

# Effects of Divorce

Please Note: this document is provided in your intro. However, due to it being included in the exam, we have included it your chapter.

The effects associated with divorce affect the couple's children in both the short and the long term. After divorce the couple often experience effects including, decreased levels of happiness, change in economic status, and emotional problems. The effects on children include academic, behavioral, and psychological problems. Studies suggest that children from divorced families are more likely to exhibit such behavioral issues than those from non-divorced families.

## Uncontested divorce

An uncontested divorce is a divorce decree that neither party is fighting. Over 40% of American children will experience parental divorce or separation during their childhood. In a study of the effect of relocation after a divorce, researchers found that parents relocating far away from each other (with either both moving or one moving) has a long-term effect on children. Researchers found major differences in divorced families in which one parent moved away from the child; the children (as college students) received less financial support from their parents compared with divorced families in which neither parent moved. The children also felt more distress related to the divorce and did not feel a sense of emotional support from their parents. A parental divorce influences a child's behavior in a negative manner that leads to anger, frustration, and depression. This negative behavior is cast outward in their academic and personal life. Relocating is defined as when a parent moves more than an hour away from their children. Children of divorces where both parents stayed close together did not have these negative effects.

A longitudinal study by Judith Wallerstein reports long-term negative effects of divorce on children.

Linda Waite analyzed the relation between marriage, divorce and happiness using the National Survey of Family and Households and found that unhappily married families who had divorced were no happier than those who had stayed together. One broad-based study also shows that people have an easier time recovering after the death of a parent as opposed to a divorce. This study reported that children who lose a parent are usually able to attain the same level of happiness that they had before the death, whereas children of divorced parents often are not able to attain the same level of happiness that they had before the divorce.

A child affected by divorce at an early age will show effects later in life. They may make premature transitions to adulthood such as leave home or parent their own child early. Recent authors have argued that a major cost to children comes long after: when they attempt to form stable marriages themselves. Parental divorce leads a child to have lower trust in future

relationships. Compared with children of always married parents, children of divorced parents have more positive attitudes towards divorce and less favorable attitudes towards marriage

**The children of divorced parents have also been reported more likely to have behavioral problems than children of married parents and are more likely to suffer abuse than children in intact families.**

Contrary to some of the previous research, those with divorced parents were no more likely than those from intact families to regard divorce positively or to see it as an easy way of solving the problem of a failing marriage. Members of both groups felt that divorce should be avoided, but that it was also a necessary option when a relationship could not be rescued.

A 2015 article updated and confirmed the findings in a 2002 article in *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*. Both articles discuss a variety of health consequences for children of divorced parents.

Studies have claimed that people who have been in divorced families have higher rates of alcoholism and other substance abuse compared to those who have never been divorced. Researchers have also shown that **children of divorced or separated parents:**

- Have higher rates of clinical depression – Family disruption and low socioeconomic status in early childhood increase the long-term risk for major depression
- Seek formal psychiatric care at higher rates.
- In the case of men, are more likely to commit suicide and have lower life expectancies.
- Acute infectious diseases, digestive illnesses, parasitic diseases, respiratory illnesses, and severe injuries.
- Cancer – Married cancer patients are also more likely to recover than divorced ones.
- Stroke.
- Heart problems.
- Rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis.
- Increased risk of arthritis for children later in life