

Cristina Cuate

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## **U2 Reflective Annotated Bibliography**

### **Introduction**

What is the influence of divorce on children and adolescents?

The reason I chose this topic is because it is important to talk to a child and check up on them during a difficult time like divorce. Not many parents think a child could get mental and/or emotional problems during this time because they may be “too young” to understand what is happening or the feelings they may experience are just for “attention”. I have experienced my parents splitting up and it has caused me to slack off in school, I was already 16 at the time, and I still find it hard to believe they split up. I know everyone reacts differently to situations like these but I know they end up feeling upset either in the moment or later on as time goes by.

No matter what age a child is, everything will stick into their memory and it may affect them sooner or later. Children and adolescents are two different age groups and one group may experience more trauma than the other but that doesn't mean that their feelings are invalid just because of their age. In this research I expect adolescents to react worse than children during this difficult time. Adolescents may become more rebellious since they are more aware of what is happening. Children on the other hand may feel confused and may have difficulty processing what just happened between the love of their mother and father.

**Source Entries**

*Citation #1:* Espejo, Roman. *Divorce and Children*. Greenhaven Publishing LLC, 2015, Chapter 2, pages 24-28 . *ProQuest Ebook Central*

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/citytech-ebooks/detail.action?docID=5413215>.

*Summary:* Children (up to the age of 8) and adolescents (beginning around 9-13) may react differently in certain situations, in this case divorce. When it comes to divorce a child may seem to be dependent of their parents while an adolescent is independent. Children tend to become anxious and start to question things. They are scared to be alone. Having both parents together is a must for them. It's hard for children to process a parent's divorce since they might go from house to house having different accommodations and always missing one parent. They may fantasize that one day their parents may end up back together. Adolescents on the other hand tend to be aggressive and worry more about themselves. If the parents failed to be together then the adolescent will only try once to get their parents back together, if that doesn't work then it just wasn't meant to be. This will make the adolescent more distant and get to the stage of independence. Adolescents tend to be more social therefore no longer needing much from their parents compared to children.

*Reflection:* I disagree with the author when they mentioned how children are still dependent of their parents while the adolescent is not. Although an adolescent is much older it doesn't mean that they will become completely independent of their parents. Worst case scenario that will only be the case if you were never close to your parents but every kid no matter what age needs both their parents. An adolescent may become distant because there's so much going on and they don't know who to talk to. Children are going to start tantrums because they are missing their second parent figure and adjusting from one household to another when their parents are

co-parenting. Not only do children start asking questions but adolescents too, for example they may have to decide who they want to stay with and that's a lot of pressure for a kid.

*Quotation:* "Divorce introduces a massive change into the life of a boy or girl no matter what the age. Witnessing loss of love between parents, having parents break their marriage commitment, adjusting to going back and forth between two different households, and the daily absence of one parent while living with the other, all create a challenging new family circumstance in which to live." (page 25)

*Citation #2:* "How Divorce REALLY Impacts Kids' Mental Health." *Youtube*, uploaded by Shrink Tank, 29 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcNs0BIYif8>

*Summary:* According to a study discussed in The Guardian, on youtube, parental separation is more likely to harm the mental health of children if they are aged at least seven when the split occurs. Minors aged between seven and 14 at the time of the split exhibit a 16% rise in emotional problems, such as anxiety and depressive symptoms, and an 8% increase in conduct disorders. In contrast, children whose parents separate when they are between three and seven are not more likely to develop such problems either immediately or by the age of 14 than those still living with both parents. There is a panel of mental health experts discussing this and more in their segment of psychology that is called "Being Human." The "middle school age" when something major happens to a kid has a much bigger impact rather than when they are younger. A lot of mental health problems tend to sky-rocket between the ages of 11-14.

*Reflection:* I agree with this because during the adolescent's middle school years there's just a lot going on and things are being discovered about themselves. Compared to someone who is under

the age of seven they may not have a lot of thoughts. It would also depend on the lifestyle of the kid. Are they mostly with their mother or their father? Adolescents tend to become more rebellious since during this time they are hitting the stage of puberty and could use the support of their parents especially if the parents aren't paying much attention to them since they are considered too old. A lot of emotions also tend to build up if they are not being expressed to the parents, this is where the build-up of anxiety and depression comes into the picture for the adolescent.

*Quotation:* "As a child of divorce I believe it...I didn't really care much about the earlier divorces at all. Because I was much more aware of what was going on and the nasty dynamics that can come up with those sorts of things, I was very influenced by and impacted by the one [divorce] when I was in high school." (0.47-1.22)

*Citation #3:* Scott, Mindy E., et al. "Postdivorce Father-Adolescent Closeness." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 69, no. 5, 2007, pp. 1194–209, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2007.00441.x>.

*Summary:* Research indicates that closeness of the father-child bond following parental divorce is associated with better outcomes for children and adolescents. Closeness is particularly important for child well-being because divorced fathers who have such bonds with children can be more effective in monitoring, communicating with, and teaching children. Fathers, compared to mothers, are less close to adolescent offspring. 57% of adolescents reported a very close relationship with their father compared to 71% who reported being very close to their mother. Although few respondents reported low levels of closeness to either parent (indicated by ratings of somewhat, very little, or not at all), a greater proportion of offspring (17%) reported low levels

of closeness to their fathers compared to mothers (10%). In all but the very lowest levels of closeness, offspring were more likely to be closer to their mothers. Parental divorce creates an immense pressure to decrease father-offspring closeness.

*Reflection:* I think the research conducted is true because I feel like dad's are only there for their child financially and not mentally. Adolescence is also the time when kids start to grow apart from their parents but it's always nice to have both parents emotionally available when you're growing up. In the research conducted it was stated that 57% of adolescents report a close relationship to their fathers while 71% report a close relationship to their mothers. That is a 14% difference. I feel like not having a father figure also makes the adolescent more independent since the presence of the one of the most important men in their life was never present when needed. When the father leaves at an earlier stage in a child's life it may not affect them as much because they always had their mother by their side and never needed the dad in the first place. The betrayal of a parent may hurt but it just makes adolescents distance themselves from the situation therefore having a negative bond with their father rather than the mother.

*Quotation:* "Obstacles to closeness created by not being in the home are likely compounded by the fact that fathers are generally less close than mothers prior to divorce" (page 12)

## **Conclusion**

Overall in this research I have found out that adolescents may experience the divorce of their parents more differently than children. Adolescents are much older therefore are more aware of what they are experiencing and feeling in the moment. Since children are younger they tend to be confused and unaware of the deeper understanding of the situation therefore not being

affected as much. Something I learned was that seven to 14 year olds experience depression and/or anxiety during this tragic time which is something to take into consideration. Mental health problems can start at any age to anybody and that is why parents need to know about this research to prevent anything that could get out of hand for their child. These children need someone to talk to and express how they feel. Something I would like to get more into is the income in which the family is at during the time of the divorce since I believe the results may change. Parents should always check up on their kids, take them out to clear their mind, or could even just make them their favorite meal. Every child should have their voice heard.