

What does Research Say about the Impact of Parental Divorce on Teenagers?

Nina Chen, Ph.D. , CFLE
Human Development Specialist

- When compared with peers from intact families, teenagers from divorced families were more likely to become involved with drugs, date more often, and engage more in sexual relations.
- Women who experienced changes in their caretaking situation during childhood were more likely to engage in early sexual intercourse. The more transitions in care taking arrangements, the more likely the women were to engage in early sexual behavior.
- When compared with teenagers from intact families, the possibilities of having sex for the first time before age 17 were 52% greater for females and 33% greater for males whose parents had divorced.
- For male teenagers the number of transitions in parental marital status during childhood is strongly related to the age of first sexual intercourse.
- With each transition in childhood living arrangements, the risk of teenage premarital intercourse increased by 14% to 21% for black women and 23% to 41% for white women. The rate of virginity among adolescents is correlated with the absence of married parents.
- Teenagers from broken families had greater difficulties with their classes and relations with their peers. On the contrary, teenagers from intact families showed higher grades and were more socially competent.
- Nonresident fathers could benefit their adolescent's well-being. Nonresident fathers who show warm and supportive behaviors were associated with fewer internalizing and externalizing problems among adolescents.
- There is a strong correlation between family structure, delinquency, hostile behavior, drug use, larceny, skipping school and alcohol abuse among adolescent girls.
- Compared to teenagers of intact families, frequent relocation of teenagers from broken families tends to increase the incidence of behavioral, emotional, and academic problems.
- High school dropout rates are higher among youth from divorced families than youth of intact families. The college attendance rate is about 60% lower among youth of divorced families than youth from intact families.

- When teenagers (12 to 15 years old) experience parental divorce, they are likely to react by attempting to speed through the teenager years or avoid growing up. Other impacts include increased aggression, loneliness, and loss of self control. Girls are less likely to be depressed than boys.
- There is a link between divorce and frequency of suicide attempts. Adolescent suicide shows parental divorce is the most frequent background characteristic.

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