



CHILDREN & DIVORCE

Understanding the specific developmental stage your child is in will help them through a divorce.

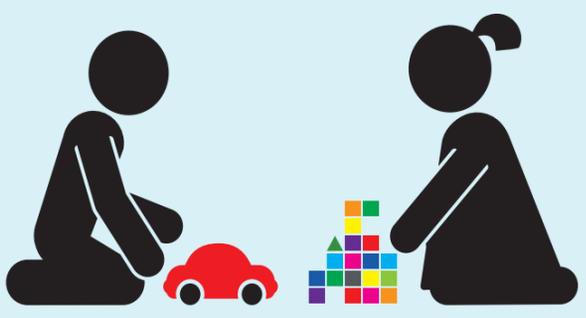
Ages 0 to 5

Key Developmental Stages

- Dependence on parents or caregivers
- No ability to understand complex events, anticipate future situations or understand their feelings

PRESCHOOLERS

- Beginning to develop independence, but still highly dependent
- Limited ability to understand cause and effect; still unable to think ahead to the future
- Self-centered understanding of the world
- Line between fantasy and reality is sometimes fuzzy
- Some ability to think about feelings, but limited ability to talk about them



Each year in the U.S., more than 1 million school-age children experience parental divorce



Ages 6 to 11

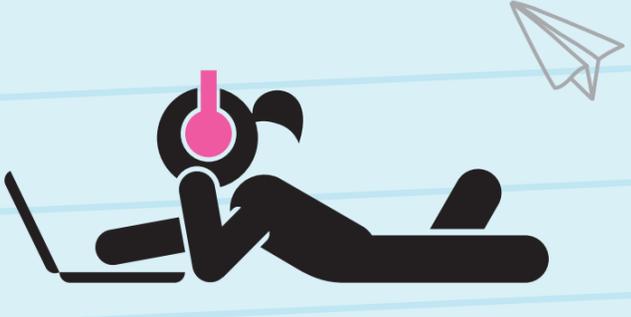
Key Developmental Stages

- Ability to think and talk about feelings
- Broad view of what's going on around them, but still limited understanding of complex circumstances such as divorce
- Developing more relationships outside the home (friends and school)

Ages 12 to 14

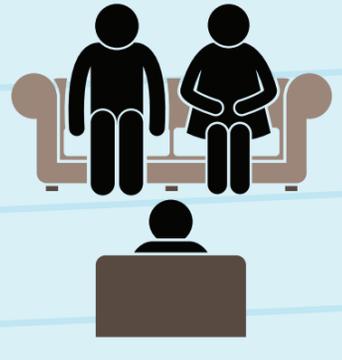
Key Developmental Stages

- Greater capacity to understand issues related to divorce
- Ability to take part in discussions and ask questions to increase their understanding
- Beginnings of desire for more independence; questioning of parental authority
- Relationships outside the family are increasingly important



Empirical research confirms that children of divorce are at an increased risk for the development of psychological, behavioral, social, and academic problems

Researchers have found a 39% increase in the incidences of mental health problems in children of divorce as compared to their peers from two-parent families at age 23



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