

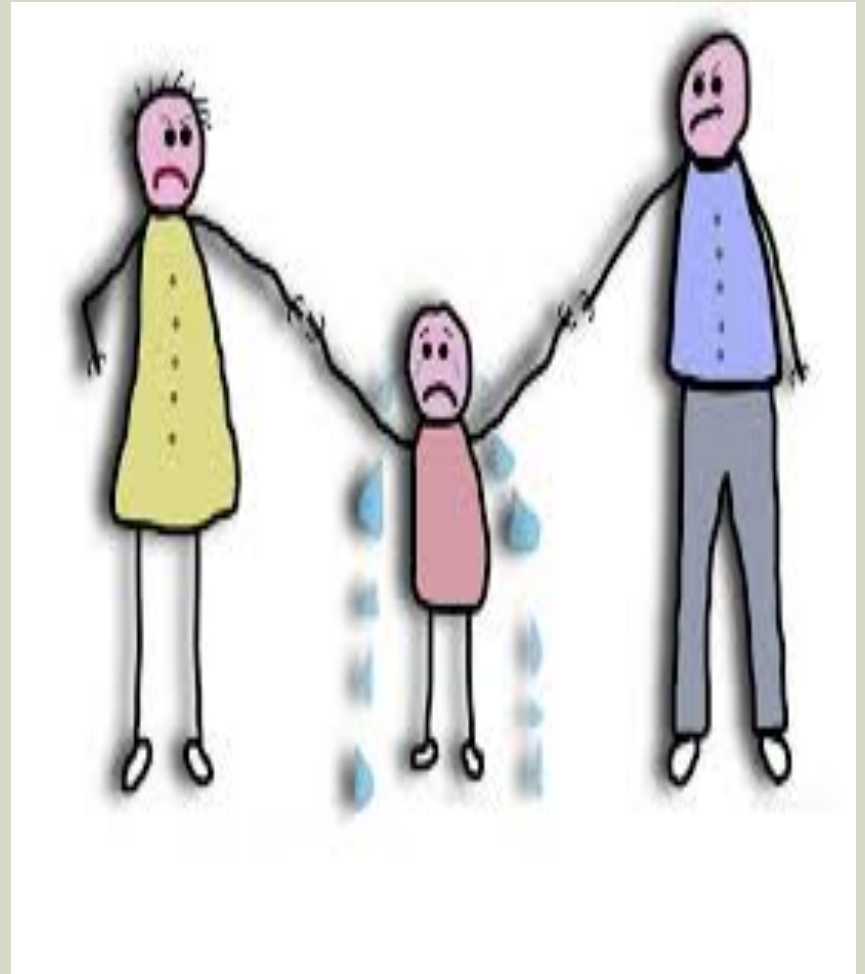
PSYCHOSOCIAL OUTCOMES OF DIVORCE

EDPS 650
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OVERVIEW

- Guiding questions
- Statistics
- Effects of divorce
 - Preschool
 - Elementary
 - Teenage
- Reasons for poor outcomes:
 - Conflict
 - Parents Mental Health
 - Father Involvement
 - Financial Effects
 - Resiliency and Coping skills



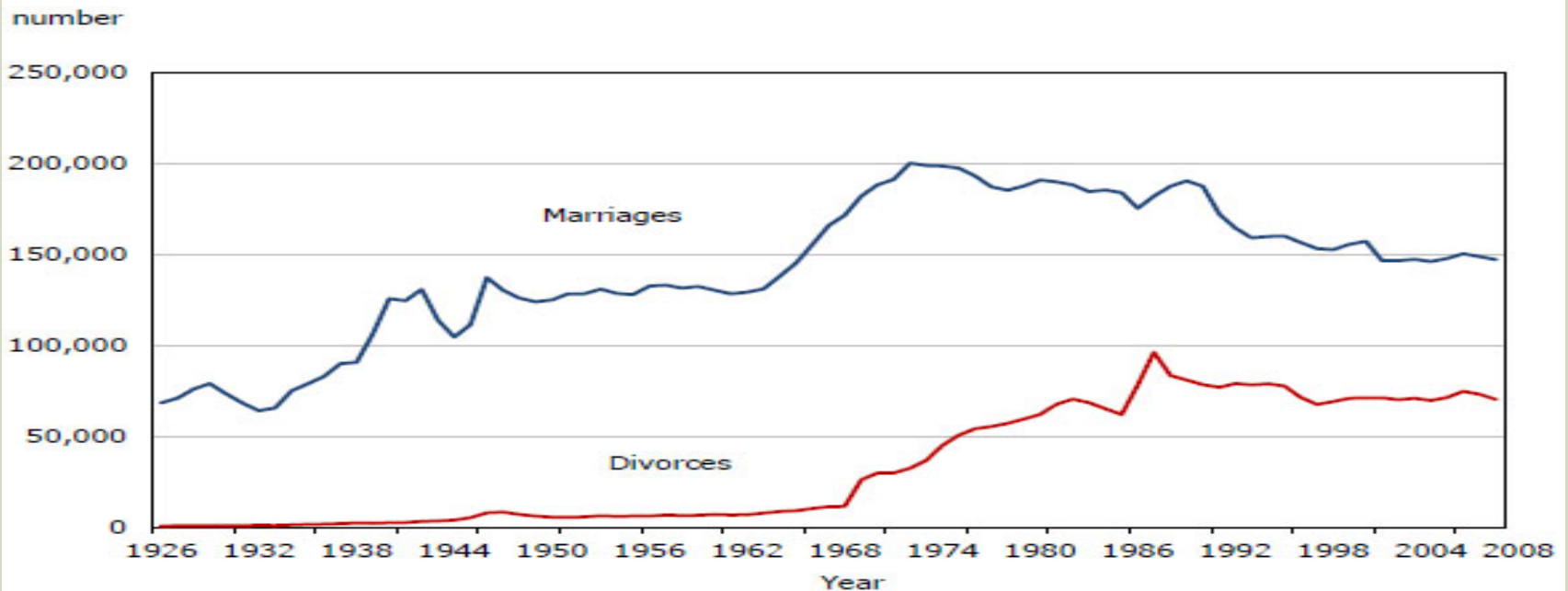
GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How is divorce going to affect a pre-school child, a child in elementary school and then an adolescent?
- How can information on divorce be used to help in parenting, teaching and assessing situations?



STATISTICS

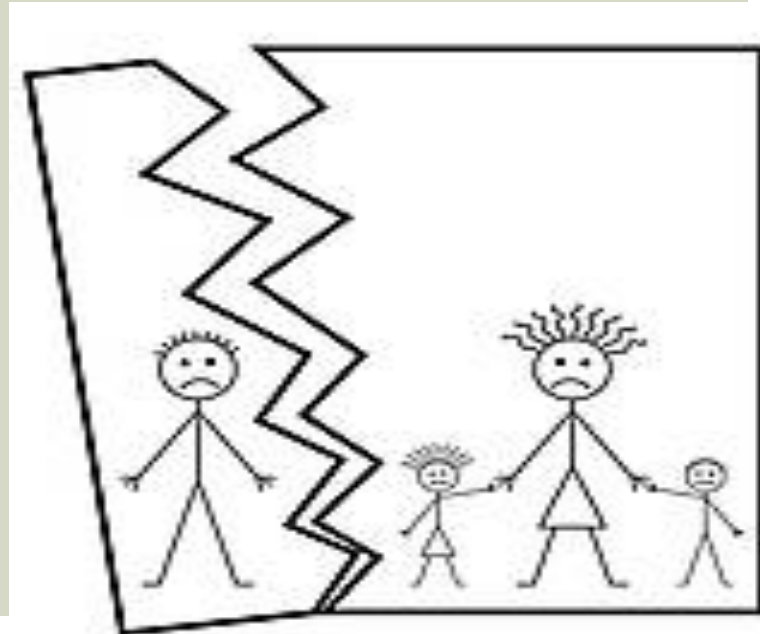
- Statistics Canada predicts that 41.3% of marriages are expected to end in divorce before the 50th year of marriage and 37.9% of marriages before the 30th year of marriage.



CAUSATION OR CORRELATION?

Negative outcomes of divorce:

- Lower educational attainment
- Teenage pregnancy & Substance Abuse
- Future earnings
- Employment status
- Behaviour problems
- Anxiety and Depression



IMPACT OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN

1. Stress

- Initially children of divorced families do have more emotional and behavioral problems than children from high-conflict, non divorced families (Rappaport, 2013).
- This does not necessarily mean however, that children will have long-term psychological difficulties.

IMPACT OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN

2. Psychological Difficulties

25% of children whose parents divorce have serious long-term problems in adulthood

→ 10% of children whose parents remain married that have long-term problems. So 75% of children of divorce do not have more emotional or behavioral problems than most peers from nondivorced families.

11% of children whose parents divorced scored in the clinical range for mental health problems

→ 8% of children scored in this range whose parents remained married

IMPACT OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN

3. Painful memories and distress

- Divorce can create lingering feelings of sadness, longing, worry, and regret



PRESCHOOL YEARS

- Clarke- Stewart, Vandell, McCartney, Owen, and Booth (2000)
 - lower cognitive scores
 - lower social adaptive scores
 - poorer on behavioral assessments
- Albert and Propescu (2010)
 - Multidimensional Anxiety Scale
 - less adjusted than intact families
 - social anxiety
 - separation anxiety
- Ogleman and colleagues (2015)
 - Living with with parent with the same gender is important in terms of personality development in the preschool years



PRESCHOOL YEARS

- Lack of understanding
- Developmental regression
- Behaviour problems
 - Anger
 - Aggressiveness
- Depression
- Nightmares



ELEMENTARY YEARS

- Sadness
 - Depression
 - Anger
 - General anxiety
 - A decline in academic performance
 - Misbehaves to get attention
 - May blame one parent more than the other
 - May feign illness as a way to foster reunification
- Study by Krishnakumar & Buehler (2000)

EFFECTS DURING THE TEEN YEARS

- Depression
- Alcohol and substance abuse
- Feelings of intense anger and frustration
- Delinquency
- Promiscuity
- More likely to leave home earlier

- (Sanz-de-Galdeano & Vuri, 2007)
 - Poor academic performance

VARIANCE IN ADJUSTMENT

- why some children have significant difficulty post divorce?
 1. Conflict
 2. Parents Mental Health
 3. Father Involvement
 4. Financial Effects
 5. Coping skills



1. CONFLICT

Mothers:

- less empathy and warmth
- less affectionate
- harsher and more coercive in their discipline In high-conflict marriages

Fathers:

- withdraw from parenting and from their children
- more intrusive and insensitive interactions

(Rappaport, R. 2013)

2. PARENTAL MENTAL HEALTH

Stress: less support, return to the workplace, bills

- **Poorer parenting: less emotionally available to their children**
- **Inconsistent discipline: mothers post divorce were more inconsistent in their discipline than nondivorced mothers.**
- **Parental depression**
 - **that maternal depression is linked to increases in children's internalized and externalized problem behaviors.**

3. FATHER INVOLVEMENT

- Positive outcomes emotionally and behaviorally, but also academically when compared to children whose fathers were not as involved.

- helping with homework
- school projects
- providing authoritative parenting
- More financial support

(King & Sobolewski, 2006)

4. FINANCIAL EFFECTS OF DIVORCE

- **21.5% of custodial mothers who divorced live in poverty with their children, as compared to 10.4% of married women.**
- **Two households means two mortgages or rent payments, two sets of electric, gas, cable and water bills which leads to more stress**
- **Parents have to work more due to financial pressures, therefore the child has to spend more time in childcare.**

(Fabricius and Hall, 2000)

5. COPING SKILLS

- Resiliency
- Temperament : Some children may be genetically inclined to better respond to some situations than other children.
- Perception impacts functioning
- Feelings of guilt, shame, helplessness, and poor self-worth may develop into broader patterns of adjustment problems

NOT ALL “DOOM AND GLOOM”

- Divorce is preferred instead of a family in which discordant parents cause stress, fights and violence
- Divorce has become more socially acceptable, and children may feel less stigmatized
- It is easier to obtain help from others in similar situations
- Limited long-term psychological difficulties

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QUESTIONS?

- How can information on divorce be used to help parenting, teaching and assessing a school-aged child?

