

The Highest Stakes

“Without question, the single biggest problem for children of divorce is being exposed to continuing parental conflict.”

Edward Teyber, *Helping Children Cope with Divorce*.
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (1992)

Exercise

- Think of yourself at age _____?
 - What was your view of the world?
 - What concerned you?
 - What did you think about?
 - What was important to you?
 - Think about friends, pets, where you lived, toys, school, family, holidays, summer vacations, free time playing.



Children Need Both Parents in Their Lives



- More successful in school, better grades
- Less likely to have mental health problems
- More likely to maintain healthy relationships as a child and as an adult
- Less likely to have behavior problems or involved in juvenile court

What Divorce is NOT



- A way to get even.
- A way to get total economic security.
- A way to show who is good and who is bad.
- A way to show kids who really loves them.
- A way to control the ex-spouse.

What Children Need to Hear

- We both still love you.
- It's OK to love both of us
- It's not your fault we divorce/separated.
- It's not your fault if we fight.
- It's not up to you to get us back together.
- It's OK not to take sides and not to tell on either of us.



Successful Family Outcomes

- Agreement on method of communication
- Develop a method for resolving conflict
- Agreement on routines for transitions as well as daily activities
- Both have roles in school, sports, and other activities
- Making transfer of clothes, toys, school notices smooth and conflict -free