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# Some Data About the Consulting of Children with Divorced Parents

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**ABSTRACT**

*The economical, psychological and social problems have had an impact on the increase of the divorce number in Albania. In this qualitative study there is analyzed a consulting process which is carried out by the school psychologist with four children with divorced parents from 10 to 11 years old. They attended the secondary school in Elbasan city during the academic year 2011 – 2012. The collected data was based on 31 psychological consulting sessions. The aim of this study is to show that art and play therapy helped the children to express their hidden emotions like fear, anger, loneliness and wishes, to express their goals and to rebuild interaction skills with peers. During this process the children expressed these emotions and improved their group cooperation. The data of this study pointed out the fact that a good cooperation between the school psychologist, parents, teachers and their classmates decreased the level of the stress and aggression of these children, involving them in various activities. Also, the teachers and parents need professional help when they are working with children with divorced parents.*

**KEYWORDS : divorce, consulting, emotion, stress, interaction skills**

## Introduction

The parents' divorce causes different problems on their children. The children are the first ones to suffer the negative impact of the divorce of their parents. Many studies show that the children with divorced parents blame their own self as the main cause of the divorce of their parents. All the children need the love, attention and a safe place where they feel safety and protected. The children need to have a full attention of both their parents. During the divorce process of their parents, children feel abandoned, and they are not sure with which of them they are going to live in the future, (1, 6, 8.). They hope and feel that their divorced parents one day will live together again. They feel guilty, refused and unable to express their emotions and feels to somebody else, (1). During and after the divorce of their parents children start to change their behavior. They try to be impolite in order to make the others, especially the adults to pay more attention on them. As they grow up they continue to have the negative behavior. This is as a result of a continuously conflict between their parents, the new life stile, etc (3). Children with divorced parents tend to express their problems trough negative behavior such as not cooperating in class, being violent with others and themselves and keeping emotions to themselves. School is the place where children can freely express what they feel like doing, (4).

Teachers, psychologists and their classmate help them to minimize their emotional disorders through the learning and the game (2). In the same time it's very important having the cooperation between psychologist, teachers and children's families, (9).

According to Loweinstein it's better to deal with children with divorced parents using game, art and music, (7). This study shows that the process of the consulting is carried out by psychologist with four children with divorced parents. Initially, the author has identified the negative behaviors of children and then is proved the fact that how we can change these negative behaviors using the creative activities, cooperation and consulting process. According to Hozman and Froilland the consulting process helps children with divorced parents, (5). During the first sessions the children are stimulated to express their anger including them on noisy activities, like the dishevelment, pop of the balloons and on the quit activities like the expressed drawings, modeling etc. Later sessions these children started to build the concept about themselves through the creating puzzles, building up the cubs and designs.

## Methods

This study is a qualitative study. It includes four elementary school children (three boys 9-11 years old and an 11 old girl) in Elbasan. All of them have been influenced by their parents' divorce. Both boys 1 and 3 and girl 2 have been suggested to go to the school psychologist by their teachers. These children were not active and were not part of class activities; they were violent, timid, and anxious; they often felt lonely and aren't doing well in school. Child 4 has been suggested to go to the school psychologist by his mother. This child has a good performance at school. His mother was worried because he was very rude and aggressive when spoken of his father.

The data for this study have been collected during 34 consulting sessions in 13 weeks. The first child took part in 10 individual sessions, the second child took part in 8 individual sessions, the third child took part in 7 individual sessions and the fourth child took part in 6 individual sessions. On the other hand they took part in 3 group sessions. In the first group session only their parents were present, however in the other sessions their teachers were present too. In the group sessions, the game therapy was applied in attempt to help these children be more cooperative and sociable. Arts and Crafts activities, drawings and different games helped these children to freely express themselves. During the individual sessions, the discussions were essential for the data. The results from the game therapy were very important data as well.

**Case 1.** The child K.K is a ten years old boy. He has an older sister. After the divorce of their parents he lives with his mother and his sister. His mother is unemployed and his father never took care for his family. He changed house some times, but not the school. He absented many times at school and had the low grades. Also he dressed the same dirty clothes every day and became violent with his classmates and his teacher.

**Case 2**. The child E.L is an 11 years old girl. She lives with her mother in the same apartment after the divorce of their parents. She complains to make homework or to help her mother. Also she prefers to stay alone and to show some antisocial behaviors with her classmates. The child E.L is only child

**Case 3**. The child K.Q is a 9 year old boy. He is the younger child of his family. His father left house and K.Q lives together with her mother, his brother and her sister. K.Q looks a quite child apparently and he stays alone in class. K.Q faces difficulties when he makes his class work. His father did not come back home for a long time so he meet him rarely.

**Case 4.** The child H.H is an 11 years old boy. Their parents are divorced two years ago. Often he takes care of his younger brother when her mother works. Also, he fights his brother and complains her mother and spends more time watching TV than doing his homework. He was a good student before their parents divorcing.

## Results and Discussions

The children included in this study look scared, blamed, irritable, and they complain their mothers and their teachers so often, (1, 6, 8). Also they show the negative purpose of their behaviors such as revenge, individual power, responsibility deviation etc. Some of these children have shown the same behaviors. The children in case 1 and 4 shown were bored, aggressive and spiteful, meanwhile the children in cases 2 and 3 are shown scared, timorous and diffident. Each of them wants and hopes to live together with both two parents. Some times the child in case 3 shown worried about the absence of his father and some times feels better when he stays both with his alder brother. The child

in the case 4 feels bad of the behavior of his father, but often he thinks how to take care of his younger brother. The use of the art therapy helps children to show different kinds of feelings such as fear, anger and desires using different colors and shapes, (7). During the first consulting session, by drawing process the children tried to picture, themself, their family and their pets using different colors and expressing different feelings. These data are presented in table 1.

**Table 1. Some data about the art of intervention during the consulting process of children with divorced parents**

| Cases | Development during the consulting process | The art of intervention |
|---|---|---|
| Child 1 | He didn't prefer talking with school psychologist. He was nervous, (session 1). | He drew his family, including his father. He painted him self in red, drew his house, school and a vortex on them. |
| Child 2 | She looked happy (session 6). Started to accept the divorce of their parents, (session 8). | He wrote on paper " my father come and meet me" He wrote on paper "my father went so far and don't come back home to met me anymore" |
| Child 3 | He wasn't ready to accept the divorce of their parents, (session 7). | He drew his family and him self and wrote "my family is happy" |
| Child 4 | He said "I am nervous", he was aggressive (session 5). | He wrote: I hate my father, will take revenge, and drew some black circles. |

Later, during the other sessions the children continued to express different feeling by using game therapy. The child in case 1 and 4 could not finish the game. After the use of the game therapy finished the cooperation between children and school psychologist started to improve. During the last sessions the child of case 2 was interested about the roles of the game and invited and the psychologist to be part of this game. During the game the child of case 4 helped the other children.

The child of case 3, drawn his family writing down "my happy family". After the last sessions the child of the case one does not fight any more with his classmate, meanwhile the children of cases two and 3 three started to do their homework and to be friendly with classmate. The child of the case four, started to avoid the use of the bad words, to be more polite with his brother and to get the high grades.

## Conclusions

1. During this study various negative behaviors of children with divorced parents such as: seeking of revenge, individual power, responsibility deviation and using bad words, are presented.
2. The use of creative activities including art and game therapy helped the children to express their psycho-social needs and to develop their interaction skills.
3. In order to decrease the level of stress, aggression, and to include the children with divorced parents in a wide range of school and class activities an active cooperation between the school psychologist, teachers and parents is a necessity.

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