

Sesame Street Produces First Program Aimed At Children Affected By Divorce

The parents of six million of the USA's children are divorced, according to 2011 statistics collected by the US Census Bureau. Every year, around one million children witness their parents' divorce.

Divorce has become such a pertinent issue for many of America's children that even kid's TV program Sesame Street tackled the issue in a recent episode for the very first time. The scene featured a happy pink fairy Abby Cadabby, who tells friends on the show about how she lives in two separate houses – one with her mother and one with her father.

It is worth mentioning that divorce rates in America are currently on the decrease. However a great many children are still raised in households where parents are separated.

Previous forays into the subject have been somewhat difficult for the show. In fact, one episode about divorce was trialed to a pre-school audience who were upset by the scene. That was twenty years ago, back in 1992.

However, with so many children now living with divorced parents, producers of the show decided it was high time the subject was tackled. This time they chose to talk about a divorce the fairy child Abby Cadabby had come to terms with, as it happened in the past. The fairy puppet describes divorce as “becoming easier with time.”

The [Sesame Street episode](#) tested in the past dealt with raw emotion, as Snuffy the elephant told Big Bird his dad was moving out of the house. This left the child audience feeling anxious that it would happen to their own parents – that Snuffy would have nowhere to live and that they were unloved by their parents.

Security

For families with children, divorce is always a difficult process. There has been a wealth of research on the subject performed over three decades, and overwhelmingly it has been discovered that children of divorce are more at risk for a variety of problems. For example, children of divorce are more susceptible to mental health issues, they find it more difficult to get along with their peers and they have problems in the school environment.

Children with divorced parents are also more likely to become involved with [drug and alcohol abuse](#) and crime, if the situation is not properly managed. Putting [Child-Centered Divorce](#) is now a popular term used by parents and professionals to consider the implications of their actions on the younger members of the family during what is a stressful and difficult time for all parties.

The information used in the 13 minute Sesame Street segment is part of the wider Little Children Big Challenges program and features advice based on clinical and scientific evidence formulated by a team of experts. The episode won't be featured on TV, instead being aired online. It also helps adults tackle issues such as conflict and support.

Conflict

Rarely is a divorce easy and amicable, but reducing the amount of arguments and fighting between the adult parties often means children adjust much better to the situation than in households where conflict is a large portion of daily life. This is a subject which the Sesame Street project tackles. Parents are encouraged to find a way to be civil to one another to prevent causing distress in childhood which leaves youngsters feeling insecure and stressed. Research has shown that in families blighted by conflict, children are unable to manage their own emotions.

Support

The roles of a mother and father are equally important even after divorce and it is well regarded that children benefit from the continued support of both parties. Additionally, the wider support network should be taken into consideration. So often grandparents, siblings and friends take sides. However, this actually causes more stress to the child during the divorce proceedings. More preferable is that grandparents and others provide a further reaching support network for families, especially children, during this difficult time.

For any family divorce is a difficult time, which can easily affect a child's sense of security. However, by focusing on the child and his or her needs during this difficult time you can minimise the impact and help your child understand that they are loved, they are important, and they will still have a relationship with both mother and father.

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