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THE FRESHBLOODS

IN EDUCATION



Children of Divorce

Can you be successful parents
for your child's school career?

THRESHOLDS

IN EDUCATION

Vol. IX No. 1
February, 1983

Children of Divorce

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Helping Children Heal The Wounds Of Divorce

By Susan Sour

Those of us who have ever been in an automobile accident, taken a surprise fall, been prey to attack of debilitating illness know that it takes time and careful attention for proper healing to occur. When an

Divorce is an emotional wound. For children particularly, it can be a sudden and overwhelmingly traumatic occurrence, rendering them helpless and vulnerable.

emotional wound strikes, however, how often do we allow ourselves that same time and attention for good healing to happen?

Divorce is an emotional wound. For children particularly, it can be a sudden and overwhelmingly traumatic occurrence, rendering them helpless and vulnerable. Why sudden? In point of fact, the signs of trouble between parents have been there a long time, but for some children there has never been any other experience of how parents are "supposed to be." For others, a protective blanket of denial has camouflaged the extent of the trouble. They say into their pillows: "When I wake up tomorrow morning, everything's going to be all right," or "When I get home from school, Mom's still going to be there. She wouldn't really leave me," or "Maybe Dad will be in a good mood and they won't fight." Wallerstein and Kelly (1980), reported in their study of children of divorce that most children felt their home life was "sufficiently nurturing and protective" prior to their parents' separation.

The shock of physical separation from a parent may hit children harder than expected even for those children who have been properly prepared. Similarly, children who feel relief at the departure of an abusive or alcoholic parent nonetheless feels sadness once the dust has settled. Their reactions are often mixed as they deal with the death of their dream for a happy, healthy family life with everybody together. This reaction is not unlike that of a person hurt in an automobile accident whose instincts for survival and

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safety may initially preclude their noticing the pain or the bleeding of an open wound.

The analogy continues in the convalescent period. The victim of the accident lies in bed feeling enervated by the pain for awhile, unable to get up and function in a normal way. Questions come to mind: "Why me? Why not? If I had turned the wheel a little faster, could I have prevented it? Why didn't I see that other car coming? What will happen to me? How will I survive? Will I ever be the same again?" And, as the body physically heals, on those days when he feels stronger, he might say, "Why can't I get out of this bed and get on with things? Why do I have to lie here anyway when everybody else is out there moving ahead without me? I feel cheated, I feel angry at the world for holding me prisoner here."

Similarly, as children begin to heal following parental separation, they may feel tremendous throbbing as the emotional make-up of the body strives to right itself and get into working order again. At this time children are often distracted in school, unable to concentrate on lessons and homework. At home they may be withdrawn, sitting unseeing in front of the TV, unwilling or unable to get involved in activities with

This process of convalescence, ranging from denial to sadness to anger seems to take an average of six months to two years for most children, a time when they run the gamut from feeling good one day to depressed the next, then angry yet another day.

friends or family. Or, children may become belligerent, disobedient, hard to handle. Many show their anger at school rather than at home, finding it safer to beat up on classmates or disrupt the flow of organized procedures than to aggravate a parent who might also leave them. They displace onto others their anger at losing the dream, feeling helpless and "ripped off." Some engage in antisocial behavior, particularly at the junior high and high school levels, defying authorities and engaging in vandalism, sexual activity, drug and alcohol abuse.

This process of convalescence, ranging from denial to sadness to anger seems to take an average of six months to two years for most children, a time when they run the gamut from feeling good one day to depressed the next, then angry yet another day. Their feelings run in a zigzag pattern, up and down, back and forth

until finally the pattern becomes a simple wavy line. They have reached the reorientation and acceptance stages: "My parents are divorced and they're okay" and "My parents are divorced and I'm okay."

The helping hands of parents, teachers, and child care workers can make children's passage through this transitional time easier. The wound needs to be opened to the air, feelings need to be talked about, listened to, understood. Protecting a child from the experience of his own sadness and anger may only cause it to go underground. Sooner or later it will surface again, perhaps in disguised forms. Some children pretend for a long time that nothing significant has happened. For them the trigger that touches their hearts might be a parent's remarriage or an event in their own eventual marriage. Relapses are also common, so that a child who has regained mastery of his world at home and at school may be plunged into a regression around significant holidays or before and after visitations with the noncustodial parent. The teacher who understands that a child is going for a visit over the week-end realizes that the child will often be more excitable, harder to manage on Thursday and Friday, then perhaps withdrawn and distracted the following Monday morning. A few words that show the teacher understands can keep the behavior from escalating into a more serious situation involving disciplinary action or the lowering of a child's self-esteem for not producing up to standard.

There are several techniques which I have found useful in working with children of divorce in a school setting. All are designed to speak to the child's feelings but not to overstep the bounds of necessary ethical considerations of a family's right to privacy.

1. The Monologue. As the name implies, the monologue is designed as a one-way conversation. There is no pressure on the child to respond. The adult simply sets the stage, giving permission to the child to have feelings of confusion, anger, helplessness, and the like. No questions are asked, only a few statements are made in an attempt to put the child more at ease. An example might be:

Johnny, you don't seem quite yourself recently. You seem upset about things and I'm concerned about you. Sometimes kids have a hard time concentrating on school when they're worried about things at home. It's awful to feel like you can't make life go the way you want it to.

11. Differentiating Feelings. Adults can help children stay out of the middle of parental conflicts by helping the child to separate themselves from adult-to-adult issues. Parents often make confidants, messengers or spies out of their children, causing in the children tremendous loyalty conflicts. Children need to be encouraged to develop separate, loving relationships with each parent, letting the parents engage in whatever warfare they may choose away from the child. The parent who tries to win complete loyalty of the child at the expense of the other parent will often find that the child may come to resent this

In later years. We can encourage children to say to such parents:

Mom, you may not love Dad any more and Dad, you may not love Mom anymore, but I still need to love you both. I don't want to carry messages back and forth and spy on each other for you. If you have things you want to know, you'll have to ask each other. I don't want to be in the middle any more.

111. Active Listening. Active listening, as described in Thomas Gordon's book, Parent Effectiveness Training (1970), begins with the child making the statement and the adult responding. The adult's job is to reflect back to the child the feeling behind the words the child is saying. An example might be:

Child: I hate week-ends! I don't want to go to my Dad's house! I'd rather stay here with my friends!

Adult: You are upset about the week-end and going to your Dad's. You'll miss being able to play with your friends.

Child: Yeah. It's not that I don't like Dad but I hate having to go back and forth all the time.

Adult: You feel sort of mixed up. You want to see your dad but you feel left out of things here. You wish it didn't have to be this way.

IV. Bibliotherapy. If conversation with a child isn't easy or possible, you might suggest a book for them to read that would be relevant to their situation. Both fiction and nonfiction books are now available for preschoolers through teenagers and adults. It can be reassuring to a young person to read about others who have been through similar experiences. It is also less threatening than having to bare your soul to a person you might not fully trust. The school librarian should be encouraged to have a variety of such books available for students, if they are not already available. Research projects on divorce, single-parenting, remarriage might also be helpful.

School personnel need to select the mode that works best for them as individuals. Not all are at ease talking openly about sensitive feelings, nor is there always time or opportunity to do so in a school setting. Other suggestions as to ways in which schools might be helpful include: 1) citing examples of single-parent families, stepfamilies and other types of families in daily lessons and projects; 2) being careful that invitations to school-related events include options for adult attendance (e.g.: mother-daughter banquets, father-son sports events--many students do not have that particular parent available); 3) eliminate the use of the phrase "broken home"--it promotes a negative stereotype (many single-parent homes are happy and well-adjusted!); 4) offer in-service trainings on the issues of divorce for children to all staff members; 5) include "Children of Divorce" groups run by trained counselors as part of the school pro-

gram; 6) form a team of teachers, administrator, school nurse and counselor to work with a particular child for mutual support and maximum effectiveness; and 7) keep resource materials and agency contacts available to single-parents who may not know how to find them for themselves.

With this kind of understanding and cooperation, schools can make a real difference in determining a healthy healing of the emotional wounds of divorce for children.

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Successful Parenting For Children Of Divorce

By Roberta and John Starkey

Over the years, the comment in the teacher's lounge has changed from, "What do you expect, you know she comes from the South where their schools are poor." Or "We always have trouble with these black kids." To "What do you expect, you know she comes from a broken home. Poor thing! Considering her family life, there just isn't much we can do." This stereotype seemed very unjust. One of the authors' hearing many teachers label children of divorce as "problem children," inspired this research. The authors knew many children of divorce who were doing well in school. They assumed one could find answers, which would assist many single parents who were having difficulty helping their

children achieve their potentials, from parents who had solved or prevented problems with their own children.

So a pilot search for children of divorce who were achieving up to their academic potential and who were normal in their classroom behavior was initiated. They were not hard to locate as there were many of them. Since this was just a pilot study to help the authors form the interview questions and to determine what these successful, single parents or parents in blended families believed was important in their role as single or re-married parents, divorced parents in the author's graduate Educational Psychology and Workshop in Discipline courses and divorced acquaintances, were interviewed. When necessary for verification of achievement or behavior of the children, permission was obtained to check with the teachers.

Hence these interviews were not with "the normal population" nor were they randomly selected. The 25 parents interviewed were female; all except two had at

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least 2 years of college; all single parents were employed with a higher income than the average single woman earns; many were teachers; all had been divorced 4 or more years.

The question, "What was your most pressing and troublesome problem?" invariably produced the answer, "Money."

Hopefully, the information which follows may provide suggestions for problem solving and prevention of problems for other divorced parents.

Money

The question, "What was your most pressing and troublesome problem?" invariably produced the answer, "Money." Several positive suggestions for solving or accepting this problem were offered.

Although at first consideration, money may seem unrelated to school achievement and behavior, all of the mothers believed that solving this problem was closely related to both their happiness and that of the children. Many of the children considered the downgrading of their financial situation unfair and blamed their mother or father for placing them in this situation. When younger children were involved, explaining why they could no longer buy many articles, which they had taken for granted, was difficult. It was very difficult not to become depressed as the woman blamed herself for denying her children financial advantages which they had previously enjoyed. So solving this problem either by increasing the income or achieving contentment or at least acceptance of the new status was necessary.

Most newly divorced women were dumbfounded with the unexpected problem of continuing services and credit. More recently divorced women have found this problem less severe than it was seven or more years ago, before the equal credit and equal treatment regulations were enacted. However, it was a problem for each person interviewed. The surprise came when employed women who had been paying the bills, and were not moving from the home in which they had lived for several years, requested the utility companies to change the billing to their names. Requests for a large deposit were frequent; often the companies insisted on an installation fee.

Direct confrontation with the business manager with evidence of employment and statements of the injustice of the requirements sufficed for most. However, several had written letters to the editors, then a copy was taken to the business managers with the statement that this letter would be mailed if the fee or deposit were charged. Direct confrontation solved this problem for most of the single women.

Appliances, auto and plumbing breakdowns seemed

immediate. Most of the newly divorced women had heard about how much more women were charged for the same service than were men. (Changing Times had published research documenting this fact.) In the beginning, the

All had become knowledgeable enough to talk to service personnel in such a manner that there was no doubt about their knowing approximately what was wrong and the appropriate cost for the service.

solution most often used to solve this problem was having the father, or other male relative or friend, contact the servicemen. Each realized that this was not a permanent nor satisfactory solution. Each woman had approached the problem by becoming more knowledgeable. Several had enrolled in small appliance repair and auto repair courses at junior colleges, others had depended on father or friends to teach them. Many had become self-sufficient with minor and sometimes major repairs. One even installed a long cord on the telephone so her father could give instructions and even hear the car running as she repaired the auto. It had been over a year since calling Dad was necessary.

All had become knowledgeable enough to talk to service personnel in such a manner that there was no doubt about their knowing approximately what was wrong and the appropriate cost for the service. Many collected billings from married friends, detailing the amount paid for similar work. All learned to request an estimate before contracting for the repair. If it were out of line, the billings from friends were produced as they questioned the difference in proposed charges.

These women, who were not working when first divorced, had all surveyed their saleable assets. This limited sample of divorced women had been more fortunate than the average newly divorced woman, because either the parents, or infrequently, the ex-husband of the woman had provided a financial cushion for the transition from housewife to provider for the family.

Several women had reluctantly accepted the hospitality of their parents' homes while re-training or seeking employment. The psychological acceptance of this situation enabled them to make the period brief and to accept the help offered in a positive manner. Resentment toward the parents and oneself had to be fought. Winning this battle was a necessary step, thus enabling them to direct their energies toward becoming employable while giving the children the support which they desperately needed in their emotional upheaval.

Both those who were employed and those who were "just homemakers" emphasized the need to survey the job opportunities in the community where they expected to live as well as exploring the possibility of moving to a location which would provide more positions. It was most difficult for them to consider alternative job descriptions. However, modification of previous con-

cepts of what they could do were necessary to allow them to enter more profitable occupations. Non-traditional roles for women also had to be considered as these usually paid more.

Many of the women interviewed had become teachers or were already teachers, which is a traditional women's profession. As evidenced by their being in the authors' classes, they were obtaining the Master's degree for rapid advancement on the salary scale as well as to become better teachers.

Most emphasized depending on alimony was a mistake. Only two had regularly received the allotted payments without confrontations. Perhaps caring fathers should consider the implications of poverty or a drastic decrease in living standards for their children. Although solving this problem took as many directions as there were interviewees, emotional upset solved none of them. Continued fighting often prevented the mother from reaching her own potentials and maintaining emotional stability. Both were necessary in her dual role of mother and provider.

Open and honest communication with the children about the financial situation had been maintained by all of the mothers if the child were over four or five years of age. Many of the children (both boys and girls) had taken paper routes or other jobs as they became part of the solution. Realization of the reality of the situation instead of maintaining resentment for the husband was a battle fought and won by each of the women interviewed.

At the secondary level, Mother and the youths had had to determine how much work was possible without interfering with the youth's academic progress or physical strain.

Although seldom voiced, one thing the interviewer observed in these women was a determination to accomplish and a belief in themselves instead of resentment and blaming of others.

School Achievement

A variety of answers were given to the question, "How did you help your child succeed in school?" Each mother knew other children of divorce who soon lagged behind their classmates. With a concern that this not

Each had worked with the teacher to determine if there were any weak areas in their child's performance.

happen to their children, every one of these women supervised their children's homework and continually checked with the schools to determine the child's progress. Each had worked with the teacher to determine if there were any weak areas in their child's performance. From the teacher and/or the shelf of the grocery store, they had obtained materials for strengthening the student's skills.

Just finding time to call the teacher(s) presented a problem to all working women. Usually the mother was

not employed where she could just take off work or even make a call during working hours. She was reluctant to call the teacher at home. Usually the mother's and teacher's lunch hours were simultaneous, but where was there a telephone private enough for making the call? Sometimes a pay telephone was used, others were able to use the company telephone, others wrote letters asking for a conference time. This first step, for a working mother outside of the teaching field, was usually difficult and easily put off until a later time. Each woman emphasized contacting the school was very important. Some had waited until the child was in real trouble before contacting the teacher, which made the

Most mothers found teachers were very cooperative in giving special support to their children when made aware of the home situation.

problems much more difficult to solve. The conference required interest both on the part of the mother and the teacher. Most mothers had found the teachers cooperative in arranging a time; however, some were not willing to make a special effort. Those mothers who were employed close enough for either a before work or lunch hour appointment were fortunate. In most instances both the teacher and mother compromised in order to provide time for the appointment. Each mother emphasized the importance of communicating with the teacher even if the teacher assured her that everything was fine. Establishing rapport, along with assuring the teacher of parental interest, was very important.

Believing junior high or secondary students need help in maintaining their previous school performance was not easily realized by any of the parents. Because making or keeping appointments with all of the teachers would be a formidable task, most mothers had sought the appointment with the school counselor. Usually the counselors were willing to accommodate the time schedule of the newly divorced parent. After becoming aware of the situation, most counselors contacted the teachers to determine if there had been any decline in performance of the students and to convey the other's interest.

Most teachers realize that many children fall behind in their academic work prior to the divorce and following the decree. Emotional upheaval prevents concentration. Most mothers found teachers were very cooperative in giving special support to their children when made aware of the home situation. Of course, time imposes a limit on what each teacher can do for individual children.

For the elementary child, reading and math are the prime areas of concern. Positive methods of helping with reading were given by several of the mothers. No one gave suggestions for helping with math, hence one of the authors, who has been a secondary math teacher, has some suggestions for achieving up to grade level in math.

Some of their suggestions follow. First, reading provides a natural avenue of quiet communication and companionship. Some teachers will encourage the children to take the readers home for practice, others either discourage or disallow taking readers home. Also, remember reading is the best way to become proficient in reading. For reading to be helpful, it must be either at the instructional or recreational level. This means, when a child reads the page, (s)he should not miss more than 5-10% of the words. If more are missed, seek an easier book.

Many teachers will loan supplementary readers, at the correct reading level. Trade books from the public or school library are another source of reading materials. Most of the mothers at every level had built their children's libraries by purchasing books and workbooks at garage sales.

Consult with the teacher, or experiment to determine if silent reading (grades three and above), oral reading or oral reading as you and the child take turns provides the most progress and satisfaction for the child.

If your child is just acquiring the skill of reading, answer the following question, "Do you know the word attack skills of phonics, using the context, dividing words, etc., used by most teachers in teaching children to read?" If you find yourself unprepared, pick up one of the word attack skill books at the grocery. Both you and your child may gain these skills together. Even though it takes more time to help the child develop word attack skills than it does to just tell him/her the word, in the long run this will be more profitable and save time. This does not imply that it is incorrect to just tell the child a word when (s)he is reading for pleasure or you are trying to help him/her acquire this attitude, or even when you are just too busy to take the time (unless this happens too often).

Therefore, anything which encourages the child to hope the separation is temporary and can be aborted, only prolongs the period of rejection thus preventing final acceptance of the situation and of themselves as children of divorce.

Many of the Mothers found their best time for helping the young children was while the mother was preparing supper. The child or children would sit at the table and read or practice their skill while mother cooked. Incidental help was given along with the idea that school work was important. Just the fact that you are interested in what they are doing is important. Actually many will need no greater help than just being near you and encouraging words.

Other Mothers found they were more refreshed to begin the household chores after 30 minutes of sitting and resting as they supervised lessons or shared

reading time with the children.

Just a word of caution about choosing trade books. Often, someone suggested books about children of divorce as possible therapy. This is an excellent idea, however, first the mother should read the book. Many authors follow the theme of disaster which brings the parents back together. These stories are to be avoided because they may delay the child's acceptance of the divorce. Denial and refusal to admit the situation are common stages toward emotional stability. Therefore, anything which encourages the child to hope the separation is temporary and can be aborted, only prolongs the period of rejection thus preventing final acceptance of the situation and of themselves as children of divorce.

Reading for pleasure at bedtime is a method of solving two problems-reading improvement and an unwillingness of going to bed. Allowing the child to read in bed for 30 minutes or so often provides him/her with a relaxing time which helps induce sleep. Many of the mothers reported this practice had eliminated one battle.

Math seems to be the most vulnerable of the subjects either in elementary or secondary school. When one considers the sequence of mathematics, this is easily understood. Whether it is adding, then subtracting, or proving theorems in geometry, one computation is based upon knowing and understanding the computations which preceded it. Thus, if the child was very concerned about his family situation during the time the class was learning multiplication, even though (s)he had regained his/her interest in math, he is lost in trying to divide.

Most parents were unable to protect their children from the disaster of quarreling and unrest prior to the divorce, so most of the time the child had begun to deteriorate academically before the divorce. Although the last thing a parent feels like doing when divorce is looming on the horizon, if you can manage it with patience, begin working with the child and his/her math early. Just checking, to determine that each lesson is learned, will allow the student to feel your interest and help him/her not fall behind.

At the elementary ages, acquire practice books from the grocery or extra work sheets from the school so you can help your child "keep up."

At the secondary level, maintain an interest in their work. Learning or reviewing along with the student, should allow you to function as a teacher and helper during the stressful time of the divorce and during the emotional adjustment which follows. Math requires concentration and unlike reading seldom can act as an escape.

History, science, government etc., can be "read" without thinking about the contents. If your student is having trouble in these subjects, have him/her read a paragraph to him/herself, then cover it with his/her hand as s(he) is reading and demand that meaning be extracted from the printed page. (One author even requires this of her college students who are having

difficulty on tests in educational psychology!)

To all of the mothers, the job, plus all of the homemaking and mothering requirements, seemed formidable without spending extra time "doing the school's work." Yet it soon became a time of companionship and closeness. That "quality time," which all researchers of working mother's children have found essential in obtaining positive results from the employment of the mother instead of negative effects, was often found in the act of showing interest in the child's homework.

Communication

Communication was listed as one of the most important factors in obtaining well adjusted children. Prior to the divorce, their own emotional stress, had a great tendency to draw the parents into themselves. Although it was a supreme effort to think of others when they were so angry and hurt, most mothers had tried to give their children time and personal attention. Loving communication from both parents helped the children understand and accept the situation. Those parents who had not provided this communication cushion for their children in the early stages and during the divorce, had experienced more problems than had those who had offered the early communication support.

All of the parents stressed the importance of open communication of both information and feelings. All of the mothers had established more of an adult to adult conversation with their children, even five year olds, than is normally established in homes. Most found communication eased many difficult situations. Yet all felt they were able to maintain and/or develop the authority as the person in charge. When controlling decisions were necessary, this was clearly stated to the children or youths. When there was a choice or alternative solution, it was discussed; however, when there was only one answer because of financial concerns, moral obligation, acceptable behavior, etc., the mother carefully explained the situation while making it clear how she or the child was to behave.

Discipline

Each mother was asked how she had obtained acceptable discipline in the single parent home. Many of the mothers in the "Workshop on Discipline" were surprised to learn they had been practicing PET (Parent Effectiveness Training) communication to solve discipline problems even when they had never heard of the method. A brief summary of the method follows. Where there is a conflict, the one whom it is bothering sends an "I" message. An "I" message is one which states how you feel about the situation or how another's action makes you feel. This message is sent without condemning the other person. Thus, the child can learn what his behavior is doing to his/her mother. Because many children of divorce become very protective of the remaining parent, this often causes the child to consider what his actions are doing to his/her loved one. If he

cares, then he can change without feeling terrible or having to defend his actions. If (s)he believes what (s)he is doing is right or justified, then (s)he can usually explain his/her actions without becoming angry and resentful. Sometimes when the parent understands the action from the child's point of view, it becomes acceptable, other times the child begins to understand why his/her action is unacceptable to the parent.

Explaining the problem to a caring person, who listens well, often allows an individual to more fully see both the causes of the problem and enumerate solutions.

The other portion of this method is used when the child or parent has a problem concerning their own action or feeling. This solution is based on the idea that when a person has carefully explained his/her problem, then (s)he can likely begin to see a solution. Explaining the problem to a caring person, who listens well, often allows an individual to more fully see both the causes of the problem and enumerate solutions. So when one member of the family is troubled, then the second party listens very carefully as the person with the problem explains what is bothering him/her.

This is very difficult for most caring adults as they want to lecture, tell the youth how (s)he should act, etc. However, many have found that when the child or parent has fully explained his/her problem to a caring individual, then it falls into perspective; thus the person with the problem begins to understand how it can be solved. Careful, interested listening was important to all of the mothers interviewed. Many had to learn the art of really listening to their children.

Summary

In summary, these successful single or re-married parents had found open communication a foundation stone for beginning the solutions to their own problems and their children's problems. Most had, and the rest wished they had, become concerned about the effect of the stress of the arguments on their children's concentration on school work. Thus, they found early communication with the teachers, with a follow through of helping the children with their work, was important and helpful. Most children needed extra academic help during the stressful times. Reading together provided a calming period for all.



Family Change: What The Counselor Can Do

By Mary Farnum

The American family in general, the single-parent family in particular, is in a transitional stage. The nuclear family--mother, father and children all living under one roof, is no longer the only recognized family pattern. Among school-age children one will find children with: a deceased parent, divorced parents, never married parents, parents who are married but live in different communities (sometimes states apart), and with a single parent (natural or adoptive) who has never married. In addition, we now acknowledge that traditional family interactions are greatly affected by the increase in dual working parents and parents who live together but in a state of psychological divorce. For educators who work daily with the children from these families the impact is great. How does one address the parent who comes in for a conference? Who is called in an emergency? Are these children-at-risk who need special treatment; should new child behaviors be anticipated? For counselors who have traditionally worked in a one to one crisis counseling model, do these changes mean that their case loads will be filled only with children from nontraditional family settings seeking therapy?

Concerned school personnel have been reacting with a variety of approaches that have generally concentrated on the inferred crises that families are experiencing. The primary response has been to set up group counseling sessions for divorced and single parents and their children, and although this is beneficial to a few, it does not bring together the full resources of the educational system in helping children with the changes they are experiencing, nor does it involve the counselor in the total school program.

In order to maximize our efforts in the schools, it is necessary to determine the stresses placed on the members of non-traditional families with a special emphasis on eliminating the stereotypical thinking that influences our attitudes and behaviors concerning the children.

What Are the Needs?

In a national survey of 1,200 single parents from 47 states, respondents were asked to identify the issues that concerned them when dealing with the public schools (Clay, 1981). Among their concerns were: 1)

the scheduling of parent activities in the school which is usually during the day when parents are at work, and further, most contact with the school seems problem oriented; 2) the school seldom communicates with the noncustodial parent; 3) curriculum materials show only the two parent family environment as "normal"; 4) parents' perceptions are that school personnel assume that any problem the child has is related to the family status; 5) planned social events at the school frequently are designed for only mothers or only fathers which leaves out the child who does not have that particular parent available.

Burgess (1970), in a study on the sociological needs of single-parent families, defines other inherent problems that affect the children. She states that through the attitudes and behaviors of society these

In terms of the children in non-traditional families, the consequences of the changed economic status of the family appears to be crucial.

families are cut off from the mainstream of a former socio-economic way of life. Mothers and children in these families feel that society does not value them. Such impressions are substantiated by society's generalizations of the single-parent home as unstable, undesirable, poor, or broken. The assumption is that one parent cannot adequately perform a role which society allocates to two. Children from these families are certainly not immune to the underlying message that there is something "wrong" with the way they live. Often their response is to withdraw from in-school discussions about family life or to give untrue information concerning their families so that they will not appear different.

In terms of the children in non-traditional families, the consequences of the changed economic status of the family appears to be crucial. Few single-parent families have available the same financial resources as dual-parent families. Often these families may be required to move from the familiar neighborhood making it necessary for children to change schools and peer groups at a time of stress. If they do stay in the same vicinity, the consequence of family change may require that the children do not have the same monetary resources for attending school camping

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programs, field trips or other school related activities.

In all, the ability to adjust appears to be a primary demand on the children living in nontraditional families. During what may be a time of loss to the child, and while the family is in a state of flux, the school can become the stabilizing factor. While all else is changing, an open, caring environment in a school may provide the reassurances that children need in order to avoid cognitive developmental losses and to formulate positive ways of looking at their present family life style.

Counselor Action Plans

One of the functions of a counselor is to coordinate the efforts of school personnel in providing a positive school environment for all children. In this spirit the counselor can take the lead in establishing a preventive program that is for all children whether or not they are currently experiencing family change.

Inservicing school personnel on changing family patterns is one positive approach. An important aspect of such a workshop would be to help teachers become aware of their own attitudes and assumptions about new family patterns.

This would allow school personnel to focus on the positive aspects of family life and help children develop coping skills for many kinds of change and loss. The interventions would respond to many of the identified needs of single-parent families but would do so in a manner beneficial to all children.

Inservicing school personnel on changing family patterns is one positive approach. An important aspect of such a workshop would be to help teachers become aware of their own attitudes and assumptions about new family patterns. Parents could be asked to serve on a panel, and the resulting dialogue between parents and educators could help schools establish individual programs since it should not be assumed that the needs of the non-traditional family are the same everywhere.

In developing the inservice program counselors would be able to sensitize teachers to the concept of overcoming loss and change as a process and not as a permanent affliction. Using the ideas of Kubler-Ross, teachers can learn that the experience of loss and separation generally progresses through stages that are more easily transversed if one is aware of them.

The workshop is also a time for the counselor to identify possible changes in behavior that could indicate a crisis situation. School personnel should be helped to see that a crisis may cause pain, but with appropriate support the crisis may also be used to encourage new growth and insights in the children. In addition, the counselor should stress the strengths of children in single-parent homes. As identified by Weiss (1979) these include a sense of self-reliance and

responsibility, skills in decision-making, closer parent-child relationships, and early maturation.

Finally, the inservice should address the rights of the noncustodial parents. Teachers should be knowledgeable about their school code and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. Every effort should be made to send copies of report cards and school activities notices to the non-custodial parent. The workshop provides a setting for the discussion of how best to do this. The counselor may also develop for preview at this time a supplement to the school's enrollment form (Figure 1).

Curriculum materials are another source of positive intervention. Text books should be reviewed to assure that a variety of family styles is portrayed.

Figure 1. Single Parent Information Form

Our school policy is one of understanding your special needs and of assisting you and your children. In order that we may do so, we request that you complete the following questions if they apply to your family.

Other adults who live in your home and who may be contacted regarding the child.

Name Relationship (optional)

Name Relationship (optional)

To which of these individuals, if any, may the school release the child?

Name Name

Do you consent to the non-custodial parent being informed of the child's school behavior and academic standing?

____ yes _____ no

Parent's signature

Thank you for this additional information. We hope that it will enhance the school's relationship with you and your child.

Since family change is important to everyone at some time in their lives, children should be encouraged to discuss family structure and their feelings about family changes. Care should be taken that family stereotypes are not developed and that through classroom discussion children and teachers can expand the

definition of family to one based on the nurturance and support provided by any of the people who surround the child. Given this opportunity to develop a new kind of family tree children can include neighbors, babysitters, and friends as opposed to only biological relatives.

The counselor can participate in classroom guidance activities that will teach problem-solving skills, a discussion of coping mechanisms, and a variety of self-concept activities. Children will have the opportunity to discuss, with the counselor's guidance, both the positive and negative aspects of family change. Crucial to all of these interactions is the leader's commitment to a discussion of family life in general so that no individual child feels singled out.

Bibliotherapy is a counseling tool that encourages persons to read selected materials as a stimulant to attitudinal change through identification with the character, catharsis, and intellectual and emotional insight. In involving the entire school in learning about changing family life styles the counselor can work with the school librarian in selecting books that reflect positive views of non-traditional families. Chaudoir (1979) found in her review of single-parent families in children's literature that the image presented most commonly is not favorable. Parents are seen as child abusers who are not involved in school or community, and children are portrayed as lonely manipulators engaged in extreme acts to reconcile parents. Therefore, it is important that adults read with a discerning eye all materials they recommend to children. Chaudoir's work contains an annotated list of worthwhile books, and *Parent's Without Partners* also has available a collection of approved books. For maximum effectiveness the counselor, with the teacher or librarian, should discuss the books in small groups open to all children.

Counseling for groups or individuals should be made available to those children and parents who are identified as having family problems. For some families, support groups offer a place to work through concerns, anxieties, and guilt about the family pattern in which they are involved. Parent groups, run in the evening, and open to all who express a need, may include dual working parents as well as single parents, with one result being an opportunity for both groups to see the commonalities of their stress as well as the differences. Increased understanding such as this may eventually help in an over-all societal change of attitude toward non-traditional families.

Children's counseling, either individually or in groups, can take place during the school day. The counselor will encourage the children to talk about their feelings and may include some training in refuting irrational beliefs pertaining to their families.

Additionally, the counselor may choose to develop a peer counseling program so the children with

immediate concerns may discuss their feelings with other children who have experienced similar problems but are at different stages in the resolution of those problems.

Through the development of programs such as those discussed above, with the counselor acting as an advocate for families in a state of change and promoting a healthier school environment for all children, the school can become an even stronger place of acceptance and support for children.

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ANNOUNCING

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Counseling and Computers in Education

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The Mingled Family: A Self Study

By Marion Hall

The mingled family comes into being when two or more families join together to become one. Such a family can solve two of the most pressing problems a divorced mother faces...adequate economic resources and reliable care for their child or children while she is working at a job to support them.

My divorced niece with her nine year old daughter, along with my grown son and I have lived in such an arrangement for three years. Elaine (my niece) and John (my son) are both soldiers. John is currently stationed in Germany; Elaine will soon be serving in Korea. However, both have permanent duty stations at Ft. Bliss (El Paso, Texas), where we plan to live permanently. Krissy, the nine-year-old daughter, is in the fourth grade at a near-by elementary school. I am a former school teacher who is currently unable to teach due to health reasons. The four of us became a mingled family because 1) Elaine needed a reliable baby-sitter if she were to keep her daughter with her and 2) It was economically advantageous for all of us.

Elaine is in a bomb disposal unit. Her position involves traveling all over the United States protecting Americans and foreign dignitaries from bombs, as well as rendering safe explosive devices and materials for the army and civilian police force for thirty-nine counties in West Texas along with all of New Mexico. With these assignments, she is usually gone from home once or twice a month, frequently works late, and is subject to being called out at odd hours on incidents.

Before we moved in together, Elaine had hired a series of baby-sitters. All of them had proven to be unsatisfactory because of lack of consistency in child-rearing philosophy, availability on short notices, or reluctance to become live-in baby sitters while Elaine was on TDY (off base duty). Having to rely on so many sitters wasn't giving Krissy the emotional stability she needed. Also, Elaine was hard pressed to pay for extensive baby-sitting. Elaine realized the necessity of having a reliable and dependable live-in sitter who would rear Krissy in the manner Elaine desired.

Elaine wanted someone who would love Krissy and would do what was best for Krissy, not necessarily what was expedient or easiest to do at the moment. Above all, she wanted somebody to be around all the time who would give Krissy a sense of family. This person must

have a similar child-rearing philosophy to her own.

Elaine decided even if I didn't quite have the angel wings which the above paragraphs would indicate, that I would do until a real angel came along. Hence, she asked me to come live with her and help rear

A mingled family will not survive if all members do not benefit from the arrangement.

Krissy. After thinking it over and consulting John, I said I would give it a six months trial. At the end of that time period, we would individually and collectively decide if we wanted to continue the arrangement. John would live with us.

A mingled family will not survive if all members do not benefit from the arrangement. John and I, as well as Elaine and Krissy, were able to profit financially from the newly mingled family plan as we all improved our individual life-styles.

John dislikes living in a barrack. For him the arrangement meant a more appealing life style. I am financially dependent upon him, so it is easier for him to support both of us when we are living in the same household. It is even easier yet if someone else is paying half of the bills. Both he and Elaine suddenly had the advantages of living in a two income household. For us it meant living at slightly above the national median income level for a family of four plus the additional army benefits of free medical and dental care along with commissary, post exchange and recreational facilities privileges.

To make a long story short, after six months we decided that we got along well enough to make the arrangement permanent. We bought a jointly owned home and have lived relatively happily ever after. This is how we did it:

Fairness in the Division of Labor

Because it is a new concept, a mingled family has the advantage, over a nuclear family, in that there are no established societal expectations or stereotypes as to the jobs each member should do. The family makes up the rules to fit their own particular needs and abilities.

Although the division of labor certainly would not

Marion Hall was a university professor; she is now a homemaker.

be the same with another family as with our family, this is the way we divided it.

I do the major cooking during the week. We all pitch in and do the finishing touches if any are needed. On the week-ends, we all share equally in the cooking. I do the grocery shopping.

Each person is responsible for his/her own bedroom. The community living areas (living room, dining area, kitchen, sun room, and one of the baths) are given a good cleaning on the week-ends. Not one of us particularly likes to clean house, so we each do the jobs we least object to and all work until the job is finished.

Elaine and John mow the lawn, spray the fruit trees, prune trees, roto-till the garden and, in general, do the heavy yard work. I plant and take care of the vegetable garden and flower beds. Krissy keeps the fruits, nuts and vegetables picked; she also keeps the entire yard watered.

I wash all the clothes. Krissy hangs everything

Priorities have to be established and decisions made on how mutually agreed upon goals are to be achieved.

on the clothes lines and brings them into the house. Everyone sorts then puts away his/her own things. Krissy does the linens. Each person is responsible for either ironing or taking to a commercial laundry or dry cleaner his or her uniforms and personal clothes.

Fairness of the Financial Burden

Difficulties can arise over how the money is to be spent. We have found the best budget for us is to pay the household bills first, systematically put money into a saving account for emergencies or big bills, then allocate each person a certain amount for personal and "unaccountable" expenses.

Priorities have to be established and decisions made on how mutually agreed upon goals are to be achieved. Plans and budgets have to be revised when circumstances are changed or plans don't work. The psychological needs of everyone have to be taken into account. One person's "extravagances" may be another's "necessities." When possible, all these "necessities" have to be satisfied. In other words, deciding how to budget the money in a mingled family is difficult, but probably not as difficult as budgeting in a nuclear family. In a marriage, budgetary problems often result from pre-conceived role conflicts. Here, all can enter as equal adults. As in a two parent family, we find that the check book balances better and the bills are paid more promptly if one person (in our case, me) is in charge of the financial affairs of the household.

Respect Each Other as Equals

I am the mother of one of my house-mates (John) and the aunt of another (Elaine). To further compli-

cate matters, after a life-time of financially supporting my son, our roles were reversed. We had to make the adjustment from how you behave in an authority-figure with a submissive-child relationship to how you behave with equals. Much of the transition had already been made because I have conscientiously tried to treat my children and nieces, nephews too, as adults since their 18th birthdays. Nevertheless, a residual of the old behavior pattern still exists and conscious effort has to be made on everyone's part to create the new atmosphere. We realized that resentment would soon set in if any of the adults tried to be THE head of the household. It drives survey takers batty, but we do have THREE heads of the household. If decisions have to be made, they are made jointly.

Adjusting to be equals is a two-way street. Both junior and senior members have to start looking upon each other as persons and not as a stereotype of "this is the way mothers, aunts, sons, or nieces should act." For example, John and Elaine occasionally went dancing at a Western nightclub. One day, I said something to the effect that I'd like to go with them sometimes. Never had it occurred to either of them that I, a middle-aged mother, liked that type of night life also.

Not everyone can adapt to living in a mingled family setting. You must be flexible enough to let other people be themselves without trying to dominate. The concept calls for self-honesty and acceptance of others.

Communicating with Each Other

Although we had been friends before we moved in together, the close association of family living required that we learn to communicate better. We had to learn to impart information and not assume that our house mates already knew about some particular personality trait, quirk or need we had. We had to learn to

We all are, or at least we try to be, polite and considerate of each other, but we had to learn to ask if those things we were being polite and considerate

say such things as, "I'm very particular about my personal things in my bedroom. Don't bother them," or "I've got the pots, pans, and mixing bowls arranged so I can find them when I need them. Please, put them back in the same place when you use or wash them."

We all are, or at least we try to be, polite and considerate of each other, but we had to learn to ask if those things we were being polite and considerate about were really what the other person wanted. As an example, Elaine dislikes driving long distances; however, she had been doing it, out of consideration for me, when we took long trips together. Although she had known me all of her life, she didn't realize that I like to drive. We had to learn to tell each other those little things which we just assumed everybody

knew about us.

We've had to learn to discuss things which are really bothering us instead of letting the resentment build and grow into a really sticky situation. Most of the time we have found that cooperation, changes in behavior, etc., are given if it is KNOWN that the other person wants it.

If we have one of these sticky situations, we try to wait to discuss it until we are all relaxed and no one is in a bad mood, feeling badly physically, or is worried about something else. Then we try to tell the other person rationally and calmly what we feel is wrong, i.e., "You like dinner ready to be served when you first come home from work, but I don't know if you are going to be late or not. If I have dinner ready at 4:30 and you don't come home until 6:00, it becomes cold. Then I always feel that I've gone to a lot of trouble for nothing. Would you please phone me if you're going to be late, so I will know when to begin frying the chicken?"

Strong Incentive to Make the Relationship Succeed

Living together in a mingled family has solved certain problems for each of us. Knowing this fact has furnished the incentive for all of us to work harder at making the relationship a success.

Summary

Being a part of a mingled family solves two of the most pressing problems a single parent faces...that of increasing her financial resources so her family doesn't have to live at the poverty level and reliable care for her child or children while she is working to support them.

In order for a mingled family to succeed, there must be 1) fairness in the division of labor and financial burdens, 2) respect for each member of the mingled family, 3) communication among the participants, and 4) a strong incentive among all the members of the arrangement to make it work.



The Effect Of Divorce On The Behavior, Self-Concept And Academic Achievement Of Children

By Dorothy Westcott

According to the Bureau of the Census, more than 18% of the nation's school children are now living in a single-parent home. Furthermore, the bureau projects that 48% of all children born in 1980 will live "a considerable time" with only one parent before they reach the age of 18 (Brown, 1980). Single-parent homes are created not only by divorce but also by the death of spouses and the birth of children to unwed mothers. However, according to Brown, by far the greatest number of single-parent families are the consequence of divorce.

Millions of school-age children, because of separation or divorce, live with one parent, usually

the mother. This paper surveys the research which has been done regarding the effect that divorce or father-absence has on the behavior, self-concept, and academic achievement of these children.

Behavior Patterns

One of the major studies on the effect of divorce on children was begun in 1970. Called the "Children of Divorce Project" by Kelly and Wallerstein (1976), it began as an attempt to find out how children feel about their parents' divorce by going to the children themselves. No one knew how to help children cope with the stress of divorce or what kind of behavior to expect of them. Sixty families agreed to cooperate in the unique study. Caucasian families represented 92% of the sample, 3% were black, and the remaining 5% interracial marriages included Oriental and Chicano parents. The 131 youngsters in these families were felt to be pro-

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gressing normally at home and at school at the time of the divorce. The parents, the children, and their teachers were all interviewed. The researchers relied both on the interviews and on their own observations.

Kelly and Wallerstein reported a whole range of symptoms and behaviors, some of them alarming, in younger children. Many exhibited severe anxieties. Others experienced troubled sleep, and still others became aggressive and started to eat compulsively. The seven and eight-year-olds exhibited a pervasive sadness as well as fear and anxiety. Many became increasingly possessive and had increased difficulties in sharing with their classmates and siblings. The researchers also reported that many boys, feeling anger at their situation, expressed it toward teachers and friends in outbursts of temper. Teachers reported that these children showed a striking change in behavior at school. For others, school either provided a source of gratification or else interest was lost in it completely.

After the one year follow-up, Kelly and Wallerstein concluded that the initial behavioral responses of these children had diminished in intensity. Fifty percent had either improved their overall level of psychological functioning or had maintained their previous developmental strides. About 23% were judged to be worse.

Later latency children, ages nine to ten, were found by Wallerstein and Kelly (1976) to be ashamed of their parents and their behaviors, and many lied loyally to cover these up. Many also felt intense anger. This was expressed by a rise in temper tantrums, scolding, demandingness, and in dictatorial attitudes. New behaviors of petty stealing and lying made their appearance in this age group around the time of the family disruption.

In about half of the children in this age group, according to Wallerstein and Kelly, the disequilibrium had subsided at the first follow-up one year later. By contrast, the other half gave evidence of consolidation in the troubled and depressed behavior patterns with

The five-year follow-up of the "Children of Divorce Project" showed that roughly 34% of the youngsters were doing well psychologically, coping competently, and showing appropriate behavior patterns.

even more distress than initially. Many of these youngsters exhibited frequent school and peer difficulties. Phobic reactions, delinquent behavior such as truancy and petty thievery remained unchanged, and some children who had become isolated and withdrawn were even more so.

The five-year follow-up of the "Children of Divorce Project" showed that roughly 34% of the youngsters were doing well psychologically, coping competently, and showing appropriate behavior patterns (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). About 29% of the children

were showing reasonably appropriate social behavior and judgements in their relationships with adults and other children. However, many in this group still showed considerable anger. This took up a considerable portion of their attention and energy and sometimes hampered the full development of their potential. The final third of these children were consciously and intensely unhappy and dissatisfied with their life in the post-divorce family and many showed moderate to severe depression. The children's anger was at times defensive; at other times it took the form of temper outbursts or delinquent behavior, such as drug involvement or stealing.

In this long-term study the researchers reported that, among the children, although some improved and others worsened, the percentages remained almost stable since the time of the divorce. Wallerstein and Kelly stated:

Unfortunately, it seems clear that the divorced family is, in many ways, less adaptive economically, socially, and psychologically to the raising of children than the two-parent family, or at least the two-adult family. This does not mean that it cannot be done. But the fact remains that the divorced family in which the burden falls entirely or mostly on one parent is more vulnerable to stress, has more limited economic and psychological reserves, and lacks the supporting or buffering presence of another adult for the expected and unexpected crises of life.

The researchers concluded that the nature of the outcomes was related to the nature of the post-divorce family structure, including the amount of sustained disequilibrium, the changing tensions and gratifications of the child-parent relationship, and the interaction over time of these factors with the child's developmental needs and personality structure.

Brown (1980) reported on a study designed to compare the functioning of one-parent and two-parent children in school. Eleven elementary schools in nine states and four high schools in three states with a total enrollment of 8,556 pupils were involved in the study. Such items as truancy, discipline problems, suspensions, expulsions, tardiness, and absenteeism were used to compare the behavior of children from two-parent families with those living with a single parent. The results showed that the incidence of absenteeism and tardiness in elementary school by students from one-parent families was excessive when compared with the other group. These children were also suspended twice as often in the elementary grades. Brown also found that students from two-parent homes contributed about 44% of the truancy in the elementary grades, while students from one-parent homes caused about 56%. Finally, the research found that pupils living with one parent created more than their share of discipline problems at all school levels.

A study of 165 children in grades three through six, half of whom had parents who were separated or divorced, was conducted by Hammond (1979). The

students were attending two neighboring elementary schools in a lower-middle to middle-class community in Michigan. Children from intact homes were matched with youngsters from divorced families for grade level, sex, and teacher. Teachers provided information and completed the Walker Problem Behavior Identification Checklist (WPBIC) for each student in the classes participating in the study. The results showed no significant differences in withdrawal or peer relations of children from divorced and intact families. Teachers did, however, rate boys of divorced families significantly higher in school behavioral problems, such as acting-out and distractibility, than boys of two-parent families. The girls in the study showed no significant differences.

LeCorgne and Laosa (1976) studied the effect of

Father-present boys and father-present girls and also father-absent girls were found to be fairly well adjusted. Father-absent boys, however, were found to show significantly more signs of social and emotional maladjustment than all the other three groups.

father absence on 248 fourth-grade students in a predominantly (92%) Mexican-American urban public school district in south central Texas. Only Mexican-American children from families at or below poverty level were included. The Bender Gestalt and other tests were administered, and teachers were also asked to rate each subject on their personal adjustment. School achievement was not to be taken into consideration, and the teachers were not aware that the purpose of the study was to examine the effect of father absence.

According to LeCorgne and Laosa a trend indicated that father-absent children produced more Bender emotional indicators than father-present children. Father-present boys and father-present girls and also father-absent girls were found to be fairly well adjusted. Father-absent boys, however, were found to show significantly more signs of social and emotional maladjustment than all the other three groups.

These various studies appear to indicate that divorce does cause stress in children which can result in behavioral problems, both in and out of school. Boys appear to exhibit more problem behavior in general than girls, and it is usually of the acting out type. Hammond (1979) suggested that since, in the majority of cases, the children of divorce were living with their mother not their fathers, boys may exhibit more symptoms related to the loss of their fathers than girls do.

Kelly and Wallerstein (1979) reported that the behavioral reaction of the children was related to the amount of conflict in the child's life and his developmental stage. It should be noted that not all children from divorced homes had behavior problems, and many had made a satisfactory adjustment.

Self-concept

In their original study Wallerstein and Kelly (1976) found that some of the youngsters in the nine to ten-year-old age group showed an increased compliance and decreased assertiveness following the divorce of their parents. Others were preoccupied with their feelings of low self-esteem and inadequacy. The self-identity of these children was profoundly shaken by the parental relationship. The researchers also found that the child's socialization process and superego formation was affected by the divorce process. After one year the chronically maladjusted group continued to show depression and a low self-concept.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) reported that the self-esteem of 34% of the children in their study was high at the end of the five-year follow-up. The 29% who were found in the middle range of psychological health were reported to have times of diminished self-esteem. This was reported by teachers to take up a significant part of the child's time, attention, and energy and had an effect on the reaching of their full potential. Of the third who were found to be extremely affected by their parents' divorce, many showed signs of greatly diminished self-esteem.

In the research conducted by Hammond (1979) all of the children studied were administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale to obtain data on their feelings about themselves. This was administered to the youngsters in small groups. The pupils were told not to put their names on their papers, to work alone, and to give honest answers. The answer sheets were coded to match the information given by the teachers, and total confidentiality was assured. An analysis of the data indicated there was no significant difference in self-concept between children from intact and divorced families.

Simmons, Brown, Bush, and Blyth (1978) studied a group of 798 black and white school children in 18

The researchers reported that black children from broken homes had lower self-esteem in desegregated but not in segregated schools. Children from intact families were unaffected.

segregated and desegregated schools in a large midwestern city. They were followed from grade six to grade seven. A significant relationship was found between race and the marital status of the parents, with only 18% of the white children coming from broken homes compared with 36% of blacks. The researchers reported that black children from broken homes had lower self-esteem in desegregated but not in segregated schools. Children from intact families were unaffected. This study appeared to indicate that, among black youngsters from broken homes, the level of desegregation was related to the level of self-esteem. It was found in grade six, 60% of the black children from one-parent families who were in segregated black

schools had a high self-concept, while only 35% of those in desegregated schools had a high self-esteem. In grade seven the percentages were found to be comparable. Simmens et al (1978) stated

Thus, while black children in general in our sample have high self-esteem relative to whites, desegregated schools where broken families are relatively rare place the black child from such a family at greater risk than do segregated schools.

Academic Achievement

Brown (1980), reporting on his personal research, found that there was a disproportionately low number of children from single-parent families in the high

In mathematics achievement, boys from one-parent homes were rated lower than boys from intact homes. Little difference was shown in mathematics achievement between girls of divorced and two-parent families.

achievement group at the elementary level and a disproportionately high number in the low achievement group. To determine the influence of income on the differences between families, the study compared the achievement of students from low-income two-parent homes with that of pupils from low-income one-parent homes. Again, a substantially higher proportion of youngsters from one-parent families were low achievers. The same trend was found in the areas where income was not a consideration.

Research conducted by Hammond (1979) tended to show no significant differences in reading achievement between children of intact and divorced families. In mathematics achievement, boys from one-parent homes were rated lower than boys from intact homes. Little difference was shown in mathematics achievement between girls of divorced and two-parent families.

Fowler and Richards (1978) investigated the predictions of Zajonc's and Markus; confluence model. The basic tenant of the confluence model was that a child's intellectual development was profoundly influenced by family configuration. This effect was manifested through the intellectual environment of the home, conceived as the numerical average of the intellectual contributions made by the household members. The researchers stated,

When a father is chronically absent, there would necessarily be a decrease in the quality of the intellectual environment, since one member of high mental age has been removed from the family configuration. Children from households with a long-absent father should be educationally less well prepared for school and perform poorer on early achievement tests.

The subjects were 120 black children, predominantly from lower-income homes in Charlottesville, Virginia. Half of the 60 boys and half of the 60 girls were from father-absent households. Upon entering kindergarten the youngsters were tested on such items as general school readiness, human drawing, geometric designs, gross motor skills, and fine motor skills. The Metropolitan Readiness Test was administered by teachers. When the children were in second grade three achievement scores were obtained for each child; mathematics, reading, and language arts.

The kindergarten test results, according to the aforementioned researchers, showed no significant differences between father-present and father-absent subjects or between males and females. When the second grade achievement scores were analyzed, however, it was found that on the math and language tests the ordinal rank (from best to worst) of the four groups was: (1) father-present females; (2) father-present males, (3) father-absent males, and (4) father-absent females. The best performance on all tests was demonstrated by father-present females. The father-present subjects showed the greatest superiority on the mathematics tests.

Fowler and Richards (1978) concluded from their study,

Father presence among the lower-class black children in early childhood apparently benefits girls more, while father-absence penalizes both sexes equally.

In their study of early latency children, Kelly and Wallerstein (1976) found that more than half of the children in that age group couldn't muster the kind of energy needed to master the developmental tasks demanded and their academic achievement plummeted. The same figures held true for the later latency group. Half of this group suffered a noticeable decline in school performance. The one-year follow-up (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976) showed that about three-fourths of the children in this age group whose learning had declined at the time of parental separation had resumed their previous academic achievement level.

As has been shown (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980), 34% of the youngsters in the study were doing well at the end of the five-year mark. Twenty-nine percent were in the middle range and were achieving at grade level. Some members of this group, however, were reported by teachers to be hampered in the full development of their academic potential by the stress that their parents' divorce had placed upon them. The final third had problems in all areas, including school achievement. Many in this last group could still move ahead in school in ways appropriate for their age.

Shinn (1978) refers to a 1976 study by Ferri which failed to find cognitive correlates of father absence in second graders but found significant detrimental effects for the same children at age eleven. It was

concluded that either father-absence effects did not emerge fully in the very early school years or that the kinds of cognitive skills measured in young children were not so strongly affected as those tested later.

Shinn (1978) stated the following:

The cognitive differences between children from intact and fatherless families were of some consequence. They ranged up to 1.6 years in achievement, .9 standard deviation units in IQ and aptitude, and .8 of the difference between a B and a C in grade point average.

Conclusion

It appears from the research cited that divorce precipitates a major crisis in the lives of most children. While youngsters vary widely in how effectively they cope with the divorce experience, the ensuing stress can, and often does, lead to undesirable behavior patterns, a poor self-concept, and lower academic achievement. The pattern of the child's response seems to depend upon his or her inner strength, coping responses, developmental age, personality traits, and amount of continuing stress the child encounters.

Felner, Stolberg, and Cowen (1975) stated:

Theoretically, the soundest approach to problems resulting from crisis is for the individual to have already acquired the strengths and coping resources needed to deal effectively with them. Prevention is thus to be preferred to reconstructive efforts in this as well as many other areas. The challenge of this position is how to best engineer early (e.g., home and school) experiences to produce crisis-resistant 'products,' or at least those with well-developed mastery skills.

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Statistics On Children Of Divorce

By John and Roberta Starkey

Family Structure

Somewhere in memory's background, there lingers the idea of the typical American family--a husband and wife with two or three children compose this average household. United States Population Characteristics for 1981 shattered this image. From the US Department of Commerce Bureau of Census "Households and Families, by Type: March 1981 (Advance Report)," this data was gleaned:

Total households	82,368,000
Family households	60,309,000
Married-couple family	49,294,000
With own children under 18	24,927,000
Other family, male households	1,933,000
With own children under 18	666,000
Other family, female householders	9,082,000
With own children under 18	5,634,000

In the United States, only about one half of the married couples have children under 18 at home.

From divorce, unmarried mothers keeping their children, or death, there were 666,000 households with male heads and 5,634,000 female heads of household families with children under 18 years of age.

Observe the family status of the children under 18! Within 31,227,000 families, about 80% of the children were living with two parents: It has been estimated that 40% of these are blended families. (Blended families are families in which one or more of the children are not the biological child of both parents.) Eighteen percent are living with a single mother, while 2% are living with their father. By the best estimates of family service centers only about 60% of the families with children under 18 were constituted of father, mother, and biological children of both the father and mother.

THUS, FOR CHILDREN UNDER 18, THE NORMAL FAMILY HAS BECOME A BLENDED FAMILY OR A SINGLE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD FAMILY!

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Child Support

When single female parents were asked, by the authors, what problem was the most difficult to solve, money topped the list. This problem was highlighted by statistics from the US Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census report, "Child support and alimony: 1978." The mean income of divorced women, with children under 21 years of age present in the home, who received child support payment, was \$8,940. While those who were awarded support, but did not receive it, had a mean income of \$6,220. The lower the income, the less likely they were to have been awarded support. These families had an average income of \$4,840.

For example, persons in families maintained by women with no husband present had a poverty rate of 35%.

Being awarded child support and receiving it were two different things. In 1978, only about one-half of those women awarded child support received the full support. The average amount received was \$1,800. Having a college education correlated higher with receiving child support than did any other factor.

The court collection of child support has increased the payments for many families.

In the US Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census "Characteristics of the Population Below the Poverty Level: 1979," page 2, the following statement was discovered.

Although the poverty rate for all persons was 11.6% in 1979, many groups had poverty rates well above or below the national average. For example, persons in families maintained by women with no husband present had a poverty rate of 35%.

Working Mothers

From the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, "Marital and Family Characteristics of the Labor Force, March 1979" comes this information.

...16.6 million or 54% of the women with children under 18 were working; 79% of divorced mothers worked in March 1979. Among the most striking changes that occurred during the 1970's was the sharp rise in the

number of working women heading one-parent families.

Research Findings

Some of the research finding on children of divorce are listed below.

Hess, R. & Camara, K. Positive relationships with both parents after a divorce negate many negative results of divorce. Journal of Social Issues, 1979, 35, 4, 79-96.

Weiss, R. S. Children in one parent homes usually are given more responsibility, have a closer relationship with the present parent, and tend to mature more rapidly. Journal of Social Issues, 1979, 35, 97-111.

Grossman, S. M. Children of divorce did NOT score lower on measures of ego development, locus of control, and identity achievement. Journal of Divorce, 1980, 3, 263-272.

Sonne, J. C. One researcher found that children who live with one parent need as a model an external psychological family in order to internalize the triadic family image. Internal Journal of Family Therapy, 1980, 2, 176-92.

Hill-Scott, K. For the first time in US history the typical school child (single or two parent) has a mother who works outside of the home. The transformation of the Family, ERICABSTR Ed.201401.

Helst, M. A literature review of the effect of day care on children allowed the author to conclude, 1) day care has little harmful effect on the

attachment relationship between mother and child, 2) most day care has a positive effect on social development of the children and adjustment to new environments, 3) with working mothers there is neither positive nor negative intellectual growth of the children, however, with disadvantaged children there is positive intellectual growth. Quality of day care appears to be related to caregiver's stability, staff/child ratio, and level of staff education and related experiences. The effect of day care. ERICABSTR Ed. 197812.

The most significant minority: One-parent children. A study of children living with only one parent achieve less and present more discipline problems in both elementary and secondary schools than did their two-parent peers...students from single-parent families tended to qualify more often for subsidized lunch programs and changed residence more often than students from intact families. Students from single parent families were more often tardy, absent and truant than other students. They were also more often involved in disciplinary actions and dropped out more often. National Association of Elementary Principals: ERICABSTR Ed. 192438.

Note: Had the research team of the National Association of Elementary Principals adjusted for the poverty factor for the children of divorce, one must wonder if there would have been a significant difference in these children and those of the other children in the schools studied.



Some Suggested Books And Articles On Children Of Divorce

Boys without fathers is tougher for white teens. Psychology Today, December, 1975, 123.

Brandwein, R. A. Women and children last: The social situation of divorced mothers and their families. Journal of Marriage and the Family, August, 1974, 498-514.

Brown, F. A study of the school needs of children from one-parent families. Phi Delta Kappan, April, 1980, 537-40.

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- Burgess, J. K. The single parent family: A social and psychological problem. The Family Coordinator, April, 1970, 137-144.
- Canfield, J. 100 ways to enhance self-concept. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976. (Self-concept activity book for older students.)
- Chaudoir, M. H. The single parent family in contemporary realistic fiction for young people. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 7921280, 1979.
- The children of divorce. Newsweek, February 11, 1980, 58-62.
- Clay, P. The schools and single parents: Accessibility is the key. NASSP Bulletin, January, 1980, 40-43.
- Erickson, R. & Bohannon, P. Stepping in. Psychology Today, January, 1977, 11, 470-72.
- Farnette, G. I've got me and I'm glad. Nashville, TN: Incentive Publications, 1977. (Self concept activity book for elementary grades.)
- Ferri, E. Growing up in a one-parent family. Great Britain: NFER Publishing Co., 1976.
- Gallup, G. 12th annual Gallup poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools. Phi Delta Kappan, September 1980, 33-47.
- Gardner, R. The boys and girls book about divorce. New York: Bantam Books, 1980.
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- Green, B. J. Helping single-parent families. Elementary School Guidance and Counseling Journal, February, 1981, 15, 3, 249-261.
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- The National Elementary Principal, October, 1979. (Entire issue devoted to the school and single parent families.)
- Nye, F. I. & Hoffman, L. The employed mother in America. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963.
- The Personnel and Guidance Journal, February, 1981. (Entire issue devoted to the concept of loss.)
- Ricci, I. Divorce, remarriage and the schools. Phi Delta Kappan, March, 1979, 60, 509-511.
- Schlesinger, B. The one-parent family: An overview. The Family Life Coordinator, October, 1966, 133-138.
- Skeen, P. & McKenry, P. The teacher's role in facilitating a child's adjustment to divorce. Young Children, July, 1980, 3-12.
- Smith, G. & Scales, A. The one-parent child and the classroom teacher. Today's Education, November, 1975, 64, 83-86.
- Sprey, J. The study of single parenthood: Some methodological considerations. The Family Life Coordinator, January-April, 1967, 29-34.
- Tooley, K. Antisocial behavior and social alienation post divorce: The 'man of the house' and his mother. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, January, 1976, 46, 33-42.
- What future for the American family? Changing Times, December, 1976, 30, 7-9.
- Popular Readings on Remarriage and Stepparenting
by Susan Sour
- Atkin, E. and Rubin, E. Part-time father. New York: Signet, 1977.
Good for fathers on divorce, living separately and getting remarried.
- Berman, C. G. Making it as a stepparent. New York: Doubleday, 1980.
A recent and readable how-to book.

- Capaldi, F. and McRae, B. Stepfamilies, a cooperative responsibility. New York: New Viewpoints/Vision Books, 1979.
Gives guidelines for natural and stepparents with charts of family systems.
- Maddox, B. The half-parent. New York: New American Library, 1976.
Personal account of stepmothering when the natural mother has died.
- Mayleas, D. Rewedded bliss, love, alimony, incest, ex-spouses and other domestic blessings. New York: Basic Books, 1977.
How to set up a family system that encompasses all of the above.
- Noble, J. & Noble, W. How to live with other people's children. New York: Hawthorne Books, Inc., 1977.
Their own experience plus research with practical suggestions.
- Roosevelt, R. & Lofas, J. Living in step. New York: Stein & Day, 1976.
A personalized account by two women who lived through it.

- Rosenbaum, J. & Rosenbaum, V. Stepparenting. New York: Dutton, 1978.
A sympathetic guide to living and loving with other people's children.
- Stenson, J. S. Now I have a stepparent and it's kind of confusing. New York: Avon Books, 1979.
A readaloud coloring book for small children.
- Visher, E. & Visher, J. Stepfamilies: A guide to working with stepfamilies and stepchildren. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1979.
A useful book for professionals.
- Wallerstein, J. & Kelly, J. Surviving the break-up. New York: Basic Books, 1980.
Results of longitudinal research by pioneers in the field.

NOTE: Susan Sour's booklets Seven steps to successful stepparenting and Children of divorce: How to help are now available for \$2.95 each.



Suggested Readings For Children Of Divorce

- Adams, F. Mushy eggs. Illus. by M. Hirsh. New York: Putnam, 1973.
Interest level: Ages 4-8 Reading Level: Grade 2
- Agle, N. H. Susan's magi. Illus. by C. Robinson. New York: Seabury, 1973.
Interest level: Ages 7-10 Reading Level: Grade 5
- Arundel, H. A family falling. Nashville: Nelson, 1972.
Interest level: Ages 12-16 Reading Level: Grade 8
- Baldwin, A. N. Jenny's revenge. Illus. by E. Arnold McCully. New York: Four Winds, 1974.
Interest level: Ages 5-8 Reading Level: Grade 2-4
- Blue, R. A month of Sundays. Illus. by T. Lewin. New York: Watts, 1972.
Interest level: Ages 7-11 Reading Level: Grade 5
- Blume, J. It's not the end of the world. Scarsdale, NY: Bradbury Press, 1972.
Interest level: Ages 8-12 Reading Level: Grade 2-3
- Cameron, E. To the green mountains. New York: Watts, 1972.
Interest level: Ages 12-16 Reading Level: Grade 4
- Ghorao, K. A magic eye for Ida. Illus. by author. New York: Seabury, 1973.
Interest level: Ages 5-8 Reading Level: Grade 2-3

- Cleary, B. Otis Spofford. Illus. by L. Darling. New York: Morrow, 1953.
Interest level: Ages 8-11 Reading Level: Grade 3-4
- Clifton, L. Everett Anderson's year. Illus. by A. Grifalconi. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1974.
Interest level: Ages 4-8 Reading Level: Grade 2-4
- Ewing, K. A private matter. Illus. by J. Sandin. New York: Harcourt, 1975.
Interest level: Ages 7-10 Reading Level: Grade 5
- Gardner, R. A. The boys and girls book about divorce. Illus. by A. Lowenheim. New York: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1970.
Interest level: Ages 10 and above Reading Level: Grade 6
- Goff, B. Where is Daddy? The story of divorce. Illus. by S. Perl. Boston: Beacon, 1969.
Interest level: Ages 4-8 Reading Level: Grade 2-3
- Greene, C. E. A girl called Al. Illus. by B. Barton. New York: Viking, 1969.
Interest level: Ages 10-14 Reading Level: Grade 2-3
- Grollman, E. Talking about divorce: A dialogue between parent and child. Illus. by A. Cann. Boston: Beacon, 1975.
Interest level: Ages 5 and above Reading Level: Grade 1
- Holland, I. Heads you win, tails I lose. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1973.
Interest level: Ages 12-16 Reading Level: Grade 6
- Kalb, J. & Viscott, D. What every kid should know. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976.
Interest level: Ages 9-13 Reading Level: Grade 3-4
- Klein, N. It's not what you expect. New York: Pantheon, 1973.
Interest level: Ages 12-16 Reading Level: Grade 4-5
- Klein, N. Mom, the wolf man and me. New York: Pantheon, 1972.
Interest level: Ages 10 and above Reading Level: Grade 3-4
- Klein, N. Taking sides. New York: Pantheon, 1974.
Interest level: Ages 10-14 Reading Level: Grade 5
- Lexau, J. M. Emily and the klunky baby and the next-door dog. Illus. by M. Alexander. New York: Dial, 1971.
Interest level: Ages 4-8 Reading Level: Grade 2-3
- Lexau, J. M. Me day. Illus. by R. Weaver. New York: Dial, 1971.
Interest level: Ages 5-8 Reading Level: Grade 2
- Lexau, J. M. Striped ice cream! Illus. by J. Wilson. Philadelphia: Lipponcott, 1968.
Interest level: Ages 6-10 Reading Level: Grade 2
- Mann, P. My dad lives in a downtown hotel. Illus. by R. Cuffari. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973.
Interest level: Ages 8-11 Reading Level: Grade 2
- Mazer, H. The dollar man. New York: Delacorte, 1974.
Interest level: Ages 10-13 Reading Level: Grade 5-6
- Mazer, N. I, Trissy. New York: Delacorte, 1971.
Interest level: Ages 7-11 Reading Level: Grade 5
- Morrison, C. V., & Morrison, D. Can I help how I feel? Illus. by J. McCrea & R. Mc Crea. New York: Atheneum, 1976.
Interest level: Ages 10 and above Reading Level: Grade 6
- Naylor, P. R. Getting along in your family. Illus. by R. Cooley. Nashville: Abingdon, 1976.
Interest level: Ages 9-12 Reading Level: Grade 4
- Naylor, P. R. No easy circle. Chicago: Follett, 1972.
Interest level: Ages 12-16 Reading Level: Grade 5-6
- Newfield, M. A book for Jordan. Illus. by D. deGroat. New York: Atheneum, 1975.
Interest level: Ages 7-11 Reading Level: Grade 2-3
- Norris, G. Lillian. Illus. by N. Swanberg. New York: Atheneum, 1968.
Interest level: Ages 8-12 Reading Level: Grade 4
- Pursell, M. S. A look at divorce. Photographs by M. S. Forral. Minneapolis: Lerner, 1976.
Interest level: Ages 4-7 Reading Level: Grade 2
- Richards, A. & Willis, I. How to get it together when your parents are falling apart. New York: McCay, 1976.
Interest level: Ages 11 and above Reading Level: Grade 5

Rogers, H. Morris and his brave lion. Illus. by G. Coalson. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975.
Interest level: Ages 4-8 Reading Level: Grade 1-2

Simon, N. All kinds of families. Illus. by J. Lasker. Chicago: Whitman, 1976.
Interest level: Ages 5-8 Reading Level: Grade 1-2

Stanek, M. I won't go without a father. Illus. by E. Mill. Chicago: Whitman, 1972.
Interest level: Ages 5-8 Reading Level: Grade 1-2

Step toe, J. My special best words. Illus. by the author. New York: Viking, 1974.
Interest level: Ages 3-6 Reading Level: Grade 1

Thomas, I. Eliza's daddy. Illus. by M. Barnett. New York: Harcourt, 1976.
Interest level: Ages 4-8 Reading Level: Grade 2

Zolotow, C. A father like that. Illus. by B. Shecter. New York: Harper, 1971.
Interest level: Ages 4-8 Reading Level: Grade 1-2



First Year Teachers: What Professional Activities Do They Report Having Difficulty Performing?

By Byron F. Radebaugh and Joseph R. Ellis

This article describes certain activities typically used by teachers when performing seven professional roles, reports the difficulties first year teachers had in performing them, and draws implications for in-service and university teacher development programs.

The data used were collected as part of a larger study (Note 1) and based on a population that included all first year teachers teaching in Illinois public schools (exclusive of the Chicago Public Schools) near the end of the 1980-81 school year. This group consisted of 3,465 teachers. A systematic sample of 1,571 teachers was selected and mailed the instrument of the study which was based on the concept of teacher role performance (Kinney, 1952), supplemented with activities and a scale developed and field tested by Ellis and Radebaugh (1974). Teacher difficulties were defined as those difficulties which teachers perceive themselves to have in the performance of their profes-

sional roles and activities at a level of success satisfactory to them. There were 614 useable questionnaires (39%) returned.

Grade levels represented by the 614 teachers were preschool-K 9.1%, grades 1-6 31.4%, grades 7-9 26.9%, and grades 10-12 32.7%. The BA-BS degrees earned were from Western Illinois University 9.7%, Northern Illinois University 16.5%, Southern Illinois University 9.7%, Illinois State University 31.7%, and University of Illinois-Urbana 13.3%. The teachers represented schools from rural small towns 50.0%, suburban 37.7%, urban (over 50,000) 11.1%, and other towns 1.2%. Males represented 21.7% of the teachers while females 78.3%.

In the tables that follow, the professional roles and certain activities are listed in order of most difficulty to less difficult. That is, Table 1 identifies the role the performance of which was reported to be most difficult by first year teachers. The activities related to each role are arranged so that the most difficult activity is listed first, the second most difficult activity listed next, etc. It is recognized that the activities described are only some of the activities engaged in by teachers. Based on a field testing of them (Ellis & Radebaugh, 1974) however, they are probably the most critical.

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Table I
Role I. The Teacher as a Link with the Community

Level of Difficulty. First

Description of Role. Teachers and students are a part of a cultural setting and both are involved in the culture through community needs, happenings, interpretations and customs. The very service and art of teaching necessarily link teachers to the community and the community to the teachers. Teachers help translate community values, needs and goals into school programs and communicate school programs to the community.

Description of Activities Teachers May Be Involved In		Degree of Difficulty				Cumulative % of Moderate Considerable Extreme Difficulties
		Little or None	Moderate	Considerable	Extreme	
Participating with the public and others in developing educational goals and implementing programs to achieve goals	N 190 % 32.8	267 46.1	104 18.0	18 3.1	67.2	
Enriching student learning experiences through the use of community resources	N 193 % 32.8	263 44.7	105 17.9	27 4.6	67.2	
Encouraging critical thinking in dealing with community values, needs, goals and problems	N 209 % 35.9	283 48.6	84 14.4	6 1.0	64.0	
Developing an awareness of community values, needs, goals, problems	N 243 % 41.5	268 45.8	65 11.1	9 1.5	58.4	
Interpreting and explaining the school program to students, parents and the public	N 287 % 48.6	237 40.1	57 9.6	10 1.7	41.8	

Table II
Role II. the Teacher as Mediator and Interpreter of the Culture

Level of Difficulty. Second

Description of Role. Teachers and students belong to a specific culture which necessitates conscious awareness and critical examination. Teachers are responsible in a unique way to communicate clearly and reflectively the culture.

Description of Activities Teachers May Be Involved In		Degree of Difficulty				Cumulative % of Moderate Considerable Extreme Difficulties
		Little or None	Moderate	Considerable	Extreme	
Helping students employ critical thinking procedures when dealing with issues and problems	N 224 % 38.4	272 46.6	78 13.4	10 1.7	61.7	
Encouraging and facilitating student democratic involvement in school and community affairs	N 223 % 38.8	249 43.3	88 15.3	15 2.6	61.2	
Helping students develop interest in and appreciation for democracy as a way of life	N 253 % 44.2	241 42.1	68 11.9	11 1.9	55.9	
Introducing students to different issues and aspects of the culture including related problems	N 273 % 46.5	264 45.0	46 7.8	4 0.7	53.5	
Helping students identify and interpret important values	N 301 % 50.3	241 40.3	48 8.0	8 1.3	49.6	
Giving student responsibilities	N 406 % 67.7	142 23.7	44 7.3	8 1.3	32.3	

Table III
Role III. The Teacher as Planner

Level of Difficulty. Third

Description of Role. Teachers identify and assess the needs and problems of both students and society. They identify, assess and state clearly defensible instructional objectives. They plan and develop appropriate learning materials and activities. They assess and evaluate performance. They communicate and report the progress and needs of students.

Description of Activities Teachers May Be Involved In	Degree of Difficulty				Cumulative % of Moderate Considerable Extreme Difficulties
	Little or None	Moderate	Considerable	Extreme	
Establishing relevant and clear objectives	N 268 % 46.6	284 8.5	52 0.8	5 55.9	
Planning for assessing and evaluating performance	N 267 % 44.1	274 45.2	57 9.4	8 1.3	55.9
Planning for communicating the problems, progress and needs of students	N 274 % 45.1	271 44.6	57 9.4	6 1.0	55.0
Planning and developing appropriate contents, learning materials and activities	N 275 % 45.2	274 45.1	54 8.9	5 0.8	54.8
Identifying students' needs, interests, and problems	N 295 % 48.4	275 45.2	36 5.9	3 0.5	51.6

Table IV
Role IV. The Teacher as Director and Helper of Learning

Level of Difficulty. Fourth

Description of Role. Teachers work to help students learn. They plan, make decisions, and take actions. They constantly and reflectively evaluate each activity and occurrence. Their actions involve getting ready for learning, interacting with the students and assessing both students and society.

Description of Activities Teachers may be Involved In	Degree of Difficulty				Cumulative % of Moderate Considerable Extreme Difficulties
	Little or None	Moderate	Considerable	Extreme	
Using motivating activities	N 216 % 35.8	314 52.0	66 10.9	8 1.3	64.2
Assessing and evaluate student learning	N 306 % 50.7	214 41.2	41 6.8	8 1.3	61.0
Managing the classroom and handle problems of pupil control	N 271 % 44.6	232 38.2	95 15.7	9 1.5	55.4
Establishing and maintaining a climate for learning	N 301 % 49.5	243 40.0	60 9.9	4 0.7	50.6
Using varied and appropriate techniques in the actual learning situation	N 306 % 50.6	232 38.3	60 9.9	7 1.2	49.4
Using appropriate facilitation procedures, materials and resources	N 324 % 53.7	230 38.1	44 7.3	5 0.8	45.4
Interacting with learners	N 497 % 81.9	83 13.7	22 3.6	5 0.8	18.1

Table V
 Role V. The Teacher as Counselor and Guide to the Student

Level of Difficulty. Fifth

Description of Role. Throughout the entire mediating or teaching process teachers also give behavioral evidence that they believe in the students' potential as persons. Teachers work with students who have unique needs and problems which include a personal, social, emotional, moral, physical, and intellectual nature. Teachers demonstrate an awareness of the complexity of the individuality in his totality.

Description of Activities Teachers may be involved in		Degree of Difficulty				Cumulative % of Moderate Considerable Extreme Difficulties
		Little or None	Moderate	Considerable	Extreme	
Using evaluative techniques to gain awareness of students' needs	N 259 % 42.8	284 46.9	54 8.9	8 1.3	57.1	
Using counseling techniques to guide students toward understanding and self-direction	N 295 % 48.8	256 42.4	42 7.0	11 1.8	51.2	
Using specialized services as student needs arise	N 316 % 52.3	215 35.5	60 9.9	14 2.3	47.7	
Helping students with "non-academic" problems, and wholesome interpersonal relationships	N 378 % 62.7	171 28.4	44 7.3	10 1.7	37.4	
Establishing rapport with students	N 507 % 83.0	79 12.9	18 2.9	7 1.1	31.9	

Table VI
 Role VI. The Teacher as a Member of the School Community

Level of Difficulty. Sixth

Description of Role. As a member of the school community teachers relate to and share experiences with students, administrators, supervisors, other teachers, and support personnel. They share in the general duties and responsibilities of the school and participate in efforts to improve the quality of programs and life in the school.

Description of Activities Teachers may be involved in		Degree of Difficulty				Cumulative % of Moderate Considerable Extreme Difficulties
		Little or None	Moderate	Considerable	Extreme	
Participating in the planning, development, evaluation and improvement of school programs	N 320 % 53.4	209 34.9	54 9.0	16 2.7	46.6	
Relating to and work effectively with supervisors and administrators	N 456 % 74.9	99 16.3	39 6.4	15 2.5	25.2	
Relating to and work effectively with other teachers	N 482 % 79.1	102 16.7	18 3.0	7 1.1	20.8	
Sharing in the general responsibilities of the school such as routine duties including meetings, records, reports, playgrounds, classes, etc.	N 486 % 80.2	81 13.4	30 5.0	9 1.5	19.9	
Relating to and work effectively with school support personnel	N 496 % 81.4	84 13.8	22 3.6	7 1.1	18.5	

Table VII
Role VII. The Teacher as a Member of the Teaching Profession

Level of Difficulty. Seventh

Description of Role. As a member of the teaching profession, teachers advocate and practice professional autonomy including the freedom to teach and to learn. They accept responsibility for their professional growth and contribute to the further development of the profession.

Description of Activities Teachers may be involved in	Degree of Difficulty				Cumulative % of Moderate Considerable Extreme Difficulties
	Little or None	Moderate	Considerable	Extreme	
Participating in and contribute to professional organizations	N 302 % 50.4	216 36.1	64 10.7	17 2.8	47.6
Engaging in activities designed to improve my professional intellectual techniques	N 420 % 67.7	158 26.1	27 4.5	11 1.8	32.4
Maintaining and improving my professional competencies	N 420 % 69.2	163 26.9	17 2.8	7 1.2	30.9
Advocating and practicing professional autonomy including the freedom to teach and learn	N 485 % 79.6	98 16.1	17 2.8	9 1.5	20.4
Conducting myself in accordance with a code of professional ethics	N 519 % 85.1	72 11.8	10 1.6	9 1.5	14.9
Accepting responsibility for my professional judgments, acts and conduct	N 529 % 86.7	61 10.0	15 2.5	5 0.8	13.3

Table VIII
Seven Professional Activities Most First Year Teachers Report Having Difficulty Performing in Rank Order

Description of Activities Teachers May Be Involved In	Role	Cumulative % of Moderate, Considerable, Extreme, Difficulties
Participating with the public and others in developing educational goals and implementing programs to achieve goals	I	67.2
Enriching student learning experiences through the use of community resources	I	67.2
Using motivating activities	VI	64.2
Encouraging critical thinking in dealing with community values, needs, goals and problems	I	64.0
Helping students employ critical thinking procedures when dealing with issues and problems	II	61.7
Encouraging and facilitating student democratic involvement in school and community affairs	II	61.2
Assessing and evaluate student learning	IV	61.0

Findings and Implications

When asked to judge the difficulty they were having performing 39 activities related to 7 professional roles typically performed by teachers, at a level of success satisfactory to them, at least one-third (about 205) out of 614 first year teachers in Illinois reported "little or none" (Note 2).

In terms of the remaining two thirds of the teachers, the most significant finding was the difficulty they had in performing activities which involved their relationship with the larger community. These difficulties seem to persist at least through the first three years of teaching (Radebaugh & Ellis, 1974). While the study reported here used the descriptive method and thereby precluded other than a description of the data, it does lead to the question, "Why is this the case?"

Others, using data beyond that reported here, have implied an explanation. Scholars such as Boulding (1964), Toffler (1970, 1980), and Cremin (1983), are convinced that we are living in a time of revolutionary social change. Cremin (1983) has described some of the changes in the "American family" that occurred during the 1970's: over 50% of all married women are now engaged in paid employment; 7-10 million people, speaking many different languages, came to the United States; the size of the family shrunk; the divorce rate increased; television became a powerful informational tool especially for the very young and the very old; home computers-micro computers began to open the possibility for using first-class instructional materials in the home; educational opportunities in the workplace and many other places expanded. What do these changes mean for the teacher? Are all of these changes good?

The activities "participating with the public and others in developing educational goals and implementing programs to achieve goals," and "enriching student learning experiences through the use of community resources," which were as difficult for first year teachers to perform, have implications for both in-service and university teacher development programs. Both might choose to stress the importance of these activities, design institutional structures to better link the school (and hence the teacher) to the public (including other educational institutions), help teachers better handle controversy, and provide them with the time necessary to engage in these activities.

A second significant finding was the difficulty first year teachers had in "using motivating activities." Those involved in planning for teacher development might want to re-examine those aspects of their programs dealing with the principles and techniques of motivation in an attempt to make them more meaningful and useful for teachers.

A third significant finding was the difficulty first year teachers had with the activities "encouraging critical thinking in dealing with community values, needs, goals and problems," and "helping students employ critical thinking in dealing

with community values, needs, goals and problems." Those involved in planning in-service and university teacher development programs might want to stress the importance of these activities, help teachers become aware of the specific skills involved, and help them become aware of different strategies for helping students learn to think critically. Ennis (1981), for example, has developed a detailed conception of rational thinking, and various tapes and films are available which draw on the latest scientific research related to teaching critical thinking as a skill which can be improved. Schultz (1974), has developed ways of identifying educational issues, clarifying them, and recognizing common logical errors when thinking them through.

A fourth significant finding was the difficulty first year teachers had with the activity "encouraging and facilitating student democratic involvement in school and community affairs." Those involved in planning in-service and university teacher development programs might consider designing opportunities for teachers to develop an in-depth understanding of democracy and democratic values. Both could consider stressing the importance of including a strong background in the history, philosophy and sociology of education in their development programs. Teachers could be given specific instruction on how to conduct a sociological analysis of their community (which would include identifying community values) for educational purposes.

A fifth significant finding was the difficulty first year teachers had in "assessing and evaluating student learning." Those involved in planning for in-service and university teacher development might want to re-examine those aspects of their programs dealing with the assessment and evaluation of student learning.

Finally, because some teachers had little or no difficulty performing certain activities, those involved in planning in-service and university teacher development programs aimed at improving practice, might consider designing them in such a way that each individual teacher's difficulties be taken into account. The instrument used in this study could become a means for helping teachers identify those activities they have difficulty performing. Activities could then be designed to help them overcome them.

Summary

About one-third of 614 teachers in Illinois public schools reported having "little or no" difficulty performing 39 activities related to 7 professional roles. The 7 activities reported to be most difficult were: participating with the public and others in developing educational goals and implementing programs to achieve goals; enriching student learning experiences through the use of community resources; using motivating activities; encouraging critical thinking in dealing with community values, needs, goals and problems; helping students employ critical thinking procedures when dealing with issues and problems; encouraging and

facilitating student democratic involvement in school and community affairs; and assessing and evaluating student learning. Implications for in-service and university teacher development programs included: using the instrument of the study in identifying which activities teachers have difficulty performing on an individual basis, then planning appropriate activities designed to help them improve their ability to perform these activities.

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Note 1. See for example:

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Note 2. There is evidence (Ellis & Radebaugh, 1974) that principals, when asked to rate teachers, using the instrument of this study, tended to rate the teacher's performance of the activities higher than the teachers rated their own performance.



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