Welcome to CCEI950

Divorce is a fact of life in the United States and it can have dramatic, long-term effects on child development. Infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and older children all have emotional, physical, and other responses to divorce. Teachers are in a unique position to help children cope and to provide essential moral and educational support. This course offers strategies teachers can use to help children through these difficult times. Also, this course provides advice that teachers and center administrators should consider to avoid potential legal or ethical entanglements.

Objectives:

By taking notes on the handout and successfully answering assessment questions, participants will meet the following objectives as a result of taking this course:

- Identify common impacts that divorce can have on young children
- Identify common symptoms of stress that a child may exhibit at varying developmental stages
- Identify strategies teachers can use to help young children cope with divorce in the areas of physical, emotional, and social development
- Identify appropriate policies centers should put in place to avoid legal entanglements or undue stress on children

References:


Use the space below to record important information contained in this course.
Divorce in the United States

Research shows that ______________ between teachers and families improves the quality of care and educational outcomes for children.

During a divorce, a teacher’s top priority should be the _________________ and _________________ of the children.

Effects of Divorce on Young Children

Divorce can affect the child’s:

•
•
•
•
•
•
•

Stress and Brain Development

Notes from the video:

Erikson’s Stages of Psychosocial Development:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Approximate Age</th>
<th>Positively Characterized by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust vs. Mistrust</td>
<td>Birth – 18 mos.</td>
<td>Learning to trust, bonding with caregivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy vs. Shame &amp; Doubt</td>
<td>18 mos. – 3 yrs.</td>
<td>Developing independence and self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative vs. Guilt</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>Building ambition and responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry vs. Inferiority</td>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>Developing skills, pride, and competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity vs. Role Confusion</td>
<td>12-20</td>
<td>Developing a sense of self and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy vs. Isolation</td>
<td>20-40</td>
<td>Build lasting relationships, sharing life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generativity vs. Stagnation</td>
<td>40-65</td>
<td>Ability to give back, make a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego Integrity vs. Despair</td>
<td>Over 65</td>
<td>Reflection, satisfaction, accomplishment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Approximate Age</th>
<th>Characterized by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensorimotor</td>
<td>Birth – age 2</td>
<td>Gathering information through senses; conducts simple experiments to understand the world around them; organizes information based on experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoperational</td>
<td>2-7</td>
<td>Egocentric or focused on self; learns through manipulation of real-world objects; ability to classify; makes connections between objects and symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Operational</td>
<td>7-11</td>
<td>Logical thought emerges; egocentrism gives way to empathy; ability to solve problems through thought rather than manipulation of objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Operational</td>
<td>Age 11-Adulthood</td>
<td>Ability to think about abstract concepts; can collect, analyze, and create meaning from data or new information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Infants and Divorce

Infants do not understand ______________ but they do respond to ______________.

What effect might a breakdown in routines have on an infant?

Define attachment:
Why are attachments important in early childhood? What impact might divorce have on those attachments?

Toddlers and Divorce

List possible effects of divorce on toddlers:

Preschoolers and Divorce

What differences are there between a preschooler and an infant/toddler as a result of divorce?

School-Age Children and Divorce
The older children get, the more likely they are to feel:

**A Divorce vs. An Unhealthy Marriage**

The same article offers these reasons for why divorce is better than staying in an unhealthy marriage.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 

**How Teachers Can Help**

Above all, be ______________ and ______________!

**Routines, Nutrition, Rest**

Why is each of the following factors important in helping children cope with divorce?

**Establishing Consistent Routines**

**Promote Good Nutrition**
Advocate for Rest

Additional Strategies for Helping Children

Write notes about how each of the following can be helpful in the classroom:

Encourage Expression

Talk –

Art –

Sensory play –

Roleplay –

Writing –

Strengthen Interests and Hobbies

Boost Physical Activity
Effects of Divorce on Child Care Professionals and Programs

All program staff must have a crystal clear understanding of their role. In particular, two points need to be emphasized:

1.

2.
Your obligation as a mandated reporter:

Parent Communication and Custody Disputes
Write a brief summary describing what role (if any) a teacher/caregiver should take if two parents are openly hostile toward one another:

Center Policies
Legal Documentation
What types of legal documents should parents provide to the center?

Kidnapping
Why is kidnapping a threat? What can the child care center do to help prevent it?

Scheduling
Why are parents’ schedules so important?

What can a center do to help ensure that both parents stay informed and involved?
Try This!

Make Food Fun

Children are usually more likely to eat if they are involved in making the meal. This is also a good chance to get them to try something new and nutritious.

Young children should not be involved in any cooking activities involving heat, so keep them away from ovens and stoves within the center. But there are plenty of ways they can “cook” without heat, and if heat is needed, then the teacher or kitchen staff can take care of it for the child. Some ideas:

- Pizza is an obvious favorite. Use ready-made pizza crusts, or a bagel, pita, or English muffin.
- Sandwiches are easy to make, whether they involve cheese, jelly, or meat. (Peanut butter is not recommended in the child care setting due to potential allergies.) Invite the child to use cookie cutters to create fun shapes after the sandwich is pieced together.
- Yogurt parfait is easy to make and it’s healthier than ice cream. Add ingredients like berries and granola.
- Create a Veggie City or a Veggie Forest using carrot sticks, broccoli florets, celery, sliced bell peppers, etc. Mix cream cheese and ranch to make a thick dressing that the child can use to “glue” the veggies together for a sturdier, edible model.