

1981

An annotated bibliography on divorce in children's books

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate books about divorce which can be used with elementary children. Results of this investigation were compiled in an annotated bibliography of fiction books to be used by students, teachers, guidance counselors, and media specialists in elementary schools. A comprehensive chart of readability, child of divorce, and divorce related problems was compiled and some interesting comparisons and conclusions were made. The number of books located was not as many as expected. The majority of books were located in Fry readability level three. The many feelings and emotions experienced by children of divorce, as stated in the research, were discovered throughout the fiction books. Thirty of the thirty-five books had the mother as the custodial parent, with only four books portraying the father as the custodial parent. Delinquency was involved in the plot in only three books, with none of the stories having children involved with alcohol or drugs.

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
ON DIVORCE IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

A Research Paper
Presented to the
Faculty of the Library Science Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

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July 13, 1981

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The purpose of this study was to investigate books about divorce which can be used with elementary children. Results of this investigation were compiled in an annotated bibliography of fiction books to be used by students, teachers, guidance counselors, and media specialists in elementary schools. A comprehensive chart of readability, child of divorce, and divorce related problems was compiled and some interesting comparisons and conclusions were made. The number of books located was not as many as expected. The majority of books were located in Fry readability level three. The many feelings and emotions experienced by children of divorce, as stated in the research, were discovered throughout the fiction books. Thirty of the thirty-five books had the mother as the custodial parent, with only four books portraying the father as the custodial parent. Delinquency was involved in the plot in only three books, with none of the stories having children involved with alcohol or drugs.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Divorce is a social phenomenon that has been becoming more and more prevalent in our society in recent decades. In the mid-nineteenth century there were few divorces, for divorce was almost solely the prerogative of the husband; the wife was largely denied the right to bring suit. By the 1900's there were 55,751 cases of divorce in the United States. This represented a ratio of four divorces for every 250 marriages. By the 1950's the ratio had increased to one out of every 10 marriages ending in divorce. In the 1960's it increased to one out of every four, and the 1970's ushered in an era where there was one divorce for every three marriages.¹ By 1978, the year of the last complete figures, the ratio reached an unprecedented one divorce for every two marriages.²

There are various theories offered to explain the rapid increase in divorces since the mid-nineteenth century. One theory contends that the changing role of women in our society, precipitated by many leaving the homes and taking jobs, has resulted in the conviction that marriages must be built on the sharing of common goals and interests involving the female as well as the male.³ Another study accounts for the rapid increase in divorce because of the adoption by various countries and

¹Vital Statistics of the United States, Vol III, Marriage and Divorce (Hyattsville: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1975), p. 2-6.

²U.S., Statistical Abstract of the United States, Bureau of Census (1979), p. 51.

³Early Grollman, Explaining Divorce to Children (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 5.

states of the 'no fault' divorce procedure.⁴ The 'no fault' divorce ended the traumatic and often adversary nature of one party being guilty and the other party being innocent, and allowed divorce to take place for no grievous reason. Other authorities offer the results of studies which show that divorce rates have always been higher in times of economic prosperity than in times of depression and higher during post-war periods than during prewar or war periods.

Divorce is defined as the legal dissolution of a marriage or family.⁵ As such it is purely a legal affair. But neither marriage nor divorce occurs in a social vacuum. The significance of divorce lies mainly in what it does to all who are involved. It is a major emotional upheaval, a time of radical change, requiring the most difficult and profound adjustments by all affected. All individuals involved -- parents, children, grandparents, friends, relatives -- are adjusting to new and strange roles. The parents are often caught up in their own changing roles, often at the expense of their children. While the mother and father may have emotional outlets by talking with friends, relatives or counselors to lessen the burden of these changes, often, more times than not, the children are left to fend for themselves in making psychological adjustments to the same divorce. Struggles over their custody, visitation rights, the psychological gap left by one or both missing parents, and possibly the change in familiar surroundings necessitated by the moving of the custodial parent to a new location often affects

⁴J. Gibson Wells, Current Issues in Marriage and the Family (New York: MacMillan, 1979), p. 304.

⁵Grollman, op. cit., p. 192.

the young child. Children, no matter how much they may feign indifference and lack of concern regarding their parents' separation cannot ever emerge from divorce completely unscathed.⁶

The average number of children caught up in a divorce situation is increasing at an alarming rate. In 1955, 341,000 children were caught up in divorce proceedings; in 1960, 463,000; 1965, 630,000; 1970, 870,000; and in 1975, 1,123,000.⁷ Today, more than six million children, nearly one in 10, are living in one-parent homes caused by divorce.⁸

Recent research confirms that divorce precipitates a major crisis in the lives of most children and that the stress generated by the crisis often spills into the academic area. There is no single response to divorce that can be observed in the classroom and thus there are no simple guidelines for recognizing divorce related behavior and emotional change.⁹

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY, PROBLEM STATEMENT

The purpose of this study was to investigate books about divorce which can be used with elementary children. With the concern today over the alarming rate of divorce, the researcher believed there would be an abundance of books available. Results of this investigation were

⁶Grollman, op. cit., p. 82.

⁷Vital Statistics, 1975, op. cit., p. 2-10.

⁸Grollman, op. cit., p. 4.

⁹Judith S. Wallerstein and Joan B. Kelly, "Children of Divorce," The National Elementary Principal, 59 (October, 1979), 51-58.

compiled in an annotated bibliography of fiction books to be used by students, teachers, guidance counselors, and media specialists in elementary schools. The focus of the problem was the effects of divorce on children as portrayed in contemporary fiction. These effects included self-image, peer pressures, custody, relationships with parents, and academic behavior.

This bibliography does provide detailed information on specific titles and does aid adults working with the many children involved in broken homes.

ASSUMPTIONS

It was assumed that because of the large number of divorces, there would be an abundance of available books on divorce. A second assumption was that students would read fiction books on divorce and would actually benefit from reading these books. It was further assumed that adults would want to help students with selection of books relating to the students' personal needs.

LIMITATIONS

The medium for this study was limited to the printed page including picture and fiction books intended for elementary students. The ability of the researcher to identify problems of divorce in children's literature was another limitation. Also the availability of books printed since 1966 until the present date was a limitation. Since 1966 authors have made a determined effort to write books depicting emotional needs of children.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study the term divorce included separation of parents pending divorce, as well as divorce, that is, the legal dissolution of marriage. Elementary students in this study were defined as children in grades kindergarten through sixth grade.

The following terms were crucial in the annotations:

Self-image:	One's conception of oneself or one's role. ¹⁰
Custody:	Guardianship. Children living primarily with one parent, but spending some time with the other. ¹¹
Custodial Parent:	Relating to or marked by guardianship. ¹²
Noncustodial or Absent Parent:	The parent without legal custody. The parent who visits with the children at times specified in the divorce decree. ¹³
Visitation:	Scheduled visiting rights established for the noncustodial parent. ¹⁴

¹⁰Phillip Babcock Gove, ed., Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged (Springfield: G & C Merriam Company, 1967), p. 2060.

¹¹Richard Gardner, The Parents Book About Divorce (Garden City, NY: Doubleday), 1977, p. 256.

¹²Gove, op. cit., p. 559.

¹³Gardner, op. cit., p. 256.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 243.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Great efforts were made to select materials for the literature review from primary sources which emphasized the effects of divorce on the emotional and psychological development of children involved in the divorce process. There is a wide range of divorce experiences which have varied types and degrees of effects on children. An attempt was made to report on the more frequently stated effects of divorce on children with which they have to cope. The majority of information evolved from educational, psychological, and sociological literature sources dealing with the effects of divorce.

There is now little question that children are better off in a single-parent home where they have love and stability than when they are in a two-parent home where there is tension, hostility, and possibly, violence. Psychologists and sociologists seem to agree that the pre-divorced years, with their marital strife that eventually leads to divorce, are more of a deterrent to the child's well-being than is the divorce itself.

Despert stated that trouble for children begins at the time of the "emotional divorce" when parents lose communication with each other and subsequently with their children.¹⁵ Wallerstein and Kelly state that the effects of divorce on children have been directly related to family life prior to the legal action.¹⁶

¹⁵J. Louise Despert, Children of Divorce (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1962), p. 7.

¹⁶Judith S. Wallerstein and Joan B. Kelly, "Divorce Counseling: A Community Service for Families in the Midst of Divorce," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 47 (January, 1977), 4-22.

When separation and divorce occur it is clear that the personal repercussions for each child depend upon the child's age, relationship with the departing parent, relationship with the custodial parent, circumstances of the divorce, sibling relationships, and personal developmental history.¹⁷ According to Wallerstein and Kelly, "the particular pattern of each child's response depends on his or her position on the developmental ladder, the child's own unique personality, and the psychological ambience of the divorcing period, particularly the amount of conflict between the parents."¹⁸

One of the first reactions by children of all ages to divorce is shock and surprise. Children, as well as adults, can't believe that it is happening to them. Fifty percent of the children show shock, anger, depression and defenses of denial and regression, and blame others for their problems.¹⁹

Smaller children, of preschool age, feel threatened, as they are concerned with the possible loss of their room, their home, their possessions, their sense of order and security.²⁰ Westman's study showed that the child's awareness of self as a boy or girl and the development of the role models for interpersonal relationships are fashioned through interaction with family members during this stage of life.²¹

¹⁷Jack Westman, "Effects of Divorce on a Child's Personality Development," Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality, January 1972, p. 42.

¹⁸Judith S. Wallerstein and Joan B. Kelly, "Children of Divorce," The National Elementary Principal, 59 (October, 1979), 51-58.

¹⁹John McDermott, "Divorce and Its Psychiatric Sequelae in Children," Archives of General Psychiatry, 23 (November, 1970), 119-124.

²⁰Judith S. Wallerstein and Joan B. Kelly, "The Effects of Parental Divorce: Experiences of the Preschool Child," Journal of Child Psychiatry, 14 (November, 1975), 602-604.

²¹Westman, op. cit., p. 45.

The early latency child's (age 5-7) reaction was a pervasive sadness coupled with an inability to use denial, fantasy or organized activity to relieve their suffering. While these children wished that their parents could remain together, they did not assume the responsibility for the divorce as did the preschool group. It is also at this stage that conflicting loyalties are a major problem.²²

Children in the age group 8 through 12, or later latency, were more self-assured and understanding. These children through organized and energetic activity were able to overcome their fears and conflicts. Because of their ability to understand the situation and the concepts of time, reality, and history, they were, on the whole, a better adjusted group. But Westman stated, "At no other time is it more apparent that there are nonsexual aspects of masculinity and femininity than during the 'latency' or elementary school years."²³ Many girls at this age have feelings of shame for the disruption of their family. It was at this age that somatic symptoms, especially headaches and stomach-aches, appeared. Anger was the most pervasive reaction of later latency -- anger toward the parent who was perceived as the initiator of the divorce.

When Wallerstein and Kelly did a follow-up study one year later, the children were still experiencing bitterness and wishfulness, but the intensity of their problems had decreased into resignation. However, even after a year, serious depressive patterns, low self-esteem, and frequent difficulties at school and with peers were still reported.

²²Judith S. Wallerstein and Joan B. Kelly, "The Effects of Parental Divorce: Experiences of the Preschool Child," Journal of Child Psychiatry, 14 (November, 1975), 602-604.

²³Westman, op. cit., p. 48.

The aftermath of divorce brings a variety of sensitive situations which should be thought out in advance by parents.²⁴ How parents cope with their divorce greatly affects the lives of their children. Parents are likely to feel grief, shock, rejection, defeat, resentment, frustration, self-pity, quiet, and rage.²⁵ Many times these feelings are directed at the child when they are indirectly meant for the absent parent.

The majority of the burden of easing the child's anxiety lies with the custodial parent. The custodial parent must properly handle the emotional, social, and financial pressures in order to help the child adjust to divorce.²⁶

A study conducted at the University of Wisconsin by Westman contends that about one-third of the divorces involving children were followed by continued conflicts between the parents with significant impact on the emotional status of the children.²⁷ Often children, who were the center of the disagreements before, remain pawns in the parental maneuvers after the divorce. But to avoid misunderstandings and to avoid using children as pawns, parents should have a direct line of communication rather than using the children or an attorney.

Children, many times, realize their power over their parents' emotions when they infuriate the custodial parent concerning the absent

²⁵Ibid., pp. 12-13.

²⁶Steven B. Silvern and Thomas D. Yawkey, Divorce: Some Effects On and Teaching Strategies for Young Children, U.S., Educational Resources Information Center, ERIC Document ED 103 114, 1974.

²⁷Westman, op. cit., pp. 38-55.

parent's indulgence; or when they portray life during the week with the custodial parent to induce a challenge of the custody arrangements.²⁸

In years past the child of divorce often suffered significant social abuse. Generally, this (like other forms of prejudice) originated with other parents and was transmitted through their children. Children of divorce must be helped to recognize that they are not necessarily what others claim them to be. Most importantly the children of divorce have to be helped to appreciate that they will ultimately be judged on the basis of the kind of person they actually are. If they get along with other peers, are nice to be with, and respected, other children will want to be with them -- regardless of the marital status of their parents.²⁹

The school's role should be supportive of the children of divorce and their families. The support may be in the areas of record keeping, inservices for teachers on the effects of divorce, adjustments in curriculum, and counseling services.³⁰

Schools should keep a record of changes in family status during the school year. If possible these should include the telephone number and addresses of the student, the custodial parent, and the noncustodial parent in case of an emergency.

Inservice programs need to be provided for teachers to make them more aware of changes in the family structure, sensitizing them to their own values and prejudices regarding divorce, and alerting them to

²⁸Richard A. Gardner, The Boys and Girls Book About Divorce (New York: Bantam, 1971) p. 114.

²⁹Richard Gardner, Psychotherapy With Children of Divorce (New York: Jason Aronson, 1976) p. 347.

³⁰Michell Lazarus, "The School's Most Significant Minority," The National Elementary Principal, 60 (September, 1980), 31-37.

the personality and behavioral changes of the child. Administrators should conduct inservice on how to help children of divorce by providing lists of available materials, community agencies, and support groups.

Adjustments in curriculum and instruction must be made to offer units in coping skills such as basic food groups, first aid, and how to handle emergency situations for those who have to take care of themselves and their siblings. Teachers of all subject areas need to choose textbooks and other materials that show a variety of nonstereotyped family patterns. Teachers should plan student activities which encourage students to express their feelings on changing family patterns in our society.³¹

Counseling services should be provided for individuals on a group basis to aid students in dealing with family crises. Schools should offer current books and resource materials to be used by students, counselors, teachers, media specialists, and parents on divorce and single parenting.

³¹Ibid.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Books for this bibliography were found by using available sources. Lists of titles were obtained from nonselective and selective sources. The Nonselective source was Subject Guide to Children's Books in Print. Selective sources included: The Elementary Library Collection, Children's Catalog, Fiction Catalog, Junior High Catalog, The Bookfinder: A Guide to Children's Literature About the Needs and Problems of Youth Aged 2-15, Single-Parent Family in Children's Books, Children's Books for Time of Stress, Separation and Divorce: Annotated Bibliography of Selected Literature for Children and Teens, Divorce in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain, and "In the Balance, Contemporary Realism in American Children's Books: by Ann E. Hall."³²

Sources for obtaining the books were the UNI Youth Collection, Welch Junior High in Ames, Iowa, Ames Public Library, Iowa State Library, Southeast and Northwest Elementary Schools in Ankeny, Iowa, Heartland Area Education Agency, and Fellows Elementary in Ames. As many books as possible were read and analyzed.

The following checklist was used for inclusion of books in the bibliography. Materials should:

1. be about a child of divorce;
2. present possibility of either father or mother being the custodial parent, or of sharing custody;
3. cover all facets of the characters' strengths as well as weaknesses in relationship to the divorce;

³²for complete bibliographical information on these titles see Appendix A.

4. be appropriate in reading level for elementary students, grades K-6; (This will include a few books of seventh grade level because some sixth graders will be able to read at that level.)
5. describe problems associated with divorce, such as: emotions, self-image, peer pressure, custody, visitation, relationship with the custodial and absent parent, delinquency, modification of behavior, and academic behavior.

The relationship of the custodial parent and the absent parent with the child was noted. In the research it was found that close to ninety percent of children of divorce under the age 18 live with their mother.³³ Psychologists deem this is an important factor because of the identification children have with the custodial parent. Marino and McCowan believe that "the development of self-image, sex-role and social skills is often disrupted to varying degrees. The sex-linked power structure also affects the child's view of authority and power in society."³⁴ Much of the research states that during the first year of divorce the custodial parent may offer little help and reassurance to the children. This is because they are having to cope with new emotions and experiences of their own.

To determine the appropriate reading level of books for elementary students the Fry Formula was used for grades four and above because it is familiar to the researcher and is easy to compute and yet is accurate. The Spache Formula was used for the primary levels and its accuracy is within 3.3 months.³⁵

³³Lisa D. Rubin and James H. Price, "Divorce and Its Effects on Children," The Journal of School Health, 49 (December, 1979), 552.

³⁴Gena D. Marino and Richard J. McCowan, "The Effects of Parent Absence on Children," Child Study Journal, 6:3 (1976), p. 168.

³⁵George D. Spache, Good Reading for Poor Readers (Champaign: Garrard Publishing, 1966), p. 206.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Annotations were arranged in order of reading levels, beginning with preprimers, and in alphabetical order by author in said grouping. Entries of the bibliography included bibliographic information (author, title, publisher, copyright date, number of pages), reading level, plus the annotation which was not to exceed 100 words for each item read and analyzed. Fiction and picture book annotations included a brief description of the plot, problems encountered by the child of divorce, and how the characters reacted to the problems.

Use of the readability level does not take into consideration the interest level of the students; instead this is left up to the professional judgement of the user of the bibliography. The bibliography should be of value to students, teachers, guidance counselors, and media specialists in elementary schools.

CHECKLIST

Fiction Books

The following checklist was applied to the fiction books and a comprehensive chart completed. The book number in the first column at the left edge of the page is the entry number of the book in the annotated bibliography. Headings for the succeeding columns came from the following Outline.

- I. Readability Level
- II. Child of Divorce
- III. Divorce Related Problems
 - A. Individual Feelings
 - 1. Fear of Abandonment
 - 2. Frustration

3. Love
4. Guilt
5. Anger
6. Confused Loyalties
7. School Performance
8. Eating Habits
9. Delinquency
10. Characters' Strengths and Weaknesses

B. Individual Feelings -- Peer Group

1. Peer Pressures
2. Self-Image

C. Individual Feelings Involving Adults

1. Custody -- Mother, Father
2. Visitation
3. Child Support
4. Relationship with Custodial Parent
5. Relationship with Absent Parent
6. Parents' Subsequent Dating
7. Relationship with Step-Mother
8. Relationship with Step-Father
9. Time Left Unsupervised
10. School Involvement

Chapter 4

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Fry 2

Blue, Rose. A Month of Sundays. New York: Franklin Watts, 1972. 60p.

Because his parents begin divorce proceedings, Jeff has to move with his mother to New York City. He has a hard time adjusting to being alone after school; there are no special dishes like his mom used to make, and his father never really talks to him or plays catch with him but always seems to be taking him places. Through his activities in school, the influence of his teacher, Mr. Hart, and because his friends say lots of kids don't have fathers, Jeff finally begins to adjust. (1)

Fry 2

Hogan, Paula L. Will Dad Ever Move Back Home? Milwaukee: Raintree Childrens Books, 1980. 31p.

Because their mother is working and is always tired, Laura and John must help around the house. Each Saturday they take turns going with their father to special places. John pretends to be handling the divorce better than Laura, although he is spending less time on his school work. Laura asks if she could live with her father, but he insists they must give this plan more time. Thus Laura believes both parents are rejecting her. How can she get their attention and love? (2)

Spache 3.7

Adams, Florence. Mushy Eggs. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1973. unp.

David and Sam have accepted the fact that "we are divorced." David is positive about each of his parents and about the fact that they are living separately. It's not until their babysitter leaves for Italy that David and Sam's world seems to fall apart. Although, in the end, David says that maybe someday he'll love his new babysitter, too. (3)

Fry 3

Blume, Judy. It's Not the End of the World. New York: Bradbury Press Inc., 1972. 162p.

Karen's parents have been fighting more and more. Although Karen's father leaves, no one bothers to explain where he's gone or if he'll return until much later. Karen and her grandfather try to get them back together. Karen's friend Val is another child of divorce and recommends Gardner's Boys & Girls Book About Divorce which helps Karen. Her brother, Jeff, becomes upset and runs away. Will this crisis bring Karen's and Jeff's parents together and keep their father from divorcing their mother? (4)

Spache 3.9

Hazen, Barbara Shook. Two Homes to Live In. New York: Human Sciences Press, 1978. unp.

Niki says her parents are divorced from each other but not from her. She would like them to get back together, and she hides so they'll have to see each other. Although she is sad and lonesome when she can't be with both her parents, she does do special things with each of them. Niki is angry with her mother when she goes out with another man. How can she get her parents back together? (5)

Spache 3.7

Lisker, Sonia O. Two Special Cards. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976. unp.

Hazel Cooper is worrying about her parents arguing over silly things. During the night she hears them yelling about divorce and in the morning her father is gone. Hazel misses her father and wonders if her mother will leave her and her little brother too. Finally she asks about her father and her mother says they will get to visit their father on the weekends. (6)

Fry 3

Mazer, Harry. Guy Lenny. New York: Delacorte Press, 1971. 117p.

It has been seven years since Guy has seen his mother. He vaguely remembers her, although he was only five when she left with that serviceman. Guy can't understand why his mother finally shows up after all these years of only sending occasional presents and letters. Then it all begins to fall into place. Guy's father must have written to his mother to have Guy out of the way so he can remarry. (7)

Fry 3

Mazer, Norma. I, Trissy. New York: Delacorte Press, 1971. 150p.

Trissy feels her typewriter is a bribe from her father. She would rather have her father at home and forget about the divorce. Trissy causes a scene at her brother's birthday party in hopes that her father will come home and then her parents will get back together. Trissy is crushed when she talks the 'super' into giving her a key to her father's apartment and finds a note there from another woman. She is just as upset when her mother announces she is going to marry Uncle Arthur. How can this be happening to her? (8)

Fry 3

Norris, Gunilla B. Lillan. New York: Atheneum, 1969. 136p.

Lillan has many frustrating moments. She misses her Papa terribly and she hates the fact that her mother works; she's the only student in the whole school who can't go home for lunch. Everyone knows she doesn't have a father, so she really feels alone. Finally, she becomes friends with Britta which does help in school, but because she has so much unsupervised time she steals a china elephant for a gift for her mother. (9)

Spache 3.8

Noble, June. Two Homes for Lynn. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979. unp.

Lynn lived with her mother and her father until she was six, but now, because of the divorce, she is living with her mother and only staying with her father on weekends. It's hard to adjust to two homes; because she is lonesome she invites Janelle, her make believe friend, to live with her. However, she is thankful that she has a mom and a dad who will share their homes with her. (10)

Fry 3

Okimoto, Jean Davies. My Mother is Not Married to My Father. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1979. 109p.

Coming home after visiting friends with her mother and sister, Cynthia thinks her house has been broken into. Actually her father has been home to pick up his things. This is very traumatic for Cynthia and her sister. The book discusses the feelings of the children, as well as the parents, during the divorce and remarriage. One of Cynthia's friends warns her of the weird adult behavior during divorce, and her mother does spend time talking to Uncle Marvin, the psychiatrist. (11)

Spache 3.6

Perry, Patricia. Mommy and Daddy are Divorced. New York: The Dial Press, 1979. unp.

Joey and Ned were always excited when their father came to visit on Wednesdays and Saturdays. He would play with them in the yard or help make model airplanes. Sometimes Ned would cause a scene when his father had to leave because he wanted him to stay so they could be a family once again. His father tried to explain that he loved the boys, but their mother and he made each other unhappy. (12)

Fry 3

Pevsner, Stella. A Smart Kid Like You. New York: The Seabury Press, 1975. 216p.

Nina has been away at camp all summer, but she is still having a hard time accepting her parents' divorce. Nina resents the remarriage of her father even more, but it's time to put that behind her and to think about her first day at junior high. All goes well until she gets to her math class and discovers her teacher is her father's new wife. Nina wants to drop the course, but her friends talk her into staying and tell her that through their actions they will try to get the teacher to quit. Who will survive the longest: Nina or Mrs. Beckwith? (13)

Fry 3

Slote, Alfred. Matt Gargan's Boy. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1975. 158p.

Although his parents have been divorced for three years, Danny Gargan wants to get them back together as soon as his father retires

from major league baseball. Things begin to deteriorate when his mother gets a new boss at the library and his daughter ends up on Danny's little league team. In desperation Danny calls his father in Chicago, but you'd never believe his father's news. (14)

Spache 3.5

Thomas, Ianthe. Eliza's Daddy. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976. unp.

Although Eliza wants her parents to live together again, she knows that probably won't be possible because her father has a new wife, a new daughter, and a new baby. She gets to see her father each Saturday afternoon, and they do special things. Eliza dreams about her father's new daughter and wants to visit his new home. After some-time she does ask to visit his house and meets his new family, thus overcoming the fear of losing her father. (15)

Fry 3

Wood, Phyllis Anderson. Win Me and You Lose. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977. 137p.

At the custody hearing following his parents' divorce Matt is asked with which parent he wants to live. He chooses his father but then realizes he really doesn't know him. Matt meets Rebecca, another child of divorce, who is home alone in the evenings. Matt finds Rebecca is being followed and is getting threatening phone calls. Through their concern for Rebecca, can Matt and his father work out their differences? (16)

Fry 4

Alexander, Anne. To Live a Lie. New York: Atheneum, 1980. 165p.

Starting a new life at a new junior high, in a new town, with a new name is going to make a difference for Noel Henning. She isn't going to confide in friends again because hers had betrayed her during the divorce. She tries to be a loner and only answers personal questions when asked. But since new classmates kept asking about her mother, she finally tells them her mother is dead. Of course, one lie leads to another, and when she returns her mother's birthday gift in the mail, the whole problem surfaces. (17)

Spache 4.9

Caines, Jeanette Franklin. Daddy. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977. unp.

Windy enjoys her visits from her father each Saturday. They play games, visit his apartment, do the shopping, or cook special things. Sometimes she worries he may not come but is thrilled when she sees him. (18)

Fry 4

Fitzhugh, Louise. Sport. New York: Delacorte Press, 1980. 218p.

Although his parents have joint custody, Sport lives with his dad the year around. Not until his grandfather dies and leaves Sport thirty million dollars does his mother become interested in him. While his father and new step-mother are on their honeymoon, Sport's mother gets a chance to have him around full time. You can't imagine all that can happen to Sport in one short week! (19)

Fry 4

Harris, Mark Johathan. With a Wave of the Wand. New York: Lathrop, Lee and Shepard, 1980. 191p.

Marlee can't believe the bad luck she had in fifth grade and now to top it off her parents are separating. Things really aren't looking much better for sixth grade either, having to move, making new friends, going to the "weird" school in town, and her father dating are almost too much. Marlee tries everything, including magic, to get her parents back together. Will she succeed? (20)

Fry 4

Mann, Peggy. My Dad Lives in a Downtown Hotel. New York: Avon Camelot, 1973. 92p.

Joey Grant doesn't want to accept his parents' divorce. In fact, he borrows money from a friend at school and takes a bus all the way downtown to his dad's office. He promises his father he'll be very good if his father will just come back home. Joey tries to comfort his mom but does miss having her at home to do the little things for him. Joey is embarrassed that his father lives in a crummy hotel, and it is not until he realizes some of his friends don't have fathers, that he begins to adjust to the divorce. (21)

Fry 4

Platt, Kin. Chloris and the Freaks. Scarsdale: Bradbury Press, 1975. 217p.

Jenny Carpenter, age twelve, hopes her sister Chloris is wrong. Chloris wants Fidel, their stepfather, and their mother to get a divorce. Chloris says their dead father's spirit instructs her to get rid of Fidel and not to let their mother marry again. Jenny is too young to really remember her father. She doesn't understand why her parents divorced or why her father, after his remarriage, committed suicide. Jenny does love Fidel and wants them to remain a family. It is not until Fidel goes to an art show and her mother brings home a man from work that Jenny starts thinking Chloris may be right about the divorce. (22)

Fry 4

Smith, Doris Buchanan. Kick A Stone Home. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1974. 152p.

Can you imagine that her parents' divorce was three years ago and this was the first time Sara had mentioned it, even to her best friend Kay? It was then that Kay admitted that her parents were also divorced. At least Kay didn't have to choose between never seeing her father or having weekend visitation with him and his new wife. (23)

Fry 5

Bawden, Nina. The Runaway Summer. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1969. 185p.

Although Mary's mother has custody of her, she has dumped Mary onto her great aunt and grandfather. Mary is very bitter about her situation and makes life unbearable for the people around her. Not until she meets Simon and they rescue a young boy does Mary get her mind off her problems and begins to like herself. (24)

Fry 5

Clewes, Dorothy. Missing from Home. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975. 150p.

Maxwell and Carrie can't believe that one of Carrie's schoolmates and their father have gone off together. Their mother is having a hard time adjusting to the situation, so Maxwell and Carrie devise a plan to bring their father back from Paris. They plan to "get lost," but their plan becomes more complicated when they hear on the radio that their kidnappers have demanded a ransom. Will they ever get back home? (25)

Fry 5

Hunter, Evan. Me and Mr. Stenner. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1976. 157p.

In November her family consisted of her mother, father, and herself. Now it is December and she and her mother are living alone in a house rented for them by Mr. Stenner. Abby can't stand Mr. Stenner. She doesn't want a new stepfather; all she wants is to be able to move back to her father. As time passes will Abby be able to have a good relationship with her stepfather and not feel like she's betraying her real father? (27)*

Fry 5

Irwin, Hadley. Bring to a Boil and Separate. New York: Atheneum, 1980. 123p.

While Katie was away at summer camp it had happened. Her brother told her about the divorce, but every time she tries to discuss it with her mother the subject is dropped. Through her friendships and self-determination, Katie does begin to adjust to the divorce although she doesn't think it's best for her parents. (26)*

*These items are out of alphabetical order because of the pseudonym of Hadley Irwin.

Fry 5

Klein, Norma. Taking Sides. New York: Pantheon Books, 1974. 156p.

Nell's parents have been married and divorced twice. During the summer months Nell and her brother have lived with their mother, but now that it's time for school to begin, they're moving into the city to live with their father. Nell tends to feel guilty because she loves her father best. Nell doesn't approve of her father dating, but that becomes a minor detail when her father has a heart attack and they have to fly home from vacation. Will their father live? And, where will Nell and Her brother stay? (28)

Fry 5

Newfeld, John. Sunday Father. New York: Signet Press, 1977. 159p.

During the last eight months Tessa has been having a hard time adjusting to the apartment and the idea of her parents' divorce. Now comes the bombshell, her father is remarrying! Why doesn't her mother do something if she still loves him? Well, if she's not going to try anything, Tessa is! What tactics can a 14 year old girl use, against a possible step-mother and who will win? (29)

Fry 5

Newfield, Marcia. A Book for Jodan. New York: Atheneum, 1978. unp.

Jodan ~~doesn't~~ want her parents to separate. How is she going to see her father? Jodan and her mother are moving to California and her father is staying in Massachusetts. Jodan receives letters from her father and she writes to him to let him know how she is feeling without him. Finally it is Easter vacation and she flies to see her father. They have a great time walking, skating, visiting the zoo, making pancakes, and just being together. Jodan finally receives the surprise she heard so much about in her father's letters. You will want to read the book and discover the very special surprise gift which showed that she indeed was very important to her father. (30)

Fry 6

Jones, Cordelia. A Cat Called Camouflage. New York: S. G. Phillips, 1971. 156p.

As Ruth looked back, Knaresley wasn't half bad, thanks to Camouflage and her owner. Ruth and her mother had moved there after her parents' separation. No one had bothered to tell Ruth the details of what was happening and where her father was. She did feel bad when he missed her birthday and Christmas. But when he unexpectedly showed up at her school and explained to her that her mother had returned to him the letters and presents he had sent to her, she was sorry she had been so rude to him. (31)

Fry 6

Platt, Kin. Chloris and the Weirdos. New York: Bradbury Press, 1978. 231p.

Through her relationship with Harold, her first boyfriend, Jenny

adjusts more and more to her mother's divorce. She easily says, "We're out of fathers for the time being." Harold is also a child of divorce and together they share their inner feelings. Chloris will not tolerate their mother's dating. She has not forgiven her mother for the first divorce from their father. (32)

Fry 6

Walker, Mildred. A Piece of the World. New York: Atheneum, 1974. 218p.

Although Calder has decided to make the best of her stay with her grandmother, she really doesn't understand the divorce. She realizes her mother has to be on a set schedule and this really upsets her erratic father. While exploring Calder finds a huge boulder which she imagines as her territory. With the aid of her friends, Calder begins to sort out the divorce, her father's remarriage, and learns to accept her mother's remarriage. (33)

Fry 7

Christopher, Matt. The Fox Steals Home. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1978. 178p.

Bobby is finding it hard to concentrate on baseball, or on anything else for that matter. He feels so alone. His mother isn't interested in his baseball games, and his father can't always come. Not until his grandfather calls Bobby's dad to come coach him does his baseball playing improve. If his mother finds out she may cut out his dad's visitation rights all together. Bobby just can't really understand how, or why, the divorce happened, and he isn't too crazy about the thought of having a stepbrother either. (34)

Fry 7

Salles, Susan. An Open Mind. New York: Harper and Row, 1978. 139p.

It's been three years since the divorce, but David still hopes his parents will get back together. He doesn't want to accept the fact that his father is dating; even without meeting her, he knows he hates his father's girlfriend. It is by accident that David becomes friends with her son Bruce, a paraplegic. The emotions of each of the boys are very different when they hear of a possible marriage. Don't miss the adventure when David finds Bruce taking off from his school. (35)

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS

After the checklist and annotations were completed, some interesting comparisons and conclusions were made. The number of books located was not as many as expected, but a sufficient number was found at each readability level, except for level one, in which none was found. The majority of books were located in level three with the second most numerous readings in level five. In agreement with the research all books were written since 1966 with the majority being written in 1978.

The many feelings and emotions experienced by children of divorce, as stated in the research, were discovered throughout the fiction books. Fear of abandonment was found in 23 of the 35 books read, guilt in 14, confused loyalties in 25, and anger in 27 books. Most of the described children did not want anyone to know about their parent's divorce and were frustrated and ashamed. But the majority met other children of divorce and found it easier to go on with their lives once they found they were not the only ones with divorced parents. Only in To Live a Lie did the main character express that her friends' parents had forbidden them to associate with her.

According to the research, the emotional aspects of divorce usually spills into the academic areas. In about one-half of the books, 16 of 35, the researcher found this to be true; but many of the stories took place during the summer months, thus this particular comparison may not have been necessarily valid in the development of this conclusion.

Although the research stated that the burden of easing the child's anxiety lies with the custodial parent, throughout the fiction books

many times other children of divorce, friends, and other relatives helped the child more than the custodial parent. Many times the custodial parent was too involved in adjusting to his/her life to be of much help to the child.

Thirty of the 35 books had the mother as the custodial parent, with only 4 books portraying the father as the custodial parent. In the book Sport, the parents had joint custody. It was surprising to the researcher that only in Win Me and You Lose was there a custody case involved. Yet complications, changes, or anticipation of visitation were mentioned in 23 of the 35 books. A teacher participated in the student's life in two books while in An Open Mind there was participation by a school counselor. In a majority of the books the children were never told why their parents were getting a divorce; and they all hoped their parents would get back together so they could be a family once again.

Delinquency was involved in the plot in only three books, with none of the stories having children involved with alcohol or drugs. Time left unsupervised was mentioned in 8 books, but only when children themselves were concerned, afraid, or when their free time caused them a personal problem. If the children did not see the amount of time left alone as a problem, it was not mentioned on the checklist.

When the plot included parents dating a majority of the children could not accept this of either the custodial or absent parent. Chloris from Chloris and the Freaks and in Chloris and the Weirdos reacted the most from parental dating.

All books mentioned the child's strengths and weaknesses during the divorce period with the exception of the Easy books in which there was not any plot characterization present.

Recommendation for further research on divorce in children's books might be to do an annotated bibliography of nonfiction books or a content analysis of available books on divorce. In five years a follow-up study could prove interesting to see if any of the new books on divorce would involve elementary students more strongly with delinquency, alcohol, or drug abuse.

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APPENDIX A -- SOURCES

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APPENDIX B -- A COMPREHENSIVE CHART OF READABILITY, CHILD OF DIVORCE, AND DIVORCE RELATED PROBLEMS

Book Number	I. Readability Level	II. Child of Divorce	III. Divorce Related Problems	1. Fear of Abandonment	2. Frustration	3. Love	4. Guilt	5. Anger	6. Confused Loyalties	7. School Performance	8. Eating Habits	9. Delinquency	10. Characters' Strengths and Weaknesses	B. Individual Feelings -- Peer Pressures	1. Peer Pressures	2. Self-Image	C. Individual Feelings Involving Adults	1. Custody -- Mother	Father	2. Visitation	3. Child Support	4. Relationship with Custodial Parent	5. Relationship with Absent Parent	6. Parents' Subsequent Dating	7. Relationship with Step-Mother	8. Relationship with Step-Father	9. Time Left Unsupervised	10. School Involvement
1.	2	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
2.	2	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
3.	3	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
4.	3	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
5.	3.9	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
6.	3.7	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
7.	3	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
8.	3	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
9.	3	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
10.	3.8	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
11.	3	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
12.	3.6	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
13.	3	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
14.	3	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
15.	3.5	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
16.	3	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
17.	4	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
18.	4.9	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
19.	4	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
20.	4	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
21.	4	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
22.	4	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
23.	4	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
24.	5	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
25.	5	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
26.	5	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
27.	5	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
28.	5	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
29.	5	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
30.	5	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
31.	6	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
32.	6	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
33.	6	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
34.	7	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
35.	7	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x		x		x	x					x
TOTAL:		35		23	31	35	14	28	25	16	8	3	33		15	20		30	5	23	2	31	28	20	6	4	8	3

APPENDIX C -- TITLES OF BOOKS READ

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