

Developmental Considerations and Implications

(Taken from "Divorce Mediation: A path to cooperation" training manual of Community Mediation Center, Harrisonburg, Virginia)

Babies: Basic Attachment and trust Needs

Notions of time, space and causality develop only with constancy of attachment.

Needs routine and a primary caretaker and very frequent contact with other parent.

Ages Two-and-a-Half to Five: Separation/Individuation Most likely to misperceive and distort reality.

Feels most directly responsible.

Fears abandonment and parental violence. *Needs assurance.*

Ages Six to Ten: Independence/Peers/Self-Control/Competence. Extreme loyalty conflict.

Reactive depression.

Intensely misses a parent if absent. Susceptible to school problems. *Needs consistency and stability.*

Pre-Adolescent: Sexual Identity/Need to Belong/Moody, dramatic.

Embarrassed to express own upset.

Rely on moral, religious teachings. *Needs each parent to listen. Time with each parent.*

Teens: Self-Esteem/Separate Identity/Sexuality. Feel responsible to care for parents.

Wonder if they can ever have a lasting relationship. Ideas should be taken seriously; may vote with their feet. *Needs home base from which to venture out and return. Needs affirmation from opposite sex parent.*

Needs to be included in living arrangement discussions and decision. Needs to have own activities, with parents staying available and concerned.