



Divorce: Practical Guidance for Walking Families through the Process

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-  Positive Parenting Practices
-  Parent and Child Stress Management
-  Promoting Healthy Lifestyles



Universal Programming



Thrive Initiative Program Areas			
Universal Parenting Programs			
Take Root	Sprout	Grow	Branch Out
Infants (0 to 6 months)	Preschool (3 to 5 years)	Grades K-5 (5 to 10 years)	Grades 6-12 (10 to 18 years)
Infants (6 to 12 months)			
Infants and Toddlers (1 to 3 years)			
Parenting Programs for High-Needs Populations			
Take Root Home Visitation		Grow Safe and Secure	
Infants and Toddlers (0 to 3 years)		Grades K-5 (5 to 10 years)	





Today's presenter



Dr. Pamela Payne

University of Nevada, Reno



Objectives for Today



At the conclusion of today's presentation, you will be able to:

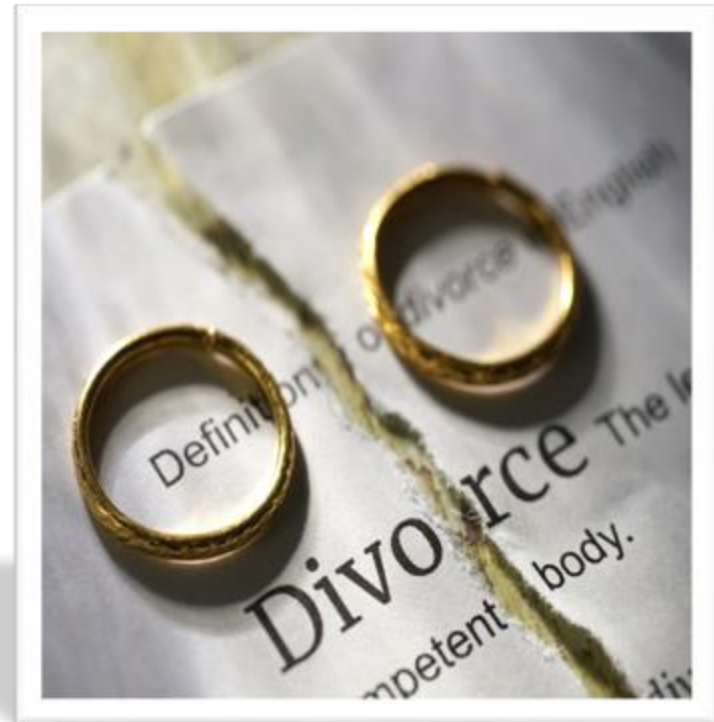
- Describe the state of divorce today
 - Dynamic Process, not Static Event
- Explain the factors that go into one's readiness for the process of divorce (e.g., emotional readiness)
- Assess parent & child well-being during divorce
- Analyze developmental influences on children
- Identify tools to help families navigating the divorce process



Overview of Divorce Today



- Brief History of Divorce
 - 17 states do not require “fault” to be assigned
- After reaching a 40-year low between 2020-2021, rising slightly since (Loo, 2023)



Overview of Divorce Today



- Statistics on Divorce

- 14.5 marriages out of every 1,000 marriages will end in divorce.
- 41% of first marriages will end in divorce and each subsequent marriage is more likely to end in divorce than the previous (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022).



The Process of Divorce



40% of children in the United States will experience the divorce of their parents' before they turn 18

- Divorce is an on-going process during and afterwards

Divorce changes every element of someone's reality in terms of how they see and experience their family *even if it's the right decision.*

- Changes relationships with others
- Process grief associated with divorce



(Kelly Raley & Sweeney, 2020; Umberson & Thomeer, 2020)



Emotional Readiness



- Why divorce? What is leading you/someone to consider divorce?
 - Irreconcilable differences
 - Infidelity
 - Communication breakdowns
 - Emotional and/or Physical Abuse
 - Addiction Issues
 - Lack of Intimacy
 - Growing apart
 - Incompatibility
 - Desire for personal growth or fulfillment



Emotional Readiness



- How certain are you in this decision?
- Assessing certainty
 - Core issues
 - Is resolution possible?
 - Impact on future
 - Impact of well-being and finances
 - How do you communicate?
 - Do you have support? Have you sought professional help?

(Harris & Hall, 2020)





Two things above
ALL else:

1. Best interest of the child(ren)
2. Maintaining stability and routine

“Parenting during the divorce process should be firm, fair, and flexible.”

(Archard, D., & Skivenes, M., 2009)



- Considerations:
 - Emotional support & communication
 - Coparenting Cooperation
 - Quality time with each parent
 - Consistent discipline and parenting styles
 - Safety and Well-being
 - Flexibility and Adaptability
 - Child(ren)'s preferences (when/where appropriate)
 - Counseling and support services

(Goldberg & Carlson, 2015)



Impact of Ages & Stages



- Differences in development based on age and stage will result in different responses to the divorce process and different parenting strategies, but there are uniform things as well.
- Important to recognize what is normative development vs. stress of divorce/change
 - Infants & Toddlers (0-3 years old)
 - Preschoolers (3-5 years old)
 - School-age children (6-12 years old)
 - Adolescents (13-18 years old)



Infants & Toddlers (0-3 yrs)



- Routine is VITAL!
 - Crying and changes in sleep may be normative or stress responses.
 - Increased clinginess
- Attachment bonds are forming
 - Separation challenges vs. Stranger Danger
 - ❖ 18 months
 - Long term - difficulty forming & securing relationships



What can Parents/Caregivers do?

- Schedule, routine, and consistency is key!
 - Bedtimes, basic routines maintained across homes
- Young children can sense YOUR EMOTIONS.
 - Managing your stress, anger, anxiety & frustration is important; take breaks and find tools to help.
- Regressions may happen, but it's okay! Be patient!
 - Work to re-establish the behavior that has regressed



Preschoolers (3-5 yrs)



- May struggle to understand reasons for divorce and may blame themselves.
- May have developmental regressions around bedwetting, tantrums, and separation anxiety.

Preschoolers (3-5 yrs)



What can Parents/Caregivers do?

- Schedule, routine, and consistency is key!
 - Bedtimes, basic routines maintained across homes
- Young children can sense YOUR EMOTIONS.
 - Managing your stress, anger, anxiety & frustration is important; take breaks and find tools to help.
- Regressions may happen, but it's okay! Be patient!
- Develop new traditions and routines, ways of being together and playing.



School-age (6-12 yrs)



- May experience a wide range of emotions including sadness, anger, and confusion
- Academics and social challenges may be related to the stress and distraction of divorce
- May internalize challenges of divorce, feeling guilt and self-blame

School-age (6-12 yrs)



What can Parents/Caregivers do?

- Develop new traditions and routines, ways of being together and playing.
- Carve out time to spend with your child(ren) individually.
- Make transitions consistent with space to have big emotions.
 - Allow children to have different needs during transitions from house to house.



Adolescents (13-18 yrs)



- May have a pronounced emotional response to divorce, exhibiting anger, rebellion, and/or withdrawal.
- May engage in risk-taking behavior (e.g., substance use, self-harm) as a way of coping with emotions.
- May struggle with identity issues and difficulties establishing independence, may have increased risk for mental health challenges.
- May be more aware of social and emotional cues.
- May be more likely to lash out and express anger-frustration as they are aware of the scope and magnitude of divorce.

Adolescents (13-18 yrs)



What can Parents/Caregivers do?

- Develop new traditions and routines, ways of being together.
- Carve out time to spend with your child(ren) individually.
- Allow children to have different needs during transitions from house to house.





Take Aways

- Divorce is a process that involves an ongoing series of transitions. It is important to assess readiness for this process.
- There are many reasons that people elect to divorce. Divorce may have different impacts on children at different ages and stages of development.
- Parents need to focus on the best interest of the child(ren).
- Parenting, especially during and after divorce, is firm, fair, and flexible.

Questions?

**Please enter any
questions or
comments into the
chat box.**



Supplemental Module

Coming soon...



Coming Soon!

This is a supplemental parent-education module that is designed to provide support to parents who are considering or experiencing divorce and explores the various factors that could play a part in that decision.

Parenting during a divorce presents unique challenges as parents navigate their own emotions while providing support to their children. Children of different ages experience divorce in different ways, and they may display a wide range of reactions throughout the divorce process. Parents need to be consistent yet adaptable to their children's ongoing and changing needs during the divorce and throughout their children's development.

Parental decisions, behaviors, and responsiveness can positively influence how children experience their parents' divorce and their ability to navigate and overcome challenges. This module presents information that parents and caregivers can use to help them understand how children's lives may be impacted by their parents' decision to divorce and how parents, coparents, and other caregivers can help support their children during this transition.



This supplemental module builds on information and strategies that are discussed in the four universal Thrive parenting programs – *Take Root, Sprout, Grow, Branch Out* – so, it is recommended that you participate in the age-appropriate universal Thrive parenting program prior to using the supplemental module.

For more information about the this supplemental module, visit:
<https://thrive.psu.edu/modules/supplemental>

thrive.psu.edu thrive@psu.edu 1-877-382-9185



In this module, you will learn how to do the following:

- Explore your own emotional readiness for divorce and the factors that may lead you toward reconciling or moving forward with a divorce.
- Understand how divorce can disrupt the family system and how divorce can impact you and your child(ren).
- Recognize the importance of and strategies for incorporating self-care practices and stress-management skills into your daily life.
- Build circles of support to help you and your child(ren) maintain well-being as the family navigates the divorce process.
- Learn strategies for how you and other caregivers can help your child(ren) express their emotions and cope with change.
- Understand how children of different ages may respond to divorce, and learn strategies you can use to support them.
- Identify steps you can take to promote your child(ren)'s well-being during and after divorce, such as limiting their exposure to parental conflict.
- Consider how your decisions and the decisions of your coparent can impact your child(ren).

Assess readiness for divorce

Understand divorce's impact on family

Apply self-care strategies

Build a support network

Help children express emotions

Recognize age-based responses

Promote children's well-being

Consider effects of parental choices

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Resourceful Parents. Resilient Children. Ready Families.

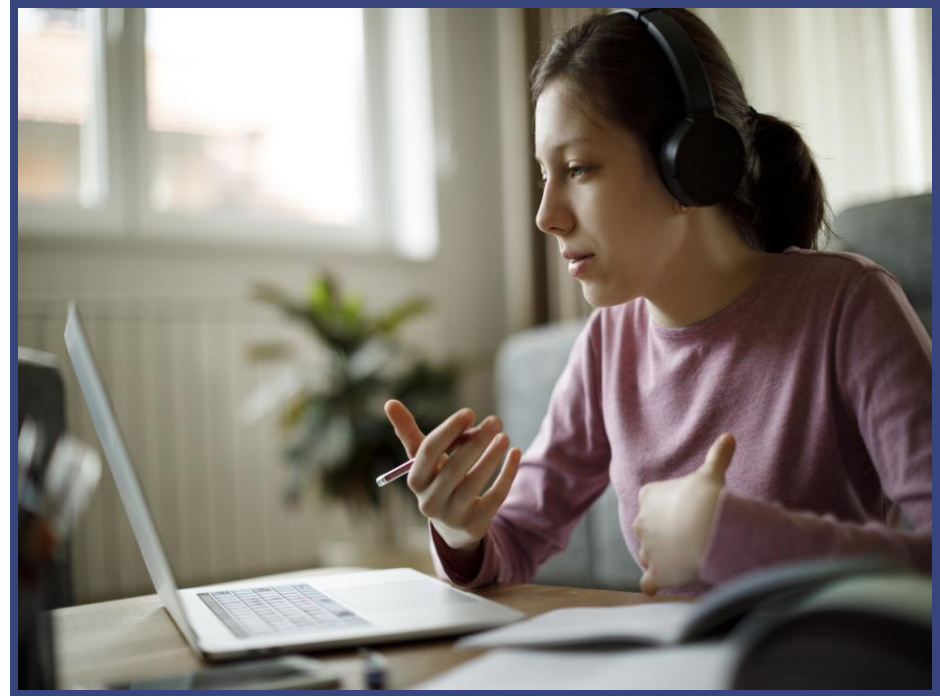
Programs for parents and caregivers to learn and practice effective strategies for raising healthy children.

[Learn More →](#)

Clearinghouse Office Hours



- Monthly collaborative learning sessions.
- Real-time guidance and resources from researchers and implementation specialists.
- Open to anyone who supports military families
- 30- to 45-minute microlearning sessions over Teams



**** Nov/Dec sessions: schedule individually via Clearinghouse@psu.edu***



Presentation survey



<https://bit.ly/40hct88>

**** Slide deck and recorded presentation will be available on the Thrive website.***

Contact Us



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1.814.865.7412

Thank you for
participating!



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