

Suggested Reading List

For children and youth

- *It's not your fault, KoKo Bear.* Vicky Lansky (1998). Book Peddlers. This book is designed for parents and children ages 3 to 5 years to read together. Each page provides a large picture to show what is happening in the story and includes messages for parents. The messages for parents help make a connection between the story and what happens to children in real families. KoKo Bear faces situations that help him learn what divorce means, and that he is not to blame for the divorce. He is helped to talk about his feelings, and is told that he is still loved by both parents.
- *Dinosaurs Divorce: A guide for changing families.* Laurene Krasney Brown and Marc Brown (1986). Little Brown and Company. This award-winning book is designed for parents and young school-aged children to read together. Stories are presented in a cartoon strip pattern and organized around topics that are important for children experiencing the divorce of their parents. Issues such as why parents divorce, living with one parent, having two homes, telling friends, parents' new partners, and celebrating special occasions are discussed. Solutions to problems that may come up are illustrated by the actions of the dinosaur children and their parents.
- *How do I feel about: My parents' Divorce.* Julia Cole (1997). Copper Beach Books. This book is written for older school-aged children with some reading skills, but should be read at least the first time with a parent so that the child may ask questions. Topics covered in the book include: why divorce happens, difficult feelings, and feeling okay. Photographs and cartoon illustrations show that everyone lives in a unique situation. The book reassures children that they are not alone in having their parents divorce and that there is more than one way that problems may be solved.
- *Pre-Teen Pressures: Divorce.* Debra Goldentyer (1998). Steck-Vaughn Company. This book, written for pre-teen readers, covers a wide range of issues. It is recommended that parents read it before reading it with their children. This book discusses common changes that take place for divorcing families. A variety of families are presented to show that there are many reasons why marriages end (affairs, violence/abuse and alcoholism). A variety of family stories are used to show that individuals adjust differently, make different decisions and move on to new relationships at different speeds. The children's roles in their own adjustment to divorce are emphasized.
- *Charlie Anderson.* Barbra Abercrombie (1990) Macmillan Publishing Company. Elizabeth, Sarah and Charlie have a contemporary story that takes into account the changing character of the family unit. This story is simply told with beautiful illustrations.
- *Divorce is Not the End of the World: Zoe's and Evan's Coping Guide for Kids.* Zoe and Evan Stern, Ellen Sue (1997) Stern Tricucle Press. "Lots of kids are dealing with divorce and going through the same things you are. Like 15 year old Zoe and 13 year old Evan, who know firsthand what it's like. They've written an honest, positive, and practical guide for kids."

- *For Better, For Worse: Guide to Surviving Divorce for Preteens and their Families.* Janet Bode and Stan Mack (2001) Simon and Schuster. This book explores the feelings of preteens in interviews with more than a thousand students, as well as parents, therapists, religious leaders, teachers, and other. Through these interviews she offers solutions that have worked with families. A separate section is geared towards adult readers around short and long term impact of divorce on their children. The last section includes resources in print and on-line for children and their parents.
- *Let's Talk About it: Divorce.* Fred Rogers (1996) The Putnam & Grosset Group. Mister Roger's talent for calmly explaining scary emotional upheaval to young children shines in this latest volume....Rogers offers caring support and validation for readers working through such trauma, and he supplies concrete examples of ways kids can deal with the stress....Books that offer such honest reassurance are rare."—*Publishers Weekly*
- *Mama and Daddy Bear's Divorce.* Cornelia Maude Spelamn (1998) Albert Whitman and Company. "When Mama and Daddy Bear tell Dinah that they are getting a divorce, Dinah is very sad and scared. Where will Daddy go? Will she see him again? Over time, Dinah learns that while Daddy isn't living with them anymore, many of the best things stay the same: Mama will always be her mama, Daddy will always be her daddy, and they love her very much." A brief note for parents is included.

For parents

- *Making Divorce Easier on Your Child: 50 Effective Ways to Help Children Adjust.* Nicholas Long and Rex Forehand (2002). Contemporary Books. This book provides practical, effective advice for parents on dealing with issues including talking to children about divorce, managing stress, communicating with the child's other parent, single parenting, and building a support network. It is clearly written and organized so that parents can quickly find information about specific issues.
- *Co-Parenting Survival Guide.* Jeffrey Zimmerman, Elizabeth Thayer. (2001) New Harbinger Publications. This book helps parents in the aftermath of divorce learn to sustain a healthy co-parenting relationship. "conflict and Parenting" explores parental conflict and its effects on children, conflict resolution, and the importance of forging a co-parenting relationship. "Co-Parenting Guidelines" offers specifics for solving day-to-day problems, disciplining, and handling conflict during transitional times and special events.
- *Difficult Questions Kids Ask (and are too afraid to ask) About Divorce.* Meg Schneider and Joan Zuckerberg (1996) Simon and Schuster. Hidden messages behind the questions children are asking and how to answer them with honesty and love.
- *Vicki Lansky's Divorce Gook for Parents: helping Your Children Cope with Divorce and Its Aftermath.* Vicki Lansky (1996) Book Peddlers. Children do not believe in no fault divorces. They blame the parents or themselves. No matter what their age, they need reassurance, security and love to get through this painful period. Drawing on her own and others' experiences as well as the expertise of professionals, Lansky gives parents age

specific advice on what reactions to expect from their kids and tips to cope with divorce realities.

- *Helping you Kids cope with Divorce the Sandcastles Way*. Gary Newman, Patricia Romanowski (1999) Random house Publishing Group. Divorce is painful and confusing. Perhaps now more than ever, you want to give your child all the love, support, and guidance he or she needs, but everything seems harder and more complicated. *Helping Your Kids cope with Divorce the Sandcastles Way* is based on Gary Newman's successful Sandcastles program, which has helped more than fifty thousand children cope with divorce.
- *Parenting after Divorce: A Guide to Resolving Conflicts and Meeting Your Children's Needs*. Philip Michael Stahl (2000) Impact Publishers. In the real world, divorcing parents are often in conflict, and lots of arguments are the rule, not the exception. "However, if parents continue to argue after the divorce," says Dr. Philip Stahl, "the children will suffer." Stahl knows parents are not perfect, and in this book he shows imperfect parents how to settle their differences in the best interests of their children.
- *Parents are Forever: A Step-By-Step Guide to Becoming Successful Coparents after Divorce*. Shirley A. Thomas (2004) springboard Publications. This guide is highly readable, essential information for all parents raising children while living apart. This is an indispensable guide for making life happy in two homes.
- *Through the Eyes of Children: Healing Stories for Children of Divorce*. Janet R Johnston, Carla Garrity, Karen Breunig (1999) Free Press. Written by leading authorities on child psychology and divorce, this book is a valuable and much needed tool for parents and professionals who work with children struggling with family breakup. Relying on imagination and metaphor, the fifteen stories in this unique anthology provide a safe and effective way to help children understand and cope with their parents' separation and living apart. For generations, stories have been a foundation for teaching children. *Through the Eyes of Children* continues that tradition and allows children the chance to recover and heal from divorce.
- *Why Did You Have to Get a Divorce? And When Can I Get a Hamster? A Guide to Parenting through Divorce*. Anthony Wolf (1998) Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Definitive advice from the author of the bestselling *Get out of my life*. Divorce, argues Anthony E Wolf, does not have to do long-term damage to a child. In his groundbreaking new book, he shows parents how to steer children through the pain and the complex feelings engendered by divorce, feelings that, if not resolved, can create continuing problems for a child. Wolf also explains how to deal with the difficult issues that so frequently accompany a divorce. How do you tell your child about the divorce? How do you keep your children from being caught between you and your ex-partner? What do you do if that other parent gradually fades out their lives? Or, how do you maintain strong ties with your children if you are not the primary custodial parent? How do you help them cope with new living arrangements, as well as stepparents or stepsiblings'?

Additional Reading

It's Not the End of the World. Blume, Judy (1998) Macmillan Children's Books.

Karen's parents have always argued, and lately they've been getting worse. But when her father announces that they're going to get divorced, it seems like Karen's whole world is falling apart.

I don't Want to Talk about It. Finney, Kathryn Kunz & Ransom, Jeanie Franz (2000) Magination Press. Ages 4-8. When a child's parents tell her they have decided to divorce, the last thing she wants to do is talk about it. Instead, she wants to roar as loud as a lion so she can't hear their painful words, or turn into a fish and hide her tears in the sea, or even become a bird and fly away. But with her mother and father's help, she starts to consider what life will be like after divorce and learns that although some things will change, many other things will remain the same. Most importantly, she realizes that although her parents may not agree about much, one thing they do agree on is that they both love her very much and will always be her mom and dad. *I Don't Want To Talk About It* features a comprehensive afterward that describes children's common reactions to divorce and offers parents suggestions for helping their own children adjust and thrive.

My Parents Are Divorced Too: A Book for Kids by Kids. Blackstone, Jan (1998). Magination Press. Ages 9-12. Been there, done that - that's the message of this friendly book told by kids who have survived their parents' divorce and are now sharing their hard-won wisdom with other kids. Asks - and answers - the toughest questions that all kids have about divorce.

Two Homes. Denton, Kady Macdonald & Masurel, Claire
Ages 2-4. Alex has two homes - a home where Daddy lives and a home where Mummy lives. Alex has two front doors, two bedrooms and two very different favorite chairs. He has a toothbrush at Mummy's and a toothbrush at Daddy's. But whether Alex is with Mummy or Daddy, one thing stays the same: they both love Alex - always. This portrayal of the life of a child whose parents are divorced is full of warmth, comfort and affection.

Why Are My Parents Separating? Jordan, Diane L. (2000) Backbone Productions. Ltd. A story-tape (audiocassette) for 5 - 9 year olds whose parents are separating. Lucy and Dan's parents are splitting up. Lucy blames herself and her older brother just bottles up his feelings. A chance encounter with Geraldine - a wise old cow, starts them on the exciting journey of understanding what is really happening at home. Through encounters with animal families and Geraldine's expert guidance the concept of shape-changing is introduced i.e. that families come in all shapes and sizes and even if both parents don't live together you are still a family. A chatty crow, a feisty field mouse and a hungry hawk all combines to make this story helpful and reassuring to children whose parents are separating.

'Why are my parents separating?' has been extensively researched and developed in consultation with an experienced child psychotherapist, an educational advisor and other relevant professionals. They have contributed invaluable expertise to ensure that in addition to being very entertaining, the story has therapeutic value appropriate to children's age and understanding.

The cassette runs for approximately 40 minutes and is enlivened with music and sound effects. A 22-page full color illustrated parental booklet accompanies the cassette, which suggests discussion points and helpful activities based around the story.