

The Risks for Children after Divorce

Your child will be experiencing a lot of feelings and emotions in the first few years after divorce. By being aware of the potential risks, you can better prepare to help your child and yourself through the transition.

Parental Loss

Parental loss is the loss of day-to-day contact with that parent, to see them in the morning, to kiss 'em goodnight at night time, that's hard on kids. **If the other parent is present and available to give time and love to that child, the number one thing a mom or a dad can do is open the door to that love.** Think ahead and foster opportunities for kids to be with their other parent.

For a child of divorce who desperately loves mom and dad, the best thing a parent can do is open that door as wide as possible and encourage that other parent to be part of that child's life.

Ideas of how to counteract this risk: Enlist a mentor. Think about an aunt or an uncle. Someone who could really stand in the gap and really love and show support for that child. A second one might be somebody at church. If you're part of a church community, look for a pastor, a youth pastor, maybe just some surrogate grandparents.

Economic Loss

The first few years after a divorce will be hard financially. Sometimes parents feel guilty about the financial struggle, so instead of being smart with their finances, they start to **overspend**. They feel bad that their kids have gone through a divorce, so they go out and rack up credit cards and get themselves into more debt. Spend time with your kids, don't just spend money on them. Make choices around your kid's **age and stages of development**. **Come up with some new hobbies to do together.** Every parent can think of one or two things that they know their children love. Take an interest in that, but keep it simple.

Handling economic loss means being smart, being strategic, and pulling in the resources that are going to make your family work.

Be a Smart, Stable Parent

You really have to start paying more attention on how to be a good, smart, stable parent. It can be helpful to find a support parent. Find one or two people that you can really go to and bounce ideas off, specifically about parenting.

Minimize Stress

Try your best to minimize stress. When a situation arises, such as moving, think about, *"How can I make that less stressful as possible?"* Another idea about minimizing stress for kids is **keeping them in the same school**, if possible. School is a very stabilizing factor for children. **Kids will need somebody to talk to**, and that could look like a friend, maybe a neighbor, someone you really trust, a grandparent, an aunt or an uncle, ideally, a counselor. There are many great organizations that offer play therapy for young children. Having a safe place to talk, other than mom and dad, **is a way to minimize stress for kids.**

The most distressing thing that a child who has experienced a divorce is the conflict between the parents.