

Congregations & Early Childhood

From the Early Childhood Faith Initiative, a collaboration between Durham's Partnership for Children & End Poverty Durham

Year 2, Edition 6

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SECTION 1: FAITH COORDINATOR NEWS: Lunch & Learn: Feb. 7 + other news

LUNCH & LEARN takes place on **Feb. 7** from 11:30am - 1:00pm at Covenant Presbyterian on *Getting Fathers Involved with Young Children*. Jeff Quinn, MPH, Duke's Center for Child & Family Policy will present, and Pastor Linzie Atkins, Lincoln Memorial Baptist, and Asst. Rector Joe Hensley, St Luke's Episcopal will be sharing suggestions as well as personal experiences. **PLEASE COME!**

The Initiative **received a small DCIA grant** to purchase and distribute bilingual (Engl./Span.) board books to young children in East Durham. Could your congregation get involved with this project? Let's form a partnership to make a difference. Contact me at 919-732-1524 or winniewmorgan@juno.com

All the best to Rev. Mel Williams as he retires from Watts Street Baptist Church! We look forward to your continued leadership of End Poverty Durham.

Parents of newborns to 4 months are invited to connect with other families for a newborn discussion group on Tuesdays March 6th-April 24th from 10-11am at Grey Stone Baptist Church. For more info contact ckriley@durhamcountync.gov

SECTION 2: RESOURCES & MATERIALS: Divorce & Young Children

1. Helping Your Child Cope with Divorce by Neuman. Has a chapter on infant & toddlers and preschoolers (3-5). See 13 ways parents can help children with divorce in general.
2. Helping Children Cope with Divorce by Teyber. Info on why children feel responsible & scripts for talking with children.
3. Mom's House, Dad's House: How Parents Can Make Two Homes for Their Children After Divorce by Ricci
4. Books for Children: Dinosaurs Divorce: A guide for Changing Families by Brown & Brown, It's Not your Fault, KoKo Bear by Lansky, My Parents Still Love Me by Yorba

SECTION 3: QUOTES – Divorce

When parents divorce, most children suffer. For some, this suffering turns into long-lasting psychological damage. Neglect of children, which can be psychologically more damaging than physical abuse, is twice as high among separated and divorced parents.

Yuriko Egami

Children of divorce have a higher rate of divorce themselves than children from intact families.

Paul Amato

If you want kids to do well, then you want marriage to do well.

Rick Hampson and Karen S. Peterson

My experience is that divorce is almost always unilateral. It's not a democracy. One person gets to decide the fate of not only the marriage but the family.

Michelle Weiner Davis

SECTION 4: SHARING IDEAS – Tips for Dealing with Young Children & Divorce

Young children might not understand divorce, but they know there are changes in the family structure and that their parents may be upset and angry and they live apart. They don't understand why. Infants may experience changes in eating, sleeping, digestive systems, behavior (more fretful, fearful, and anxious). Toddlers may cry more, be clingy, have changes in sleeping & toilet habits, express more baby-like behavior, feel angry/frustrated but not be able to explain feelings. Preschoolers may feel loss/sorrow and fantasize pleasant & frightening thoughts, fear abandonment, feel rejection, blame themselves, feel responsible, have physical symptoms (tummy aches) and can become angry and attack the parent they blame or turn their anger inward and become depressed or withdrawn.

During divorce, what can parents do:

With infants: Keep a normal routine, remain calm in front of the baby, rest while baby sleeps, ask family or friends for help, & both parents need contact.

With Toddlers: Parents can nurture, reassure, continue routines, allow some "baby like" behavior but set clear limits/consequences, keep daily stress to minimum, provide alone time with child, spend time with same sex family member as the parent who does not live at home.

With Preschoolers: Encourage questions & concerns about separation/divorce, encourage expression of feelings by talking, physical play & art work (including anger), reassure them both parents understand and love her/her, tell repeatedly if needed he/she is not responsible for the divorce.

Overall suggestions: keep consistent routines, set reasonable limits & enforce consistently & lovingly, provide reassurance surrounding transitions, reassure both parents love them & will always be their parent, have open communication with other parent & with caregivers, and take care of self.

Taken from a variety of web sites. Google "divorce & young children" to get great info.

Outreach Opportunities:

DIAPERS DESPARATELY NEEDED: Healthy Families Durham needs diapers to share with their families. Organize a diaper drive or secure gift certificates to purchase them.

BOARD BOOKS NEEDED: Babies need to be exposed to books early! Would your congregation organize a book drive for the early years? We have many avenues of getting books into the homes of underserved families with young children.

CALL ME to help with either project! We will make it easy and it will make a difference. Instead of flowers for Valentine's---give diapers or books and make a difference with your LOVE!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

www.dpfc.net/EarlyChildhoodFaithInitiative.aspx; www.endpovertydurham.org;

[Sign-up for e-news from Durham's Partnership for Children, follow the Partnership Blog and join us on facebook !\[\]\(291e070cef6c4d5e78fefe4696ef53be_img.jpg\)](#)!

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