

Effects of Parents' Conflicts on Children

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Abstract:

What will happen to the children who live with parents always fighting or fixing their difficulties in unwise methods? Maintaining a safe home environment for our children become a major problem for many parents these days, which lead children to suffer from inappropriate behaviors psychologically, physically, and psychically.

To solve such a problem I will assign this research to help children's organizations to share these information with parents in order to ensure a safety environment for children. Hence, in this paper I will discuss how home environment can cause major issues for children. Constant arguments in front of a child may lead him to be disordered person in the future. Because the impact of parents' conflicts has a long-term impact on children's future, parents must protect their children from such damages. The solution that I suggest is to contribute the awareness in our society using scientific methods that can influence parent's behaviors.

Believing that divorce has side effects on children could be the reasons why many couples live together while they are disagree. Parents will often live together even if they are not appropriate for each other because they want to save their children. Children will live in a harmful environment, while parents constantly argue. Pease Gadoua (2009) states that parents can harm their children by staying together rather than separating ¶5). Moreover,

children could be relieved by divorce if their parents argue every day ¶6).

Having children or taking care of them is not the only meaning of being a good parent. It's a hard mission that not every parent understands enough in order to create a good family. Parents' role is beyond covering every little demand for children (Murphy, 2014, ¶1).

How do we know if a couple is married? "If they are arguing, then they are

probably married” was a child answer on that question (Firestone, 2010, ¶1). Since arguments are some of the basic events in a family’s life, we need to know how we could control them. Controlling the problem starts from knowing the main factors leading to parents’ conflicts. It’s essential that parents recognize the factors leading them to fight. For example, they may argue about some decisions for the family, children’s education, financial problems, or may they suffer from work pressure (Tynan, 2011, ¶1,7). Whether the reason is simple or complex; it will cause a disagreement between parents, which will affect children (¶3). Having too many responsibilities, as many working parents do, can lead a person to make sudden and bad decisions. Although it’s a common issue that parents have disagreements, parents should control their conflicts because parents’ conflicts lead to psychological, psychical, and physical effects on children.

The first effect of parents’ conflicts on children is physical effects. One of the most physical effects is violent conduct. When parents argue without control, they may resort to violence. By using unkind words, screaming, or pushing each other, parents will hurt not only themselves but also their children (Tynan, 2011, ¶3,15).

Moreover, using unhealthy ways to solve problems, parents are raising a violent child who impacts other children by his behaviors. Researchers have recognized that living at homes with too many arguments leads children to have both behavior and academic difficulties (El-Sheikh, Buckhalt, Mize, & Acebo, 2006, ¶1). For instance, they may hurt other children’s feelings by using unkind words or pushing someone whenever they feel angry. Violent conduct will make a lasting effect for children raised in unhealthy environment. Since parents are the first models for kids, they should respect their family’s members and control their behavior especially when they are in front of children.

Another physical effect is health problems. Experience of high-level conflicts at home not only contributes to a child’s sleeping disorders but also eating disorders. One of the side effects of parents’ disagreement that researchers have found recently is a sleeping disturbance (El-Sheikh, Buckhalt, Mize, & Acebo, 2006, ¶1). When sleeping hours for children from the age 8-9 were counted, they found that their sleeping time was normal according to their normal level of conflicts at their homes (¶2).

On the other hand, sleeplessness or moving during sleeping time was observed in children living with high levels of disagreement at homes. Furthermore, those children covered their demand of sleeping during the day (El-Sheikh, Buckhalt, Mize, & Acebo, 2006, ¶4). Researchers have found it leads to a high occurrence of sleeping disorders because children's sleeping time has a strong correlation with parents' unsolved conflicts (¶5).

Eating disorders are another health problem caused by parents' conflict. Mujtaba & Furnham (2001) mention that parents influence eating disorders for children by over-care and disagreement (p.1). In this case, children are losing desire to eat. If children have any eating disorders, they will suffer from physical stress more than adults. (Farrar, 2014, ¶7). It's vital that parents understand the normal changes which occur in child's personality because of the stress that is caused by eating habits (¶8). If parents weren't aware, they couldn't resolve the problem later (¶8). In sum, parents' conflicts should be solved in order to protect children physically.

Besides physical effects, psychological effects are some common effects on children suffering from parents' conflicts. Children could blame themselves

when they believe parents' conflicts are related to them, and this may affect children emotionally (Tynan, 2011, ¶4). Whether the conflicts are directed to the child or not is not the only cause for children's losing emotional security; children hearing conflicts is the main reason (Murphy, 2014, ¶7). Unhealthy treatment of one parent by another may lead a child to worry about his other parents' feelings (Tynan, 2011, ¶9).

When people get into a bad situation and lose control, they feel depressed. According to Murphy (2014), depressed mothers reflect their feelings onto their children, which causes mothers not to be good role models. As a result, children will not be able to develop their standard emotions (¶4). Dr. Andrew Adesman states that children's emotions are absolutely impacted by parents' conflicts (Goodwin, 2012, ¶16). Moreover, the relationship between parents associates with children's perception about themselves (Goodwin, 2012, ¶14). Researchers have recently found that insecure feelings contribute to depression feelings in children (Economic and Social Research Council, 2013, ¶3).

More importantly, reducing the sense of security can transfer to children's feelings when their parents disagree. Seeing parents upset and out of control can make kids feel

unprotected and scared” (Tynan, 2011, ¶3). Anxiety, mental health, and depression can be found in children who lost feeling of security (Goodwin, 2012, ¶10). In contrast, parental emotional satisfaction contributes to the feeling of safety for the child (Firestone, 2010, ¶7); accordingly, it’s important that parents command their feelings and solve their problems in order to maintain stability at home. Having no conflicts isn’t the solution for protecting children, but trying to solve them safely can be a great idea (Goodwin, 2012, ¶4).

In the same way, children’s social skills are affected by parents’ conflicts. Scientists have proved the relationship between parents’ conflicts and child’s development emotionally and socially (Murphy, 2014, ¶7). Because of the unresolved parents’ arguments that are happening regularly, children aren’t able to trust people and communicate with them normally (DeNoon, 2006, ¶11).

Not only a child’s personality could be affected when he becomes a witness of his parents’ fighting, but his relationship with his parents could be harmed too (Eugster, 2007, ¶8). Parent’s relationships with each other and with their children affect children’s concept of themselves and their family as well (Goodwin, 2012, ¶14).

The changes in the relationship with one of the parents occur when a child hears unkind words constantly from one parent to the other. It leads to lack of respect between a child and his parent especially when the child become older (Eugster, 2007, ¶13). To help children with overall development, parents should support each other and their children too (Murphy, 2014, ¶1).

The last effect of parents’ conflicts is psychological effects. Years ago, researchers had found that psychological development could be affected by parents’ disagreement (Meier, 2012, ¶ 1). The first psychological effect is reducing cognitive thinking for children. Persistent conflicts that are unsolved between parents harm children’s mental health even if their parents are divorced (Eugster, 2007, ¶ 1). To illustrate, consistent conflicts impact children’s brain and hormones, so they lead to failure in memory and cognitive skills (Crowe, 2013, ¶4).

Additionally, children’s academic skills can be reduced in unsustainable home (Crowe, 2013, ¶4). Children from sustainable home, on the other hand, have a better chance to succeed academically (¶4). Health problems, like stomachache or sleep, can prohibit a child from school when he is concerned because of parents’ conflicts (Tynan, 2011, ¶10). We know that sleeping

disorders are results of parents' conflicts too. Children's attention, information processing, motivation, and emotions are then impacted by sleeping problems (El-Sheikh, Buckhalt, Mize, & Acebo, 2006, ¶6). As a result, children fail in improving skills and developing cognitive thinking, such as mathematics.

Children are different in how they understand their parents' conflicts. Scholars have discovered the relationship between children's feelings and their behavior depends on how they perceive their parents' disagreement (Economic and Social Research Council, 2013, ¶2). A psychology professor mentions that positive behaviors, emotions, and positive words in the parents' interactions can change children's view of the marital problems (Goodwin, 2012, ¶5). In contrast, parents as models teach children social skills from their relationship with each other, so parents who use bad techniques in solving problems impact children's future in solving problems (Eugster, 2007, ¶10). Murphy (2014) insists that children learn to identify people's emotions and treat them from family interactions (¶7). However, emotions are hard to be directed by children who are exposed to a high level of conflicts at home (Farmer, 2010, ¶8). For example, children

use conflict's style as a normal style to solve problems with friends, or in the future with their family (Farmer, 2010, ¶8). To close, children can find the way to succeed in school and other social contexts if they were directed positively (Murphy, 2014, ¶6).

In conclusion, parents' conflicts damage children in many aspects, three of which are physical, psychological, and psychical effects. The impact of parents' conflicts could follow children until they grow up (Crowe, 2013, ¶1). Moreover, it may damage parents' relationship too. However, parents shouldn't solve this problem by divorce because it's harmful for kids too (Farmer, 2010, ¶16). According to the research, the impact of parents' conflicts depends on the family situation. It's mostly harmful for children whose parents are divorced. It extends to affect those children emotionally, socially, behaviorally, and academically (Parental conflict and its effect on children1, n.d., ¶6).

Since unsolved and explosive arguments are harmful for children, parents had better protect their children from their damage. The solution is that parents start to find another way to solve their problems than by arguing or getting divorce. For example, parents should create new ways to talk about their issues, end every conflict

that they start, and listen to each other carefully (Farmer, 2010, p.18). Sometimes children can be protected if they understand the argument positively. In other words, parents can explain to kids that it's normal for parents to argue, but without hurting each other's feelings or body. All of the above can protect children from being victims of their parents' conflicts. Parents' realizing the elements of their conflict could be another way to control their disagreements easily. Furthermore, they may decrease their conflicts and learn to deal with family problems in a peaceful and harmless way.

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