ask Yourself

Follow-up

1. Is the relationship with your ex hostile? If so, what can you do to create a more positive environment for your child?

2. Have you grieved for your losses and moved past to forgiveness? If not, who in your life can help you with this? How can you help your child to grieve?
Questions to Ask Yourself

Follow-up

3. What does your relationship with your child look like? Are you complaining about your ex around them? Are you giving them the support and attention they need? Are you making them feel like a priority? What are things you can do to make them feel important?

4. Is the relationship with your spouse a coparenting partnership? Are you continuing to parent your child together? If not, is there a way that you can work towards this? What would this look like?
About the Author

Ashley Wilson

Ashley Wilson is a graduate from California State University, Sacramento with a Masters degree in Child Development. This is the first book she has written and hopes that it will be a big help to those going through a divorce. Ashley believes that the world is in need of some change when it comes to children and parenting. Hopefully this book can help with that change. Ashley lives in Brentwood, CA with her fiancé Scott and her three dogs, Pidgey, Porsche, and Squirtle. In addition to writing she loves going to church, reading, researching, and spreading awareness about Cystic Fibrosis.
Appendix B: Completed Surveys
Please take a moment to help me improve the book, “Parenting After Divorce: Becoming the Exception to the Rule”. If you do not feel comfortable answering any questions you may skip them or stop the survey at any time. When you are done with this survey please email this survey back to me at Ashley@theparxsclan.com. Return of this survey is implied consent for your data to be used in this evaluation. Thank you!

**Purpose and Audience**

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<td>I felt the part about how to deal with children during a divorce would be very useful.</td>
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<td>It was all very informative and I thought it would be very useful.</td>
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<td>I believe it was based on facts that came from research and the authors own experience with divorce.</td>
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**Content**

Does the book adequately cover its topic of divorce?
*Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.*
1 Strongly agree (adequately covers)
2 Agree
3 Neutral
4 Disagree
5 Strongly disagree (does not cover)

**Comments/ Concerns**

Would you recommend this book to others?
*Circle the one that most represents your response.*
Yes
No
Maybe

**Additional Comments:**

I believe the book contained very useful information. It made me think about ways that I could have dealt with my child and divorce that would have made it easier on her.

---

Thank you for your participation!
How Can This Book Be Improved?

Please take a moment to help me improve the book, “Parenting After Divorce: Becoming the Exception to the Rule”. If you do not feel comfortable answering any questions you may skip them or stop the survey at any time. When you are done with this survey please email this survey back to me at Ashley@theparksclan.com. Return of this survey is implied consent for your data to be used in this evaluation. Thank you!

Purpose and Audience

Is there a need for this book in today’s society?

Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.

1 Strongly agree (there is a need)
2 Agree
3 Neutral
4 Disagree
5 Strongly disagree (there is no need)

Did you find this book to contain useful information? What was the most useful? What was the least useful?

The third person part was a great point—the child becomes the mediator. Dads to stay involved.

Accuracy

Does it appear that the text is based primarily on facts or opinion? Please explain your answer.

Book seems accurate.

Does the book offer accurate and up to date information?

Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.

1 Strongly agree (book is accurate)
2 Agree
3 Neutral
4 Disagree
5 Strongly disagree (book is inaccurate)
**Content**

Does the book adequately cover its topic of divorce?

*Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.*

1. Strongly agree (adequately covers)
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree (does not cover)

**Comments/ Concerns**

Would you recommend this book to others?

*Circle the one that most represents your response.*

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

**Additional Comments:**

I liked the part about the fathers making time to be a part of your life. Make sure you are the man you would want your daughter to marry, make sure your son emulates your good points—strength, morality, etc.

Third Person—great point….wonderful point made.

Thank you for your participation!
Please take a moment to help me improve the book, “Parenting After Divorce: Becoming the Exception to the Rule”. If you do not feel comfortable answering any questions you may skip them or stop the survey at any time. When you are done with this survey please email this survey back to me at Ashley@theparksclan.com. Return of this survey is implied consent for your data to be used in this evaluation. Thank you!

### Purpose and Audience

Is there a need for this book in today’s society?

*Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.*

1 Strongly agree (there is a need)
2 Agree
3 Neutral
4 Disagree
5 Strongly disagree (there is no need)

### Accuracy

Does it appear that the text is based primarily on facts or opinion? Please explain your answer.

**Combination. Good references but also good advice. Most parents don’t want to think about how the child may be affected.**

Does the book offer accurate and up to date information?

*Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.*

1 Strongly agree (book is accurate)
2 Agree
3 Neutral
4 Disagree
5 Strongly disagree (book is inaccurate)
Content

Does the book adequately cover its topic of divorce?

*Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.*

1 Strongly agree (adequately covers)
2 Agree
3 Neutral
4 Disagree
5 Strongly disagree (does not cover)

Comments/ Concerns

Would you recommend this book to others?

*Circle the one that most represents your response.*

Yes
No
Maybe

Additional Comments:

Lots of good points made in this book. It had a good flow of information. The review at the end of each section allows the parent to reassess what they have read and the bullets give the direct reminder of what was important. I liked that it was also addressed from both the mother and father perspective. This makes the book useful to both parents. A reminder that they are both responsible for the outcome of their child’s life.

Thank you for your participation!
Please take a moment to help me improve the book, “Parenting After Divorce: Becoming the Exception to the Rule”. If you do not feel comfortable answering any questions you may skip them or stop the survey at any time. When you are done with this survey please email this survey back to me at Ashley@theparksclan.com. Return of this survey is implied consent for your data to be used in this evaluation. Thank you!

**Purpose and Audience**

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<td>1 Strongly agree (book is accurate)</td>
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<td>4 Disagree</td>
<td>5 Strongly disagree (book is inaccurate)</td>
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Does it appear that the text is based primarily on facts or opinion? Please explain your answer.

I see mostly facts and quoted research. There was not a lot that was opinion based. Books that express more facts and researched topics make for a more knowledgeable and informative book.

Does the book offer accurate and up to date information?

I think this book covered many topics that are though about due to divorce and children. I like how each section is broken down into easy to read and understand sections. Books with extremely large terminology and medical words lose my interest and focus and make it difficult to understand and this book was not that way.
# Content

Does the book adequately cover its topic of divorce?

*Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.*

1. Strongly agree (adequately covers)
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree (does not cover)

**Comments/ Concerns**

Would you recommend this book to others?

*Circle the one that most represents your response.*

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

**Additional Comments:**

The book is a great, easy to understand, and easy to relate to. I think more in depth topics and more quoted facts would help to make the readers understand that more people out there are going through this and that they are not alone in the matter.

I like that you don’t use tons of huge words that I would have to look up in order to completely understand.

---

Thank you for your participation!
How Can This Book Be Improved?

Please take a moment to help me improve the book, “Parenting After Divorce: Becoming the Exception to the Rule”. If you do not feel comfortable answering any questions you may skip them or stop the survey at any time. When you are done with this survey please email this survey back to me at Ashley@theparksclan.com. Return of this survey is implied consent for your data to be used in this evaluation. Thank you!

Purpose and Audience

Is there a need for this book in today’s society?

Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.

1 Strongly agree (there is a need)
2 Agree
3 Neutral
4 Disagree
5 Strongly disagree (there is no need)

Did you find this book to contain useful information? What was the most useful? What was the least useful?

Its all useful if readers apply the ideas to their on lives.

Accuracy

Does it appear that the text is based primarily on facts or opinion? Please explain your answer.

Facts because you mentioned them throughout the book and referenced them in the back of the book.

Does the book offer accurate and up to date information?

Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.

1 Strongly agree (book is accurate)
2 Agree
3 Neutral
4 Disagree
5 Strongly disagree (book is inaccurate)
## Content

Does the book adequately cover its topic of divorce?
*Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.*

1. Strongly agree (adequately covers)
2. Agree – Good first start
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree (does not cover)

Were there areas, which might have been explained more in depth, or additional topics that should have been included? Please explain your answer.

Cannot think of any.

## Comments/ Concerns

Would you recommend this book to others?
*Circle the one that most represents your response.*

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

**Additional Comments:**

---

**Thank you for your participation!**
How Can This Book Be Improved?

Please take a moment to help me improve the book, “Parenting After Divorce: Becoming the Exception to the Rule”. If you do not feel comfortable answering any questions you may skip them or stop the survey at any time. When you are done with this survey please email this survey back to me at Ashley@theparksclan.com. Return of this survey is implied consent for your data to be used in this evaluation. Thank you!

**Purpose and Audience**

Is there a need for this book in today’s society?

_Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above._

1. Strongly agree (there is a need)
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree (there is no need)

Did you find this book to contain useful information? What was the most useful? What was the least useful?

_I find that there is an ample need for this type of book that you have written, it is short and concise for the reader!!! It would be very useful._

**Accuracy**

Does it appear that the text is based primarily on facts or opinion? Please explain your answer.

Does the book offer accurate and up to date information?

_Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above._

1. Strongly agree (book is accurate)
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree (book is inaccurate)
### Content

Does the book adequately cover its topic of divorce?

*Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.*

1. Strongly agree (adequately covers)
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree (does not cover)

### Comments/Concerns

Were there areas, which might have been explained more in depth, or additional topics that should have been included? Please explain your answer.

I think the book points to many areas of concern, but missing the social aspect of a child’s development in that divorce may harm their ability to cope with others.

Bullet points at the end of the summary, just a suggestion.

Would you recommend this book to others?

*Circle the one that most represents your response.*

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

**Additional Comments:**

You might want to re-confirm this- “be the exception to the rule” you noted this once or twice, but I would think you want to reinforce this idea, seems to be the theme of the book!

Thank you for your participation!
Ashley Wilson
Sacramento State University, Sacramento Graduate Student

How Can This Book Be Improved?

Please take a moment to help me improve the book, “Parenting After Divorce: Becoming the Exception to the Rule”. If you do not feel comfortable answering any questions you may skip them or stop the survey at any time. When you are done with this survey please email this survey back to me at Ashley@theparksclan.com. Return of this survey is implied consent for your data to be used in this evaluation. Thank you!

Purpose and Audience

Is there a need for this book in today’s society?  
Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.  
1 Strongly agree (there is a need)  
2 Agree  
3 Neutral  
4 Disagree  
5 Strongly disagree (there is no need)

Accuracy

Does it appear that the text is based primarily on facts or opinion? Please explain your answer.  
I thought it was well thought out and researched.

Did you find this book to contain useful information? What was the most useful? What was the least useful?  
I think it would help parents focus more on how their child is feeling instead of how they are feeling.

Does the book offer accurate and up to date information?  
Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.  
1 Strongly agree (book is accurate)  
2 Agree  
3 Neutral  
4 Disagree  
5 Strongly disagree (book is inaccurate)
Content

Does the book adequately cover its topic of divorce?

Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.

1 Strongly agree (adequately covers)
2 Agree
3 Neutral
4 Disagree
5 Strongly disagree (does not cover)

Comments/Concerns

Were there areas, which might have been explained more in depth, or additional topics that should have been included? Please explain your answer.

I think it would be cool if you could have some actual comments from children perhaps in the different parts of the divorce. The beginning middle end, as some parents may not look into some of it as real since it is coming from an adult with divorce experience even though you mentioned your parent’s divorce as well.

Would you recommend this book to others?

Circle the one that most represents your response.

Yes
No
Maybe

Additional Comments:

Thank you for your participation!
How Can This Book Be Improved?

Please take a moment to help me improve the book, “Parenting After Divorce: Becoming the Exception to the Rule”. If you do not feel comfortable answering any questions you may skip them or stop the survey at any time. When you are done with this survey please email this survey back to me at Ashley@theparksclan.com. Return of this survey is implied consent for your data to be used in this evaluation. Thank you!

### Purpose and Audience

Is there a need for this book in today’s society?

*Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.*

1. **Strongly agree (there is a need)**
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. **Strongly disagree (there is no need)**

### Accuracy

Did you find this book to contain useful information? What was the most useful? What was the least useful?

Ashley, the book is very good. Having the sections at the end of each chapter with the “take-home point(s)” is really helpful and something that makes this very user friendly. I don’t think any thing was “least useful”. I think it is all necessary information.

Does it appear that the text is based primarily on facts or opinion? Please explain your answer.

-Ashley, I know that you derived the information from facts, and a few times you even say that the research says.... It is hard to tell HOW you got this information. I know because I have worked along side you, but how would someone reading this know it is research and fact based?

### Does the book offer accurate and up to date information?

*Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.*

1. **Strongly agree (book is accurate)**
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. **Strongly disagree (book is inaccurate)**
Content

Does the book adequately cover its topic of divorce?
Circle the rating to indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the claim above.

1 Strongly agree (adequately covers)
2 Agree
3 Neutral
4 Disagree

5 Strongly disagree (does not cover)

Comments/Concerns: I especially think that covering the mother-child and father-child relationship separately was great

Were there areas, which might have been explained more in depth, or additional topics that should have been included? Please explain your answer.
Ashley,
There is nothing “lacking” in this book. I do think, that if you talk about research that somewhere you should include some examples. I don’t know HOW to do that….but I think it is important if you talk about research saying something that you should provide an example.

Would you recommend this book to others?
Circle the one that most represents your response.

Yes
No
Maybe

Additional Comments:

Ashley, I am very proud of you. I know the amount of time you put into this....I cant wait to see this on a bookshelf somewhere!!! Great Job!

Thank you for your participation!
Appendix C: Query Letter
March 1, 2013

Dear Mr. or Mrs. Agent:

Divorce is a word that is widely used in today’s society. Everywhere you turn; there it is, rearing up its ugly head. Divorce, too often, creates a negative environment for all involved, especially children. Many children are being caught in the crossfire of their parent’s negative behaviors and have no say in what happens throughout a divorce. Their parent’s negative behaviors are creating long lasting effects that are not necessary if only parents were to make an active choice to become, what I like to call, the exception to the divorce rule.

In this short book, “Parenting After Divorce; Becoming the Exception to the Rule”, I explain what the research has found over the years about divorce and how it is negatively associated with children’s development. Furthermore, it gives parents a different way in which to approach divorce that creates a better environment for their children. This book is solely based on information found within published empirical studies and not centered only on my own opinion.

Now I know you are probably reading this and thinking there are a bazillion and one books about divorce, but it is my belief that they fail to reach the public for several reasons. The first is that these books continually consist of 150 pages or more. This can seem very daunting for members of the general public who have difficulties with reading and understanding extended text. Secondly, most of these books fail to address the research that has led them to their conclusions, which ultimately leads others to believe that it is solely opinion. The last and final reason is the lack of books on divorce within the bookstores that cater to the general public; for the most part they are nonexistent. For these reasons alone I believe that the public needs a book that is shorter, more concise, and relies on the evidence rather than ones opinion.

Divorce is not an unknown word for many, including myself. I am a product of divorced parents, a divorcée myself, and a child development graduate with a substantial knowledge of the research surrounding divorces. Recently I graduated from California State University, Sacramento with a Masters Degree in Child Development, in which I focused on divorce. I truly believe that this book is needed, due to the simple fact that children deserve more.

Thank you, in advance, for your time and consideration to my query. Attached is the book in its entirety. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,
Ashley Wilson
MA in Child Development; Research and Theory
Appendix D: Exemption Letter
February 24, 2013

To: Ashley Wilson

From: Juliana Raskauskas, Chair
Child Development Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects

RE: Divorce and Children’s Developmental Outcomes

Your protocol received administrative review on February 24, 2013 and was approved as “Exempt.” The exemption is made pursuant to 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). The approval applies to the conditions and procedures described in your protocol. Your approval expires on February 24, 2014.

Approval carries with it the understanding that you will inform the Committee promptly should an adverse reaction occur, and that you will make no modification in the protocol without prior approval of the Committee.

If you need any further information about the use of human subjects, please contact me at 916-278-7029.

Thank you.

Best Regards,

Juliana Raskauskas, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Child Development
References


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between parental psychological violence, other family disturbances, and

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