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## FAMILIES: INFLUENCES IN CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOUR, FROM PARENTS AND TEACHERS'

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### ABSTRACT

*Given that parental separation may have a profound effect on a young child's mental and emotional health, it stands to reason that a child's family environment would have a significant influence in shaping their growth and behaviour. This research intends to compare and contrast the experiences of children whose parents are divorced or separated with those of children whose parents are married or cohabiting in order to determine whether or not there are significant variations in their behaviour. Sixty-two children, ages six to nine, were selected at random from two groups: thirty with single parents and thirty with married parents. The Portuguese CBCL (Child Behavior Check List) and TRF (Teacher Report Form) were used to assess parents' and teachers' perspectives on students' behavioural patterns. According to the findings, teachers report that children of single parents have more behavioural problems in two areas compared to their married counterparts, parents report that their children of single parents have more behavioural problems when they do not have siblings, and mothers report that their children of single parents have more behavioural problems when their children's visits with their father are less frequent. According to our findings, therefore, both educators and parents agree that divorce has a detrimental effect on children's behaviour.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In order to operate effectively as a member of any given society, there are certain traits and behaviours that all members are required to exhibit. The obligation of parents (or other designated carers) to nurture and protect their children is one example of a cultural norm that is widely followed. Other norms and values also differ considerably among cultural contexts. All communities engage in some kind of child training, and all societies have some form of social control to make sure that the next generation is socialised, or brought up in a manner that guarantees that they will adopt the established norms of thought and action. Of course, cultures can change, either gradually or abruptly, so the transfer from one generation to the next is not ironclad. This means that the next generation may have to adjust to challenges that their



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predecessors did not encounter. Values may be passed down from generation to generation, but that doesn't mean it always works. It's possible that certain youngsters in each generation may be deemed socially unprepared according to the standards of the community at large.

Some people take longer to mature socially than others. When people enter the workforce for the first time, they often undergo a period of socialisation into the norms and practises of the organisation. When people take on new responsibilities in their lives, they undergo a process of socialisation and resocialization (e.g. marriage, parenthood). However, we are primarily concerned with the socialisation of children when thinking about the function of parents. Some of the socialisation that takes place throughout childhood is anticipatory in nature, in that it serves to prepare children for adaptability to a broad variety of life roles and settings. However, another aspect of early socialisation is teaching kids how to act in ways that are appropriate for their age. At various points in a person's life, societies place varying expectations on them, with some of the most significant ones being those imposed during early development. Among these are the expectations that children will behave in a pleasant, cooperative manner while among adults, avoid causing distress or disruption to adults, take on responsibilities commensurate with their ages, and follow other similar guidelines.

Children's everyday experiences in contemporary cultures are controlled and supervised by adults in at least three different settings: at home with their families, in their peer groups, and in institutional settings like schools and daycares. There is a vast corpus of research on the subject of how children are socialised, and throughout it, parents' influence has been repeatedly highlighted. The significance of this focus has been emphasised for a very long time. The proverb "as the twig is bent, so grows the tree" can be traced back to at least the Greeks and the Bible (and likely further back in time), and in most societies, parents are entrusted with the primary duty of "bending" the children in desirable directions through monitoring, instructing, and disciplining them as they develop. Humans, and children in particular, have long been believed to be particularly malleable throughout the early years of life, when they are more susceptible to the kind of social factors that shape their personalities even after they've left the safety of their families. Language, eating habits, religious convictions, and even long-lasting personality characteristics are all regarded to be particularly malleable throughout the first seven to nine years of a child's life.



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## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

**Blazevic, Ines (2016)** The paper's theoretical foundations are situated in a humanistic and integrative stance toward childrearing and teaching that aims to foster the fullest possible potential in each learner. A well-thought-out school curriculum may foster the all-around growth of students. Teachers, students, and parents (as co-creators of the curriculum) should work together to design a variety of classroom activities that provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding, mastery, and growth in academic and social domains. It is around this time when children form their first lasting friendships, the impact of school on their social development is reinforced, and the parental influence is still strong. This article will provide theories of social development and research findings on impacts on student social development in order to facilitate a better understanding of children's social development. School activities that stimulate not just social but also holistic development of children should be developed out of a deep understanding of the impacts of home, school, and peers on the student's social development.

**Baferani, Maryam (2015)** Exploring "the function of the family in the socialisation of children" is the primary motivation for this investigation. Students in District 2 of the city attended high school with her parents for the 2014-2015 academic year and made up the research population from which a sample of 100 participants was drawn using a stratified sampling technique (50 parents and 50 children). Answers to surveys were used to compile the data (Questionnaire "Schaeffer family" and socialisation questionnaire). For this, we employed the t-test and descriptive tables in SPSS. The findings suggest that children's social development is influenced by the level of parental affection they get. ( $p < 0.05$ ) Children's development as social beings is influenced by parental authority. ( $p < 0.05$ ) A child's development as a social being is influenced by the warmth or lack thereof in his or her familial interactions.

**Gutman, Leslie & Feinstein, Leon (2010)** This research examined the relationships between parenting practises and children's development from infancy through early childhood, as well as how these relationships differ according to socioeconomic status. Mothers and their offspring were analysed as part of an ongoing longitudinal study of British families living in the county of Avon. Children's development from 6 months to 42 months was studied in four waves of data using growth curve modelling. The results indicate that time plays a significant role in the connection between parenting and kids' growth and development. Mother-child interactions were positively associated with children's development 12 months later, but children's involvement in extracurricular activities was positively associated with their development both at the time and



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12 months afterwards. Children of moms with lesser levels of education may benefit more from interactive parenting, since this factor was also identified as a key moderator.

**Wadsworth, Jane & Burnell, Ioanna & Taylor (2006)** Children from a nationwide cohort were studied to evaluate their development and behaviour at the age of five; comparisons were made between children from single-parent, step-parent, and biological homes. Average test scores for behaviour, language, and visuomotor co-ordination were all lower for children from single-parent households compared to those from two-parent households. When we accounted for other possible confounding factors, the results still remained statistically significant. On average, adults viewed the actions of children in single-parent and blended households as more "anti-social" than those of their two-parent counterparts. On average, people thought children from single-parent homes were a little more "neurotic" than those from two-parent homes.

**Collins, Willard & Roisman, Glenn (2006)**As the old saying goes, "adolescence begins in biology and ends in culture." Traditionally, this phrase has been used to refer to a set of well-known psychological and behavioural markers of adolescent development, such as rising levels of conflict between parents and children and a more intense focus on peers as a result of both biological maturation and societal and cultural norms. Adolescent experts have just lately begun to consider whether or if genetic or environmental factors play a larger role in explaining individual variance. In contrast to research conducted with adults, adolescent studies focused on topics such "do interpersonal influences impact teenage development?" and "if so, which ones are particularly important?" throughout all time periods.

### **3. FAMILIES: HOW THEY AFFECT CHILDREN'S GROWTH AND BEHAVIOUR**

In the 15 European nations studied, Portugal had the largest increase in divorce filings, from 12,322 to 23,348 (or an increase of about 89.4%) between 1995 and 2004. This is not to say that divorce is more common in Portugal than in other European nations; in fact, Eurostat data shows that the divorce rate in northern EU (European Union) countries reached 0.6% while in Portugal it was just 0.3%. After the legalisation of divorce in the 1970s, the divorce rate in Portugal skyrocketed, with an average of 4,794 divorces per year between 1975 and 1979, 7,947 in the 1980s, and 13,093 in the 1990s. The number of divorces in 2000/2001 continued to rise, reaching 19,173. (National Institute of Statistics, 2001). Many writers have explored the effects of divorce on families in recent years as the topic has gained attention in modern society. As a result, it may be necessary to notice any changes in behaviour in children going through this transition (parents' divorce) and take appropriate action. Amato and Keith looked at 92 papers from 1991 that evaluated the outcomes for kids of divorced and married parents. Research conducted in the



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1990s, including the one included in this meta-analysis, found that children of divorced parents had worse outcomes in terms of self-concept, academic success, some behavioural disorders, adaptability, and health. Since divorce is a relatively new social occurrence, it stands to reason that the responses to this reality and the ways in which people's minds have adapted to it are not optimal for the welfare of the family unit as a whole.

### **3.1 Family**

Newer studies have shown that families play a crucial part in the maturation of young children and teenagers because they provide a "privileged environment of personality construction and shaping." The roles of men and women in society, as well as the influence of biology and sexuality on family dynamics, have undergone significant changes in recent decades. To the progress of society, each of these factors is crucial. The form and functioning of families will be affected by these shifts. The kid was on the fringes of the family for a while. But as time goes on, the kid ends up becoming the focus of the household (Leal, 2005). Taking a systemic theoretical stance, we see how the family is embedded within larger social, cultural, and communal systems that have an impact on how its members interact with one another. Individuals are the smallest unit of the family. Depending on the degree of family structure, the family unit is a permeable system that is affected by its surrounding environment. Each family has its own unique identity and driving force. So, it's clear that families are a two-way street where each member has an impact on the other. As its members grow and develop, so does the family dynamic. The familiar dynamic is the best place to ascertain whether or not a person is a mother or father. Some scholars have argued that the primary function of families is to instil a sense of social responsibility in their offspring. Children's initial interactions with others take place inside their own families, making the family unit a crucial component in their emotional and social development.

### **3.2 Children's Behaviour and Development**

Today, parents have a lot of concerns about their children's mental health and behaviour. Many writers have looked into this, and we'll touch on a few of the ideas that highlight the importance of family in this discussion. Children between the ages of 6 and 10 (our sample age range) are, from a developmental standpoint, in the midst of a period of consolidation about the learnings gained in early childhood as they prepare for puberty. When a child reaches the age of six, a profound shift takes place in his or her brain, and he or she begins to make sense of the world around him or her. This includes developing the ability to solve problems, come up with creative answers, reflect on one's own thoughts and actions, make judgements, and recognise the impact



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that another person's viewpoint can have on the dynamics between people. The struggles between the child's independence and the expectations that may or cannot boost the child's self-esteem define the child's existence at this stage. The start of formal education is also a major developmental milestone at this age. Beginning at this age, children are more likely to be affected by their peers at school than by their parents, and they spend less time with their parents as a result (e.g., teacher and other children). Some scholars see the family as the major agent of socialisation since it is inside the home that children first learn to adopt the norms of society in terms of their values, beliefs, and behaviours. Children acquire norms of conduct and the ideas and values upon which society is based via the process of socialisation. The kid's future behaviours and attitudes are conciliated by the intern learning that occurs inside the family and in their inner interactions, where the child learns the fundamental principles of socialisation, the values, and the obligations.

The interaction with parents and other family members is crucial to the child's social development because of the unique experiences inside the family. After birth, the family becomes an important part of the kid's process of becoming a person by providing the infant with the environment in which he or she may acquire the habits, values, and linguistic norms that will ultimately define him or her. That's why the home environment is so crucial to kids and teens growing into their own selves. A child's social and psychological growth occurs mostly via learning inside the family through parenting. A youngster may learn valuable life skills by seeing and participating in real-life family interactions.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

First, the parameters of the research were laid out in a meeting with the school's administration, when the intended outcomes and methods were presented for their agreement. After collecting the necessary sample and the signed papers from both the school and the parents, the children's instructors would deliver the forms to be filled out to the students, who would then give them to their parents. To ensure that everyone could see the whole procedure, the envelope also included information on the security of the software. From December 2009 to October 2010, the data were gathered.

##### **4.1 Participants**

Three private schools in the greater Lisbon region served as a source for the sample. Out of the 62 kids that were chosen, 32 are girls and 30 are boys, and their ages vary from 6 to 9. Thirty-two of the 62 kids are raised by single parents, while 30 are raised by parents who are married. Both groups had an average age of seven. In the group, there were a total of 32 people: 16 boys

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and 16 girls whose parents were still together, and 14 boys and 16 girls whose parents were no longer together.

## 5. RESULTS

Because the sample size was more than 50, "Kolmogorov-Smirnov" testing was performed to ensure the 16 were normally distributed. The null hypothesis that the distribution follows a normal distribution with  $\alpha = 0.05$  is rejected since the value of p (p-value) for all sizes was less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . To continue the investigation, we used the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney nonparametric test to compare the medians. PASW (Statistics Predictive Analytics Software) (v. 18, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Inc. Chicago, IL)) was used for statistical analysis.

**Table 1 Differentiating Children's Behaviors Based on the Composition of Their Families Using the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney U-Test**

			Teststatistics <sup>a</sup>	
	Mann-WhitneyU	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp.Sig.(2-tailed)
OppositionandimmaturityCBCL	476	941	-0.057	0.955
AggressivebehaviourCBCL	443.5	971.5	-0.526	0.599
HyperactivityattentionCBCL	406.5	934.5	-1.055	0.294
DepressionCBCL	421.5	949.5	-0.942	0.346
Social problemsCBCL	439.5	845.5	-0.13	0.897
SomaticcomplaintsCBCL	395	860	-1.352	0.176
WithdrawCBCL	460	925	-0.286	0.775
AnxietyCBCL	451	979	-0.193	0.847
ObsessiveschizoidCBCL	381.5	909.5	-1.208	0.227
WithdrawTRF	345.5	873.5	-1.953	0.051
SomaticcomplaintsTRF	437.5	965.5	-0.868	0.385
AnxietydepressionTRF	362.5	890.5	-1.684	0.092
SocialproblemsTRF	372	900	-1.607	0.108
ThoughtproblemsTRF	401	929	-2.026	0.043
AttentionproblemsTRF	429	835	-0.076	0.939
DelinquencybehavioursTRF	338	866	-2.416	0.016
AggressivebehavioursTRF	439	904	-0.165	0.869



Table 2's study reveals that, when compared to the mean of children from intact homes, children from divorced families do better on both of the aforementioned criteria. This implies that instructors are more likely to label children of divorced parents as having behavioural and cognitive issues compared to those from intact homes.

**Table 2 Statistics on Means and Medians for TRF and Delinquency (TRF)**

	Thoughtproblem(TRF)	Delinquencyproblem(TRF)
Childrenwithmarriedparents	Mean = 0.1250	Mean = 0.3125
Childrenwithdivorcedparents	Mean = 0.4666	Mean = 1

## 6. CONCLUSION

The primary finding of this study is that children from divorced homes are more likely to have behavioural issues than those from intact households, as reported by both parents and educators. Although divorce is a significant factor, it is also worth noting the influence of parental role and family welfare on children's behaviour. Is it true that getting a divorce might make you feel weaker? Since every kid is an individual, generalisations and forecasts are impossible. However, in the here and now, via the child's viewpoint on the divorce, it is essential to guarantee the child's safety, protection, and affection. This study relies on the observations of several adults who had direct contact with the youngsters. Both parents and educators play important roles in children's lives, but in very different ways. We can get a fuller and more nuanced picture of the child's behaviour and its causes and circumstances with the use of this data. In order to develop an intervention strategy that is both comprehensive and appropriate for the kid, it is essential to have these data.





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