

Resources for Children

By Alison L. Patton

As an adult going through divorce, you have many forums in which to discuss your feelings, get support and grieve the loss of your marriage: friends, a therapist, extended family, your own parents, your pastor or church group, your lawyer or mediator. You have access to books and the internet. You can go online and participate in chat rooms.

Your children need to have resources of their own in order to:

- understand the divorce
- discuss and process their feelings
- get support for their own grief and healing process

Sometimes children won't open up to their parents for a variety of reasons: wanting to repress their feelings, wanting to protect and take care of their parents, not wanting to make their parents sad, afraid to ask questions, sometimes just because they are a certain age and hide their feelings, other times they just don't know what they are feeling inside. The best thing you can do for your children is provide for them some of the same forums you have as an adult so they can understand divorce and have a place to talk about what they're going through. Your children need safe people and places where they can open up and get support. Sometimes this can be you, other times it can help them to talk with a close adult friend, a relative, a child specialist, a teacher, or in a support group setting such as Kids' Turn. (See below for more information about Kids' Turn.)

I have listed below books and resources for children. Also check with your local family court (google "Superior Court Family Law" and the name of your county) and call your county Bar Association to see if they know of any resources for divorcing families specific to your area. I also recommend that you contact your local churches, whether you are religious or not. Many churches offer support services for families going through divorce and even have a specific office or staff member who knows about all the resources in the area for children. Some churches offer grief groups for children or adults.

1. Kids' Turn

[Kids' Turn](#) is a fantastic organization offering workshops for kids and parents going through divorce. There are branches of Kids' Turn in some cities throughout California. Go to the [San Diego Kids' Turn](#) website if you are interested in the workshops in San Diego County. It's also worthwhile to look through the [San Francisco Kids' Turn](#) website, as this was the founding office and they have additional information about the efficacy of Kids' Turn and also an online program that anyone can do for a fee. Unfortunately there is not a Los Angeles Kids'

Turn branch, but some Los Angeles residents make the drive to San Diego for the Saturday workshops. If you can attend Kids' Turn with your children, you won't regret it.

2. Books and written materials

There are many books about divorce and loss for children of all different ages. Buying your children books they can read with you or on their own – and then having a discussion – is a wonderful way to keep an open line of communication with your children. The books will address many of the feelings they are having. Below are some of my favorite books.

- [The Un-Wedding](#), Cole, Babbette

Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1997. Fiction, 30 pages.

Charming and funny book that kids of almost all ages will enjoy, although toddlers may not get the humor. It was originally published in Great Britain so copies may be available from a different publisher.

- [It's Not Your Fault, Koko Bear](#), Lansky, Vicki

Book Peddlers, 1998. Fiction, 32 pp. (Available in English and Spanish.)

The book says it is for children 3-7 years, although I think parts of it would appeal to all elementary school-age children. It is a "read along" book for parents to read to or with their children. There are valuable ideas on every page for parents.

- [Two Homes](#), Masurel, Claire

Candlewick Press, 2001. Fiction. 28 pages.

Ages 3-6. Simple book (in a good way) with minimal words, beautiful pictures and concepts about what it is like to have two homes and love two parents the same.

- [The Boy Who Didn't Want to Be Sad](#), Goldblatt, Rob

Magination Press, 2004. Fiction, 28 pages.

Written by a psychologist, this book is not specifically about divorce but can be helpful to children elementary school age and up who are going through a loss such as divorce. It is about a boy who is afraid to be sad so he gets rid of everything that might make him sad, but turns out he is sad anyway until he realizes that those things are also what makes him happy. The lesson is that one emotion (happiness) is impossible without the other (sadness). Would be especially good for a child who is repressing his feelings about divorce and withdrawing. Just about any child would get something out of this book because of the general theme of life losses.

A few more books I've heard are good (but have not read myself), are:

- [Charlie Anderson](#), by Barbara Abercrombie (ages 4 and up); supposed to be a charming book about a cat who has two loving homes.
- [My Parents Still Love Me Even Though They're Getting Divorced \(An Interactive Tale for Children\)](#), by Lois Nightingale; an interactive large paperback book (workbook style) for parents to go through with their young children in the beginning stages of a divorce.

There are many more divorce books for kids, in addition to these ones I've mentioned. Kids' Turn has a comprehensive list, with books noted for every age group. Here is the link to their book list: <http://kidsturn.org/kt/family-resources/kids/booksforkids/>

I also recommend you do a search on Amazon.com to see what's out there and which ones are most suitable for your child's age and situation. Read the Amazon reviews from parents who purchased the books and that will help you narrow down your selection.

Another resource: Games, Flash Cards about Divorce

On Amazon.com, last I checked, there were games and flash cards about divorce to play with your children. Also if you do a Google search for "Games Flash Cards for Kids about Divorce" you will get some other hits which may be worth getting. I can't recommend anything personally as I've never used them, but some of the products look interesting.

© 2009, 2013 Resources for Children, by Alison L. Patton, all rights reserved.

Notice: Unless otherwise noted, all articles and essays published on this website are copyrighted work of Alison Patton. To request permission to reprint or use these works for any purposes other than personal use, please contact alison@lemonadedivorce.com.

Alison L. Patton | Patton Thickstun, APC

www.AlisonPattonlaw.com

www.lemonadedivorce.com

www.twitter.com/LemonadeDivorce