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University of Nevada, Reno

Divorce: A Potential Gateway to Positive Child Development

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

BACHELOR OF ARTS, PSYCHOLOGY AND THE HONORS PROGRAM

by

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Divorce: A Potential Gateway to Positive Child Development

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Abstract

Nevada has the highest divorce rate in the nation (Appendix, Table 4). Research has shown that divorce has both short-term and long-term detrimental effects on the children involved, including psychological well-being, physical health, behavioral problems, and decreased academic potential, including an increased likelihood of dropping out of school (Amato & Keith, 1991a). Along with having the highest divorce rate in the nation, Nevada holds the second lowest high school graduation rate in the nation (Combs & Butterworth, 2012). A few other states in the nation have implemented mandatory and voluntary education programs for children that have proven to reduce the negative consequences of divorce on children. Nevada has previously implemented mandatory education programs for divorcing parents (in Clark County), but there is no similar mandate for the children. In the interest of protecting the children of Nevada, Nevada needs to implement mandatory programs to help children through the emotional battlefield of their parents' divorces.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to argue in favor of the need for mandatory divorce education programs for children of divorce in Nevada. Research has shown that divorce negatively impacts children in many ways, including psychological well-being, academics, social and behavioral problems, and self-esteem (Amato & Keith, 1991a). In Nevada, and across the nation, educational programs are in place to teach divorcing parents how to lessen the negative consequences of divorce for the children. There are significantly fewer programs that target the children directly (Pollet, 2009). Research has shown that programs for children are effective at reducing the negative short-term and long-term effects of divorce on children (Pollet, 2009).

Nevada leads the nation in divorces (Appendix, Table 4), yet has no mandatory programs in place for children of divorce (Pollet, 2009). In Clark County, divorcing parents are required to attend an educational program prior to completing their divorce, but there is no similar mandatory program for the children. Nevada is ranked 50th in the nation for high school graduation rate and seventh in the nation for high school drop outs (Combs & Butterworth, 2012). One of the known risks for children of divorce is a greater likelihood of dropping out of school. It is the goal of this thesis to point out the need for education programs for children of divorce within the state of Nevada.

To accomplish the goal of this thesis, I will explore some of the existing research on the effects of divorce on children, as well as research on the efficacy of existing

programs aimed at divorcing parents and programs aimed at the children of divorcing parents.

1.1 Methods.

To gather data for this thesis, I conducted a search of the University of Nevada, Reno library's online databases, such as psycINFO and EBSCOhost, for articles on the topics of divorce, marriage, children of divorce, the effects of divorce on children and divorce education programs. I gathered articles from various publications, including the Journal of Marriage and Family, the Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, the Journal of Family Psychology, the Journal of Family Issues, the Psychological Bulletin, the American Sociological Review, Public Interest, Child Development and the Family Court Review. The key researchers identified in the search were from the fields of psychology and sociology. In addition to searching the library's online databases at the University of Nevada, Reno, an internet search was conducted to locate marriage and divorce statistics for the United States, as well as the educational statistics for the state of Nevada.

1.2 Outline of Thesis.

I will begin by providing information regarding the rates of marriage and divorce, both nationally and within Nevada. Next, I will discuss the short-term and the long-term negative consequences of divorce on children, followed by a chapter on some of the existing divorce education programs for both parents and children. Lastly, I will present my argument in favor of Nevada implementing mandatory education programs for children whose parents are divorcing.

Chapter 2

Marriage and Divorce Statistics

Before beginning a meaningful discussion on why counseling and education programs are necessary for children of divorce in Nevada, it will be necessary to first look at how prevalent marriage and divorce is in the United States, and specifically in Nevada, as well as how many children are affected by divorce. This chapter will give a brief overview of the current relevant marriage and divorce statistics. The intent and focus of this thesis is not to educate the reader as to the historical background of marriage and divorce statistics, but instead to illustrate how many children are impacted by divorce each year, how divorce affects the development of these children, and why Nevada needs to have programs in place to counsel and educate children with regard to the divorce of their parents.

2.1 Marriage and Divorce Statistics Collection.

Beginning in 1867, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began collecting and reporting detailed marriage and divorce statistics within the United States (National Center for Health Statistics, 1973). Due to the budgetary constraints of the CDC and the limited data collected by individual states, the CDC ceased gathering detailed data in 1996 (CDC/National Center for Health Statistics, 2009). The last comprehensive analyses of detailed marriage and divorce statistics by the CDC, including the numbers of children involved in a divorce of their parents, were published by the National Center for Health and Statistics (NCHS), a division of the CDC, in 1995 (CDC/National Center for Health Statistics, 2009).

Although the CDC stopped gathering detailed data in 1996, it continues to gather and report basic data regarding the rates of marriages and divorces each year from the states that maintain and report such data.

2.2 U.S. Marriage Rates.

The “Advance Report of Final Marriage Statistics, 1989 and 1990” published by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) in 1995, states that in 1990 the rate of marriage in the United States was 9.8 marriages per 1,000 people (Clarke, Advance Report of Final Marriage Statistics, 1989 and 1990, 1995). As can be seen in Table 1, the rate decreased to 8.2 marriage per 1,000 people in 2000, and then to 6.8 per 1,000 people in 2010 (CDC/National Center for Health Statistics, 2012).

2.3 Nevada Marriage Rates.

Nevada’s reputation as the “wedding capital” appears to be well-founded. According to the CDC/NCHS, National Vital Statistics System (Appendix, Table 2), in 1990 Nevada had the highest marriage rate in the nation, by a significant margin, at 99.0 marriages per 1,000 people, Hawaii came in at a distant second with a rate of 16.4; the national average, as stated above, was 9.8. In line with the national trend of decreasing marriage rates, Nevada’s marriage rate fell from 99.0 in 1990 to 72.2 in 2000, and then to 38.3 in 2010 (still the highest in the nation). The only state that saw an increase in marriage rates from 1990 to 2010 was Hawaii, with an increase from 16.4 in 1990 to a high rate of 22.6 in 2004 and 2005, and then a lesser rate of 17.6 in 2010 (still second highest in the nation and a distant second from Nevada).

Nevada's disproportionate marriage rate is a bit deceiving. Unlike divorce in Nevada, there is no residency requirement in order to get married in Nevada. Pursuant to Nevada Revised Statute 122.050, the following persons are able to get married in Nevada:

1. Except as otherwise provided in this section, a male and a female person, at least 18 years of age, not nearer of kin than second cousins or cousins of the half blood, and not having a husband or wife living, may be joined in marriage.

2. A male and a female person who are the husband and wife of each other may be rejoined in marriage if the record of their marriage has been lost or destroyed or is otherwise unobtainable.

3. A person at least 16 years of age but less than 18 years of age may marry only if the person has the consent of:

- a) either parent; or b) such person's legal guardian.

There is no required form of solemnization of a marriage required in the state of Nevada. Nevada Revised statute 122.110 states that:

1. In the solemnization of marriage, no particular form is required except that the parties shall declare, in the presence of the justice, judge, minister or other person authorized to solemnize a marriage, justice of the peace, commissioner of civil marriages or deputy commissioner of civil

marriages, and the attending witness, that they take each other as husband and wife.

2. In every case, there shall be at least one witness present besides the person performing the ceremony.

Nevada marriage statistics are based upon the number of marriage certificates issued, not on the number of Nevadans married. The statistics do not take into consideration the vast number of people from other States who come to Nevada to get married. I was unable to find any data regarding the number of weddings performed within Nevada for Nevada residents versus non-Nevada residents.

2.4 U.S. Divorce Rates.

In 1990, the rate of divorce was 4.7 divorces per 1,000 people (Clarke, Advance Report of Final Divorce Statistics, 1989 and 1990, 1995). That rate fell to 4.0 per 1,000 people in 2000, and then to 3.6 per 1,000 people in 2010 (CDC/National Center for Health Statistics, 2012). There are a number of ways to determine the percentages of marriages that end in divorce. One method is to use marital status life tables that track the marriage and divorce events of men and women within the US (Schoen & Standish, 2001). Unfortunately, this method requires tracking people until they die in order to get an accurate divorce percentage. Another method is to simply compare the number of marriages in a given year with the number of divorces in that same year. This very simple analysis of data reveals that the often-reported statistic that nearly one-half of all marriages end in divorce is accurate. In 2010 there was a marriage rate of 6.8 per 1,000 people, and a divorce rate of 3.6 per 1,000 people—a divorce-to-marriage ratio of

approximately 53%. In 2000, there was a marriage rate of 8.2 and a divorce rate of 4.0—a divorce-to-marriage ratio of approximately 49%. In 1990 the divorce (4.7) to marriage (9.8) ratio was approximately 47%. While the rates of marriages and divorces have been slowly declining, the percentage of marriages ending in divorce appears to be slowly rising.

2.5 Nevada Divorce Rates.

Similar to marriage rates, Nevada holds the record for the highest divorce rate in the nation. The high divorce rate in Nevada is due to the relatively short residency requirement, together with Nevada's "no-fault" divorce laws. Within the State of Nevada, a person may seek a divorce if they have met the requirements of Nevada Revised Statute 125.020:

1. Divorce from the bonds of matrimony may be obtained for the causes provided in NRS 125.010, by verified complaint to the district court of any county:
 - a) In which the cause therefor accrued;
 - b) In which the defendant resides or may be found;
 - c) In which the plaintiff resides;
 - d) In which the parties last cohabited; or
 - e) If plaintiff resided 6 weeks in the state before suit was brought.

2. Unless the cause of action accrued within the county while the plaintiff and defendant were actually domiciled therein, no court has jurisdiction to grant a divorce unless either the plaintiff or defendant has been resident of the state for a period of not less than 6 weeks preceding the commencement of the action.

Additionally, as a no-fault divorce state, the grounds for divorce in Nevada, pursuant to Nevada Revised Statute 125.010, are as follows:

1. Insanity existing for 2 years prior to the commencement of the action. Upon this cause of action the court, before granting a divorce, shall require corroborative evidence of the insanity of the defendant at that time, and a decree granted on this ground shall not relieve the successful party from contributing to the support and maintenance of the defendant, and the court may require the plaintiff in such action to give bond therefor in an amount to be fixed by the court.

2. When the husband and wife have lived separate and apart for 1 year without cohabitation the court may, in its discretion, grant an absolute decree of divorce at the suit of either party.

3. Incompatibility.

The CDC/NCHS, National Vital Statistics System reported (Appendix, Table 4) that in 1990 Nevada had the only double-digit divorce rate at 11.4 divorces per 1,000 people. The state with the second highest divorce rate in 1990 was Ohio, at 7.7. Also

similar to marriage rates, the rate of divorce has declined since 1990 both nationally, and within Nevada. In 2010 Nevada's divorce rate was still the highest in the nation, at 5.9. The divorce rate runner-up in 2010 was Arkansas, with a rate of 5.7.

2.6 Rates of Children Involved in Divorce.

The most recent detailed information regarding the rate of children under the age of 18 involved in divorce was contained in the 1995 "Advance Report of Final Divorce Statistics." The report states that approximately 1,075,000, or 16.8 out of every 1,000, children were involved in the divorce of their parents in 1990, and that there was an average of 0.9 children per divorce during that same year (Clarke, Advance Report of Final Divorce Statistics, 1989 and 1990, 1995). Approximately 53% of divorcing couples had one or more children, while approximately 47% of couples were childless (Clarke, Advance Report of Final Divorce Statistics, 1989 and 1990, 1995). The Divorce Report by Clarke (1995) further reveals that among divorces in which neither partner had been previously married, 61% had minor children. Approximately 54% of divorces in which only the husband had been previously married involved minor children, while 47% of divorces involved minor children when the wife had been previously married and the husband had not. In divorces in which both partners had been previously married, only approximately 29% involved minor children. In 1990 there were a total of 1,182,000 divorces and annulments (Clarke, Advance Report of Final Divorce Statistics, 1989 and 1990, 1995). Contained within those 1,182,000 marriage terminations, 1,075,000 children were impacted.

Chapter 3

Effects of Divorce on Children

Americans used to be believed that parents should not get divorced and should remain married for the sake of the children (Gill, 1992). Since the 1970s several research studies have revealed that, under certain conditions, children actually fare better if their parents divorce, especially if their parents' marriage is one of high-conflict (Booth & Amato, 1994; Gill, 1992). Unfortunately though, the majority of children of divorce suffer some negative developmental consequences, which may last into adulthood, and may even pass on to the next generation of children (Amato, 1994; Kim, 2001; Amato & Cheadle, 2005).

3.1 High Conflict vs. Low Conflict Marriage.

Long before children are affected by their parents' divorce, they are affected by their parents' marriage. When children are living with parents that are hostile toward one-another, it creates an aversive living environment for the children (Amato & Keith, 1991a). Children living in such an environment experience stress, unhappiness, and insecurity (Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991a; Bing, Nelson, III, & Wesolowski, 2009). Children whose parents' marital conflict is "overt, intense, chronic and unresolved" generally appear to be better off if their parents divorce than if the parents remain married (Amato, 2001).

However, when children's parents exhibit few signs or symptoms of overt marital conflict prior to divorce, the children are likely to be caught off guard by the divorce and suffer emotional and behavioral problems as a consequence (Amato, 2001). As parents

transition from marriage to divorce, a low-conflict home can become a high-conflict home. As the children traverse this changing landscape, their home—their place of safety and security—can become a battlefield. This can result in children developing feelings of insecurity, isolation, anger toward one or both parents, helplessness, hopelessness, frustration, and aggression (Oppawsky, 2000).

Amato and Keith (1991a) conducted a meta-analysis of 92 studies involving over 13,000 children. Contained within the studies that they reviewed, eight studies included data on intact high-conflict, intact low-conflict families and divorced families. Children in the intact high-conflict families scored significantly lower than children of intact low-conflict families on measures of conduct, psychological adjustment and self-image. Additionally, the children of intact high-conflict families scored significantly lower than children of divorced families on measures of psychological adjustment and self-esteem.

3.2 High Conflict vs. Low Conflict Divorce.

Just as with marriages, spouses can have low-conflict divorces and high-conflict divorces. When high-conflict marriages come to an end, it is usually in a high-conflict divorce. Low-conflict marriages can end in varying degrees of conflict during divorce (Bing, Nelson, III, & Wesolowski, 2009). A high-conflict divorce is usually characterized by the presence of any or all of the following: “intractable legal disputes, ongoing conflict over parenting practices, hostility, physical threats, and intermittent violence” (Johnston, 1994).

Children whose parents engage in high-conflict divorce, including protracted litigation over custody and finances, often experience conduct disorders, antisocial

behavior, depression, anxiety, delinquency, and defiance toward authority (Bing, Nelson, III, & Wesolowski, 2009). Children who witness their parents peacefully resolve their marital issues exhibit less distress than their high-conflict counterparts (Bing, Nelson, III, & Wesolowski, 2009).

3.3 Developmental and Adjustment Issues for Children of Divorce.

Within the disciplines of psychology and sociology, there is a voluminous amount of research on the effects of divorce on children. The consensus of much of the research is that most children suffer some negative consequences from the divorce of their parents (Amato, 1994; Kim, 2001; Johnston, 1994). The degree and nature of the negative consequences varies depending on a number of factors. The age of the child at the time of divorce, the amount of interparental conflict during marriage and during divorce, the resulting economic impact of the divorce on the child, and the parents' ability to coparent after divorce are just a few of the factors involved (Amato & Keith, 1991a; Amato & Keith, 1991b).

A great deal of research has been conducted regarding the consequences of divorce on children. Much of that research has revealed that, generally, children of divorced families experience lower academic achievement, an increased likelihood of dropping out of high school, more behavioral problems, poorer psychological adjustment, more negative self-images, more social difficulties and more problematic relationships with both parents (Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991a).

In addition to the meta-analysis of children of divorce, Amato and Keith (1991b) conducted a similar meta-analysis focusing on the long-term impact of adults who

experienced the divorce of their parents when they were children. Amato and Keith's meta-analysis of adult children of divorce revealed that, on average, adults who experienced the divorce of their parents when they were children had lower psychological well-being, more behavioral problems, less education, lower job status, lower standard of living, lower marital satisfaction, heightened risk of divorce, heightened risk of being a single parent, and poorer physical health than adults who were raised by parents who did not divorce.

Not all children of divorce will suffer life-long negative consequences as a result of the divorce (Amato, 2000). However, for those children who do suffer, research has shown that it is possible for the negative effects of divorce to carry through to the next generation. Amato and Cheadle (2005) conducted a 20-year longitudinal study of the intergenerational consequences of divorce. Amato and Cheadle's study revealed that divorce in the grandparent generation was linked to lower educational attainment, greater marital discord, and poorer relationships with parents for members of the grandchild generation.

3.4 What are the Causes of Developmental and Adjustment Issues for Children of Divorce?

Oppowsky (2000) conducted research on the causes of the most negative effects of divorce on children. Oppowsky argued that witnessing parental verbal arguments provokes the most negative effects on the children. Looking at the divorce from the point of view of the children, Oppowsky cited some quotations from the children:

Nicole, age 9:

They were always fighting and I couldn't stand it. I always cried. It hurt me deep in my heart. I went to my room, held my ears shut, and cried my heart out (Oppawsky, 2000, p. 143).

Manfred, age 14:

I didn't know what I was suppose [sic] to do...it was difficult, I couldn't do anything about it...it was their business and I didn't want to get mixed up in it. I didn't agree and I was very angry. It wasn't nice for them either because my mother was mad at everything and everybody. She treated me unfair, was against me... (Oppawsky, 2000, p. 144).

Barbara, age 12:

The screaming! Even when they weren't screaming, I heard screaming (Oppawsky, 2000, p. 143).

Later, when discussing fear, Barbara stated:

I don't know who drew the knife, my mother or my father. I was the reason my parents did not get divorced. The reason my mother had to suffer. I was so afraid. Afraid that something would happen I could not prevent. I wanted the divorce. I said over and over: 'get divorced! Please get divorced.' They fought and yelled so. Suddenly the knife appeared. I was so afraid they would hurt each other and that there would be nothing I could do (Oppawsky, 2000, p. 145).

When asked about school, Barbara stated:

My head was empty. I just couldn't get my thoughts together. I always forgot to do my homework because the household was so turbulent (Oppawsky, 2000, p. 145).

Over the years researchers have utilized various theories to explain how and why divorce affects children negatively. Some of the theories include feminist theory, attachment theory, attribution theory, symbolic interactionism, systems theory, the social capital perspective and the life-course perspective (Amato, 2000). There seems to be a general consensus among the studies that I reviewed that there are four main factors that are responsible for the negative developmental and adjustment issues faced by children.

First is the economic factor. When a couple divorces, they move from one household to two, from one house payment and associated utilities, to two house payments and associated utilities. Under some circumstances, they go from a single two-earner household, to two single-earner households, or worse even, from a single-earner household to a single-earner household and a household with no employment income at all. Whatever the change is, there is typically a decline in the standard of living for one or both of the spouses and for the children (Amato & Keith, 1991a).

The economic hardship and lack of economic resources experienced by the parents after divorce increases the risk factors for children in the areas of nutrition and health (Amato & Keith, 1991a). Additionally, single-parents may be unable to afford tutors, educational toys, books, computers and other educational tools (Amato & Keith, 1991a; Sun & Li, 2009).

Next is the parental absence factor. Whether the parents agree to equally share custody or whether one parent has custody and the other parent has periodic visitation, the child is still going from living with two full-time parents to living with only one parent at a time. Divorce is associated with a decrease in the amount of time and the quality of time that both custodial and non-custodial parents have with their children (Amato & Keith, 1991a). The decline in parental supervision and support has been linked to decreased academic performance, low self-esteem and behavioral problems. Additionally, the lack of two parental models has been linked with the children failing to develop certain social skills, such as compromising, negotiating and cooperating (Amato & Keith, 1991a).

Another factor to consider is the family-conflict factor. The conflict that the family experiences before, during and after a divorce is a known stressor for children, resulting in the children experiencing stress, unhappiness and insecurity (Amato & Keith, 1991a). The stress that the parents feel as a result of the divorce, along with events leading up to the divorce, can result in the parents being less effective when dealing with their children, which in turn increases the stress of the children. As mentioned earlier, children in high-conflict family situations exhibit conduct problems, psychological adjustment issues and self-esteem issues (Amato & Keith, 1991a).

Finally, there is the psychological stress factor. In addition to the changing of the family structure, children often experience other difficult life events, such as moving to a new home, changing schools, losing contact with grandparents, and the remarriage of a parent (Amato & Keith, 1991b). These life-changing events can disrupt the children's

academic performance, social relationships and personality development (Amato & Keith, 1991b; Uphold-Carrier & Utz, 2012).

Chapter 4

Existing Divorce Programs for Parents and Children

Children whose parents are divorcing are “helpless to correct a situation they didn’t create and the very people they need to turn to—their mother and father—are often too emotionally overwhelmed to help them” (Pollet, 2009, p. 523). In order to help children navigate the tumultuous waters of divorce, education programs have been developed jointly by lawyers, judges, and mental health professionals for both parents and children (Schepard & Schlissel, 1995). Programs for parents are available in all states, with 46 states making attendance mandatory either statewide or only in certain counties, or at the judge’s discretion (Pollet & Lombreglia, 2008). Programs for children are offered in 45 states, with only 17 states making attendance mandatory on a statewide or countywide basis, or at the discretion of the judge (Pollet, 2009). The goals of the education programs for both parents and children are to minimize the short-term and long-term negative effects of divorce on children (Pollet, 2009).

4.1 Educational Programs for Divorcing Parents.

In response to the research regarding the poor outcomes and developmental issues experienced by children of divorce, court-affiliated educational programs for divorcing parents began to be developed by court personnel and mental health professionals in the mid-1970s and proliferated in the 1980s and 1990s (Pollet & Lombreglia, 2008). Today, within the United States, all states have some form of parent education program, with approximately 46 states mandating attendance for divorcing spouses prior to the issuance of a Decree of Divorce (Schramm & Calix, 2011; Pollet & Lombreglia, 2008). Within

those 46 states attendance may only be mandatory within certain counties. For example, in Nevada, attendance is only mandatory in Clark County (Pollet & Lombreglia, 2008), but voluntary programs are available in the other counties. See Table 5 for a breakdown of program attendance requirements for all states.

The general purpose of the education programs is to reduce the negative effects of divorce on the children. Different programs accomplish this in different ways. Fackrell, Hawkins and Kay (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of 28 published and unpublished outcome studies on court-affiliated education programs for divorcing parents. Fackrell, et al. found that among the programs studied, the length of the programs varied in length from between one to three instructional hours to ten or more instructional hours. They discovered that, overall, the programs, regardless of length, decreased co-parent conflict, improved parent-child relationships and parental discipline, improved child well-being, improved parent well-being, and reduced incidences of relitigation.

4.1.1 Parent Education and Custody Effectiveness (P.E.A.C.E.)

One example of a parent education program is the Parent Education and Custody Effectiveness (P.E.A.C.E.) program developed by lawyers, judges, mental health professionals and court administrators in New York (Schepard & Schlissel, 1995). The P.E.A.C.E. program is a 6-hour educational program for divorcing parents aimed at helping parents help their children through the adjustments and challenges posed by divorce. The program is not for parents with a history of domestic violence or abuse (Information, 2008)

The core belief of the founders of P.E.A.C.E. is that:

Children are more likely to cope with the transitions of parental divorce or separation if parents reduce their conflict and take responsibility for creating an effective parent-child relationship. Prolonged conflict between parents, in contrast, significantly increases the risk that divorce or separation will result in a deterioration of their child's emotional, economic, and educational well-being (Schepard & Schlissel, 1995, p. 848).

P.E.A.C.E. provides education to parents on three topics: (1) the legal process for making child-related determinations; (2) the adult experience of divorce and separation; and (3) the child's experience of divorce and separation and how parents can help their children cope with this transition (Schepard & Schlissel, 1995).

After completing the P.E.A.C.E. program, one father summed up the experience as follows:

They steer you 150 percent away from the idea that I'm going to go in and win, to saying [instead that] I am going to go in and get the best results for my children (Schepard & Schlissel, 1995, p. 853).

One mother said of her experience with P.E.A.C.E.:

You want your children to grow up with the same values that you had when you and your husband were together--to be honest and respect others. . . . When you are going through a divorce you don't realize that

they see you crumbling all those things you taught them. Now Lauren sees that her father and I respect each other's new lives. And even though we are going down separate roads, we still have a connection—our daughter. She is the one we will always love (Schepard & Schlissel, 1995, pp. 853-854).

4.2 Educational/Counseling Programs for Children of Divorce.

In 2009, when Susan Pollet conducted a nationwide survey of programs for children, she found that there were 46 programs for children offered in 152 counties in 45 states (Pollet, 2009). Pollet's research further revealed that: 34 states had no attendance requirements, in seven states it was in the judge's discretion whether or not to order attendance, attendance was mandated in certain counties in seven states (Alabama, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Pennsylvania and Wyoming), and attendance was mandated statewide in only three states (District of Columbia, Hawaii, and Indiana). Six states (Alaska, Kansas, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Vermont) had no programs available at all. Some states offer only one program children, while other states offer two or more. For example, in 2009 New York offered five different programs and Nevada offered two (Pollet, 2009). See Table 6 for a breakdown of program attendance requirements for all states.

Programs for children can be found in various settings, including at the court, in public and private human services agencies, at churches and at schools (Pollet, 2009). Many programs are community-based, consisting of one or two sessions lasting between four and five and one-half hours, while some other programs consist of up to 14 weekly

group sessions (Pollet, 2009). Many of the programs contain both an educational aspect and a therapeutic aspect, including group therapy sessions. The goals of the programs are generally to provide the children with a safe environment to express their feelings, to help them develop coping skills, to help them adjust to changes, to provide information about the divorce process, to normalize the divorce experience and to provide general support (Pollet, 2009).

4.2.1 Children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP).

One program that has been extensively researched with the use of control groups: is Children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP) (Pollet, 2009). CODIP is a 12-session school-based intervention program in New York designed to create a supportive group environment in which children can freely share experiences, establish common bonds, clarify misconceptions about divorce, and learn new skills that enhance their ability to cope with the stressful changes caused by divorce (Pollet, 2009).

Three separate studies were conducted utilizing various testing inventories developed by the researchers. Inventories completed by teachers included: Classroom Adjustment Rating Scale (CARS), Health Resources Inventory (HRI), and Teacher-Child Rating Scale (T-CRS) (Pedro-Carroll & Cowel, 1986; Pedro-Carroll & Cowen, 1985). Parents completed the Parent Evaluation Form (PEF) (Alpert-Gillis, Pedro-Carroll, & Cowen, 1989). Group leaders completed the Group Leader Evaluation Form (GLEF). Children completed the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children (STAIC) (Pedro-Carroll & Cowel, 1986; Pedro-Carroll & Cowen, 1985).

A. Teacher ratings of program children, versus the control group of non-program children, showed improved classroom adjustment and school engagement, as evidenced by lower rates of disruptive behavior and less withdrawn, anxious behavior in class. Every controlled study of the program showed improved cooperative behavior including ability to get along with peers, handle challenging situations and engage appropriately in class activities.

B. Parents of program children reported that the children were better adjusted, better able to talk about their feelings and more open to communication, less moody and evidenced more self-esteem compared to the reports of parents of children who did not go through the program.

C. Program children reported improved self-confidence, less anxiety and depression, and more confidence in their ability to successfully deal with family changes. Program children reported being better able to solve personal problems and let go of those beyond their control. A follow-up study done two years later showed these improvements endured and even extended to health benefits. Program children had significantly fewer visits to the school nurse complaining of physical symptoms after attending the program than a control group of non-program children.

After completion of the CODIP program, some parents commented that:

She talks to me a lot more and asks more questions so she understands things better. She seems really happy and more relaxed now (Pedro-Carroll & Alpert-Gillis, 1997, p. 20).

It made my son more aware of what divorce was all about and that it wasn't his fault...It made a big difference in our family... (Pedro-Carroll & Alpert-Gillis, 1997, p. 20).

I believe it gave her a footing: a place to work from. Now she's more free to discuss herself and not just watch for Mom's or Dad's reactions. She doesn't seem to look as much to me for approval but wants to please herself more (Pedro-Carroll & Alpert-Gillis, 1997, p. 20).

4.2.2 Kid's Turn.

Kids' Turn is a program out of San Francisco, California, that has been examined by Gilman, Schneider and Shulak (2005). The program goals of Kids' Turn are:

- A. to provide children and their parents with communication, coping, and problem-solving skills, to help them through the separation process;
- B. to demystify and destigmatize the separation process in order to promote a healthier perspective;
- C. to provide a safe place for children to discuss their feelings and thoughts;
- E. to provide a program that is sensitive to the cultural and ethnic diversity of families served;
- F. to develop relationships with other community entities that serve children and their families; and

G. to provide information to children and their parents about other services available in their community (Gilman, Schneider, & Shulak, 2005).

Research conducted by Gilman, et al. (2005) revealed that at the completion of the Kids' Turn program, the children demonstrated a clear understanding that:

- A. they should not be placed in the middle of their parents' fights,
- B. they should not be enlisted to carry messages between their parents, and
- C. they should look for compassionate people to help them with their feelings about the divorce (Gilman, Schneider, & Shulak, 2005, p. 119).

Additional results revealed that the children had fewer behavioral problems as evidenced by fewer problems at school and fewer incidences of punishment by their parents (Gilman, Schneider, & Shulak, 2005).

4.2.3 Divorce Care for Kids (DC4K).

Divorce Care for Kids (DC4K) is a faith-based program offered through churches across the U.S. as well as in Australia, South Africa and the United Kingdom (DivorceCare for Kids, 2013a). The DC4K program consists of 13 weekly group sessions, with each session focusing on a particular topic (DivorceCare for Kids, 2013b). The session topics are as follows:

Session 1: What's Happening to My Family? During this session, the children receive an overview of what to expect within their family and throughout the remaining 12 sessions.

Session 2: God Loves Children in All Kinds of Families. During this session children are taught that everyone's family situation is different and are encouraged to help their parents develop a healthy single parent home.

Session 3: Facing My Anger. During this session children are taught how to recognize and deal with angry feelings in a healthy and acceptable way. They are taught that it is alright to be mad, but not to hurt others when they are angry.

Session 4: Journey from Anger to Sadness. The goal of this session is to acquaint children with the sadness phase of grief in the context of the divorce process. They learn how to process sadness in an emotionally healthy manner.

Session 5: I Am Not Alone. Children are taught in this session that they are not alone and that there are people, including God, who care about them and that it is okay to ask for help.

Session 6: God's Plan for Me. The goal of this session is to teach children that God loves them and will meet all of their needs. Children are taught that they have choices to make and that their choices affect other people.

Session 7: Developing New Relationships. This session will teach children that their relationships with their parents are going to be different after the divorce and will help teach them how to develop the new relationships. Children are also taught that it is okay to be loyal to each parent and that they should not be made to feel guilty for their loyalty.

Session 8: Developing Money Smarts. In this session children are taught about the various aspects of family budgeting to help them understand the new family budgeting issues caused by the divorce.

Session 9: It's Not My Fault. This session focuses on teaching children that divorce is an adult problem between two parents and that the divorce is not their fault.

Session 10: Telling My Parents How I Feel. The goal of this session is to teach children how to talk about their feelings with their parents in an honest and respectful manner.

Session 11: Forgiveness. This goal of this session is to help children understand what forgiveness is and how to forgive others. Children are taught the concept of taking responsibility for their own actions and attitudes.

Session 12: Loving My Parents. The purpose of this session is to teach children that their parents still love them and to help each child express love for both parents.

Session 13: Moving On: Growing Up and Closer to God. This final session is aimed at helping children realize that life continues after divorce and that they can have happy and healthy futures. Children are taught that they are individuals with their own talents, hobbies and interests (DivorceCare for Kids, 2013b).

Providing education to both parents and children during divorce helps to ensure that all members of the family have access to the information and skills necessary to help mitigate the damage done to the children by divorce.

Chapter 5

Why Should Nevada Implement Mandatory Education Programs for Children of Divorce?

Famous anonymous quotation from either the Hindu or Buddhist tradition:

“Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional.”

5.1 Summary.

Nevada has the highest divorce rate in the nation (Appendix, Table 4). According to the Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau (Combs & Butterworth, 2012), Nevada ranked 50th in the nation for freshman graduation rate in 2008, and 51st in the nation for change in graduation rate between 2000 and 2008, indicating a decline in the number of graduates. Nevada scored 50th in the nation for freshman graduation rates and seventh in the nation for the number of high school drop outs in 2009. According to Amato (2001) some of the risks for children whose parents divorce are a decline in academic performance, an increase in the likelihood of dropping out of high school, poor psychological development, low self-esteem, behavioral problems and problematic relationships with both parents.

Clark County, Nevada recognized the need for educational programs for divorcing parents when it implemented mandatory education classes for divorcing parents in Clark County. However, parenting program attendance throughout the rest of the state is either at the discretion of the judge or on a voluntary basis. The purpose of the parent education programs is to reduce the negative effects of divorce on children (Fackrell,

Hawkins, & Kay, 2011). The problem with only providing education to parents is that the parents are in the middle of what may be a highly contentious and emotional divorce, and despite their best intentions, the parents may not be able to receive the full benefit of the program because they are too wrapped up in their own emotions. As stated by Pollet (2009), the parents are often too emotionally overwhelmed to help their children.

Programs for the children of divorce target the children directly and provide them with the information and support that their parents may be unable to provide. Research has shown that programs for children have a positive impact in the areas of school engagement, school adjustment and behavioral problems at both school and home (Pedro-Carroll & Alpert-Gillis, 1997). As research has also shown, divorce does not just impact the children of the divorcing spouses, in fact, the damage carries on to the next generation as well (Amato & Cheadle, 2005).

5.2 Argument.

A Google search on April 19, 2013, using the phrases: “Washoe County Nevada ‘children of divorce education’” and “Washoe County Nevada ‘children of divorce program’” revealed zero search results. In contrast, a search for the phrase: “Washoe County Nevada ‘victim advocacy’” revealed 1,160 results. Children are, in essence, unintended victims of their parents’ divorce. They suffer short-term and long-term physical and psychological consequences as a result. As a society, we need to offer assistance to these children. Children suffer from divorce in all states, and especially here in Nevada, where we have the highest divorce rate in the nation. The long-term impact on society can only be positive when these children who are damaged by divorce

begin to develop fewer psychological, behavioral and health issues, and increase their educational prospects and future employment and earnings potential. Clark County, Nevada recognized that when it mandated that parents attend an educational program before they could obtain a divorce. Nevada now needs to take it one step further and mandate that children whose parents are divorcing attend an educational program before the parents can divorce. In 2009 when Pollet conducted her research on programs for children, Nevada offered two voluntary programs: DivorceCare for Kids and Family Alliance (Pollet, 2009). However, on April 22, 2013, a search of the DivorceCare for Kids website revealed that they no longer offer any programs within Nevada. A Google search on April 22, 2013, provided no results for any child education programs in Nevada entitled Family Alliance. We owe it to our children, and our children's children to mitigate the damage they suffer as a result of their parents' divorce. Future generations will thank us!

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research.

Nevada has the highest divorce rates and some of the worst educational statistics in the nation. While divorce may not be the cause of Nevada's poor educational statistics, it may play a role. Is there a correlation between Nevada's abysmal divorce and education statistics? It is certainly an area worthy of future research. One suggestion would be to conduct a twelve-year longitudinal study of children of divorce. Researchers would select of group of children in each grade level, beginning with grade 1, whose parents are divorcing and provide divorce education to a random selection of one-half of each group and no education to the other one-half of each group. Researchers would

then follow each of the twenty-four groups through the twelfth grade to determine if the rate of graduation is greater among the children in the divorce education group as compared to the non-education group. The research could be taken one step further and include a group of non-divorce children for each year and compare rates of graduation among each of the 2 divorce groups and the non-divorce group.

Another important area in need of future research is whether or not there are any generational effects that result from educational program attendance by children of divorce. Research has shown that divorce not only impacts the children of the divorcing parents, but can also impact their children's children. Are the benefits that a child receives from attending an education program at the time of divorce passed on to that child's future children?

Lastly, an area that I believe warrants future research is a comparison of program effectiveness among school-based, community-based, faith-based and court-based programs. Is one type of program more effective than the others, or are they all equally effective?

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Appendix

Table 1:**Provisional number of marriages and marriage rate: United States, 2000-2010**

Year	Marriages	Population	Rate per 1,000 total population
2010	2,096,000	308,745,538	6.8
2009	2,080,000	306,771,529	6.8
2008	2,157,000	304,093,966	7.1
2007	2,197,000	301,231,207	7.3
2006¹	2,193,000	294,077,247	7.5
2005	2,249,000	295,516,599	7.6
2004	2,279,000	292,805,298	7.8
2003	2,245,000	290,107,933	7.7
2002	2,290,000	287,625,193	8.0
2001	2,326,000	284,968,955	8.2
2000	2,315,000	281,421,906	8.2

¹ Excludes data for Louisiana.

Note: Rates for 2001-2009 have been revised and are based on intercensal population estimates from the 2000 and 2010 censuses. Populations for 2010 rates are based on the 2010 census.

Source: CDC/NCHS National Vital Statistics System. (CDC/National Center for Health Statistics, 2012)

Table 2:

Marriage rates by State: 1990, 1995, and 1999-2010														
[Rates are based on provisional counts of marriages by state of occurrence. Rates are per 1,000 total population residing in area. Population enumerated as of April 1 for 1990, 2000, and 2010 and estimated as of July 1 for all other years]														
State	Marriage rate													
	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1995	1990
Alabama	8.2	8.3	8.6	8.9	9.2	9.2	9.4	9.6	9.9	9.4	10.1	10.8	9.8	10.6
Alaska	8.0	7.8	8.4	8.5	8.2	8.2	8.5	8.1	8.3	8.1	8.9	8.6	9.0	10.2
Arizona	5.9	5.6	6.0	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.5	6.7	7.6	7.5	8.2	8.8	10.0
Arkansas	10.8	10.7	10.6	12.0	12.4	12.9	13.4	13.4	14.3	14.3	15.4	14.8	14.4	15.3
California ¹	5.8	5.8	6.7	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.1	6.2	6.5	5.8	6.4	6.3	7.9
Colorado	6.9	6.9	7.4	7.1	7.2	7.6	7.4	7.8	8.0	8.2	8.3	8.2	9.0	9.8
Connecticut	5.6	5.9	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.8	5.8	5.5	5.7	5.4	5.7	5.8	6.6	7.9
Delaware	5.2	5.4	5.5	5.7	5.9	5.9	6.1	6.0	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.7	7.3	8.4
District of Columbia	7.6	4.7	4.1	4.2	4.0	4.1	5.2	5.1	5.1	6.2	4.9	6.6	6.1	8.2
Florida	7.3	7.5	8.0	8.5	8.6	8.9	9.0	9.0	9.4	9.3	8.9	8.7	9.9	10.9
Georgia	7.3	6.6	6.0	6.8	7.3	7.0	7.9	7.0	6.5	6.1	6.8	7.8	8.4	10.3
Hawaii	17.6	17.2	19.1	20.8	21.9	22.6	22.6	22.0	20.8	19.6	20.6	18.9	15.7	16.4
Idaho	8.8	8.9	9.5	10.0	10.1	10.5	10.8	10.9	11.0	11.2	10.8	12.1	13.1	13.9
Illinois	5.7	5.7	5.9	6.1	6.2	5.9	6.2	6.5	6.6	7.2	6.9	7.0	6.9	8.8
Indiana	6.3	7.9	8.0	7.0	7.0	6.9	7.8	7.1	7.9	7.9	7.9	8.1	8.6	9.6
Iowa	6.9	7.0	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.9	6.9	6.9	7.0	7.1	6.9	7.9	7.7	9.0
Kansas	6.4	6.4	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.8	7.0	6.9	7.3	7.5	8.3	7.1	8.5	9.2
Kentucky	7.4	7.6	7.9	7.8	8.4	8.7	8.8	9.1	9.0	9.0	9.8	10.9	12.2	13.5
Louisiana	6.9	7.1	6.8	7.5	---	8.0	8.0	8.2	8.1	8.4	9.1	9.1	9.3	9.6
Maine	7.1	7.1	7.4	7.4	7.8	8.2	8.6	8.4	8.4	8.6	8.8	8.6	8.7	9.7
Maryland	5.7	5.8	5.9	6.5	6.6	6.9	6.9	6.9	7.1	7.0	7.5	7.5	8.4	9.7
Massachusetts	5.6	5.6	5.7	5.9	5.9	6.2	6.5	5.6	5.9	6.2	5.8	6.2	7.1	7.9
Michigan	5.5	5.4	5.6	5.7	5.9	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.7	6.7	6.8	7.3	8.2
Minnesota	5.3	5.3	5.4	5.8	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.3	6.5	6.6	6.8	6.8	7.0	7.7
Mississippi	4.9	4.8	5.1	5.4	5.7	5.8	6.1	6.2	6.4	6.5	6.9	7.8	7.9	9.4
Missouri	6.5	6.5	6.8	6.9	6.9	7.0	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.5	7.8	8.1	8.3	9.6
Montana	7.4	7.3	7.6	7.5	7.4	7.4	7.5	7.2	7.1	7.1	7.3	7.4	7.6	8.6
Nebraska	6.6	6.6	6.9	6.8	6.8	7.0	7.1	7.0	7.5	7.9	7.6	7.5	7.3	8.0
Nevada	38.3	40.3	42.3	48.6	52.1	57.4	62.1	63.9	67.4	69.6	72.2	82.3	85.2	99.0
New Hampshire	7.3	6.5	6.8	7.1	7.2	7.3	8.0	8.1	8.3	8.5	9.4	7.9	8.3	9.5
New Jersey	5.1	5.0	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.7	5.9	5.8	6.0	6.4	6.0	5.9	6.5	7.6
New Mexico	7.7	5.0	4.0	5.6	6.8	6.6	7.4	6.9	7.9	7.6	8.0	8.0	8.8	8.8
New York	6.5	6.5	6.6	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.8	6.8	7.3	7.6	7.1	7.3	8.0	8.6
North Carolina	6.6	6.6	6.9	7.0	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.4	7.7	7.4	8.2	8.5	8.4	7.8
North Dakota	6.5	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.8	6.9	7.1	6.8	6.5	7.2	6.6	7.1	7.5
Ohio	5.8	5.8	6.0	6.1	6.3	6.5	6.6	6.7	7.0	7.2	7.8	7.8	8.0	9.0
Oklahoma	7.2	6.9	7.1	7.3	7.3	7.3	6.5	---	---	---	---	6.8	8.6	10.6
Oregon	6.5	6.6	6.9	7.2	7.3	7.3	8.1	7.2	7.1	7.5	7.6	7.6	8.1	8.9
Pennsylvania	5.3	5.3	5.5	5.7	5.7	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.7	5.8	6.0	6.1	6.2	7.1
Rhode Island	5.8	5.9	6.1	6.4	6.6	7.0	7.7	7.8	7.8	8.1	7.6	7.5	7.3	8.1
South Carolina	7.4	7.3	7.3	7.9	7.8	8.3	8.2	9.0	9.3	9.9	10.6	10.2	11.9	15.9
South Dakota	7.3	7.3	7.7	7.8	8.0	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.8	8.9	9.4	9.1	9.9	11.1
Tennessee	8.8	8.4	9.4	10.1	10.6	10.9	11.4	11.9	13.1	13.5	15.5	14.7	15.5	13.9
Texas	7.1	7.1	7.3	7.4	7.6	7.8	8.0	8.1	8.4	9.1	9.4	9.1	9.9	10.5
Utah	8.5	8.4	9.0	9.6	9.2	9.8	9.9	10.2	10.4	10.2	10.8	9.6	10.7	11.2
Vermont	9.3	8.7	7.9	8.5	8.6	8.9	9.4	9.7	9.8	9.8	10.0	10.0	10.3	10.9
Virginia	6.8	6.9	7.2	7.5	7.8	8.2	8.3	8.4	8.6	8.8	8.8	9.2	10.2	11.4
Washington	6.0	6.0	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	7.0	6.9	7.2	7.7	9.5
West Virginia	6.7	6.7	7.1	7.3	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.5	8.1	7.9	8.7	7.5	6.1	7.2
Wisconsin	5.3	5.3	5.6	5.7	6.0	6.1	6.2	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.7	6.7	7.0	7.9
Wyoming	7.6	8.0	8.6	9.0	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.5	10.0	10.0	9.9	10.6	10.7
--- Data not available.														
¹ Marriage data includes nonlicensed marriages registered.														
Note: Rates for 2001-2009 have been revised and are based on intercensal population estimates from the 2000 and 2010 censuses. Populations for 2010 rates are based on the 2010 census.														
Source: CDC/NCHS, National Vital Statistics System. (http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvss/marriage_rates_90_95_99-10.pdf)														

Table 3:**Provisional number of divorces and annulments and rate: United States, 2000-2010**

Year	Divorces & annulments	Population	Rate per 1,000 total population
2010¹	872,000	244,122,529	3.6
2009¹	840,000	242,610,561	3.5
2008¹	844,000	240,545,163	3.5
2007¹	856,000	238,352,850	3.6
2006¹	872,000	236,094,277	3.7
2005¹	847,000	233,495,163	3.6
2004²	879,000	236,402,656	3.7
2003³	927,000	243,902,090	3.8
2002⁴	955,000	243,108,303	3.9
2001⁵	940,000	236,416,762	4.0
2000⁵	944,000	233,550,143	4.0

¹ Excludes data for California, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, and Minnesota.

² Excludes data for California, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, and Louisiana.

³ Excludes data for California, Hawaii, Indiana, and Oklahoma.

⁴ Excludes data for California, Indiana, and Oklahoma.

⁵ Excludes data for California, Indiana, Louisiana, and Oklahoma.

Note: Rates for 2001-2009 have been revised and are based on intercensal population estimates from the 2000 and 2010 censuses. Populations for 2010 rates are based on the 2010 census.

Source: CDC/NCHS National Vital Statistics System. (CDC/National Center for Health Statistics, 2012)

Table 4:

Divorce rates by State: 1990, 1995, and 1999-2010														
[Rates are based on provisional counts of divorces by state of occurrence. Rates are per 1,000 total population residing in area. Population enumerated as of April 1 for 1990, 2000, and 2010 and estimated as of July 1 for all other years]														
State	Divorce rate ¹													
	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1995	1990
Alabama	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.9	4.9	4.9	5.2	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.7	6.0	6.1
Alaska	4.7	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.3	3.9	4.6	4.3	3.9	5.0	5.0	5.5
Arizona	3.5	3.6	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.8	4.0	4.6	4.6	6.2	6.9
Arkansas	5.7	5.7	5.5	5.9	5.8	6.0	6.1	6.0	6.2	6.2	6.4	6.2	6.3	6.9
California	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	4.3
Colorado	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.8	---	5.5
Connecticut	2.9	3.0	3.4	3.2	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.0	2.9	3.2
Delaware	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.5	3.9	3.9	4.5	5.0	4.4
District of Columbia	2.8	2.7	2.7	1.7	2.1	2.0	1.8	2.0	2.4	2.9	3.2	3.6	3.2	4.5
Florida	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.7	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.5	6.3
Georgia	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	3.2	2.5	3.1	3.3	4.1	5.1	5.5
Hawaii	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	3.7	4.0	3.9	3.8	4.6	4.6
Idaho	5.2	5.0	4.8	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.2	5.3	5.3	5.5	5.4	5.8	6.5
Illinois	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.8
Indiana	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Iowa	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.8	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.7	3.9
Kansas	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.4	4.1	5.0
Kentucky	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.6	5.0	4.6	4.9	5.0	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.5	5.9	5.8
Louisiana	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	3.4	3.3	---	---	---	---	---
Maine	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.7	5.0	5.1	4.4	4.3
Maryland	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.0	3.3	3.2	3.0	3.4
Massachusetts	2.5	2.2	2.0	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.8
Michigan	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.8	4.1	4.3
Minnesota	---	---	---	---	---	---	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.5
Mississippi	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.8	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.8	5.5
Missouri	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.5	4.4	5.0	5.1
Montana	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.4	4.5	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.2	2.8	4.8	5.1
Nebraska	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.8	4.0
Nevada	5.9	6.6	6.4	6.4	6.7	7.4	6.3	7.3	7.1	6.3	9.9	7.8	7.8	11.4
New Hampshire	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.8	4.1	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.8	5.1	4.2	4.7
New Jersey	3.0	2.7	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
New Mexico	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.6	4.6	5.2	4.4	4.9	5.1	4.6	6.6	4.9
New York	2.9	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.1	2.9	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.0	3.3	3.0	3.2
North Carolina	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.5	4.6	5.0	5.1
North Dakota	3.1	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.9	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.4	4.4	3.4	3.6
Ohio	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.2	3.9	4.3	4.7
Oklahoma	5.2	4.8	5.3	5.2	5.3	5.6	4.9	---	---	---	---	---	6.6	7.7
Oregon	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.6	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.7	5.5
Pennsylvania	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.3	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.3
Rhode Island	3.2	3.0	2.7	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.2	2.9	2.7	3.6	3.7
South Carolina	3.1	3.0	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.5
South Dakota	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.2	2.8	3.1	3.0	3.3	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.9	3.7
Tennessee	4.2	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.6	4.6	4.9	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.9	5.8	6.2	6.5
Texas	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.0	3.8	5.2	5.5
Utah	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.0	4.4	5.1
Vermont	3.8	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.4	4.7	4.5
Virginia	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4
Washington	4.2	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.5	4.6	5.0	5.4	5.9
West Virginia	5.1	5.1	4.8	5.1	5.0	5.1	5.0	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.1	4.9	5.2	5.3
Wisconsin	3.0	2.9	3.0	2.9	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.6
Wyoming	5.1	5.1	4.9	4.9	5.1	5.2	5.2	5.4	5.4	5.8	5.8	5.7	6.6	6.6
--- Data not available.														
¹ Includes annulments. Includes divorce petitions filed or legal separations for some counties or States														
Note: Rates for 2001-2009 have been revised and are based on intercensal population estimates from the 2000 and 2010 censuses. Populations for 2010 rates are based on the 2010 census.														
Source: CDC/NCHS, National Vital Statistics System. (http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvss/divorce_rates_90_95_99-10.pdf)														

Table 5:**Parent Education Mandates by State:**

	Statewide	Countywide	Discretion of Judge	No Requirement
Alabama		X		
Alaska		X		
Arizona	X			
Arkansas			X	
California		X		
Colorado	X			
Connecticut	X			
Delaware	X			
District of Columbia			X	
Florida	X			
Georgia			X	
Hawaii	X			
Idaho	X			
Illinois			X	
Indiana		X		
Iowa	X			
Kansas			X	
Kentucky		X		
Louisiana	X			
Maine			X	
Maryland			X	
Massachusetts	X			
Michigan		X		
Minnesota	X			
Mississippi		X		
Missouri	X			
Montana			X	
Nebraska			X	
Nevada		X		
New Hampshire	X			
New Jersey	X			
New Mexico		X		
New York		X		
North Carolina		X		
North Dakota				X
Ohio		X		
Oklahoma			X	
Oregon		X		
Pennsylvania		X		
Rhode Island				X
South Carolina				X
South Dakota				X
Tennessee	X			
Texas			X	
Utah	X			
Vermont			X	
Virginia			X	
Washington		X		
West Virginia	X			
Wisconsin	X			
Wyoming		X		

(Pollet & Lombreglia, A Nationwide Survey of Mandatory Parent Education, 2008)

Table 6:

Child Education Mandates by State:

	Statewide	Countywide	Discretion of Judge	No Requirement
Alabama		X		
Alaska				X
Arizona			X	
Arkansas				X
California			X	
Colorado				X
Connecticut				X
Delaware				X
District of Columbia	X			
Florida				X
Georgia				X
Hawaii	X			
Idaho		X		
Illinois				X
Indiana	X			
Iowa			X	
Kansas				X
Kentucky		X		
Louisiana		X		
Maine				X
Maryland				X
Massachusetts				X
Michigan				X
Minnesota			X	
Mississippi		X		
Missouri			X	
Montana				X
Nebraska			X	
Nevada				X
New Hampshire				X
New Jersey				X
New Mexico				X
New York				X
North Carolina				X
North Dakota				X
Ohio			X	
Oklahoma				X
Oregon				X
Pennsylvania		X		
Rhode Island				X
South Carolina				X
South Dakota				X
Tennessee				X
Texas				X
Utah				X
Vermont				X
Virginia				X
Washington				X
West Virginia				X
Wisconsin				X
Wyoming		X		

(Pollet, A Nationwide Survey of Programs for Children of Divorcing and Separating Parents., 2009)