Divorce Education Benefits Children in Region 2
Parents Forever: Education for Families in Divorce Transition

The Situation
Divorce challenges many individuals and families and causes stress and difficulty in family life. Parents need education that provides insight, support, and resources to guide them in making good decisions and helping their children adjust.

Extension Response
Parents Forever: Education for Families in Divorce Transition program is an educational program for separating and/or divorcing parents. The 4-hour session is offered by the Region 2 Parent Resource Center and provides information on the impacts of divorce on children, ways to cope with difficulties, and communication skills. The intent of the program is to facilitate better understanding of children’s needs, improve parental cooperation, reduce parental conflict, and increase positive outcomes for parents and children in divorce transition.

Impacts
From 2010 through 2014, 98 people attended Parents Forever: Education for Families in Divorce Transition (PF) in Ward County. Evaluations were completed by the participants and these are the impacts that they reported:

- 93% agreed/strongly agreed that Parents Forever was worthwhile for them.
- 98% agree/strongly agreed that the class would be beneficial for all divorcing/separating parents.
- 99% would recommend Parents Forever to someone else.

Participants also indicated that after attending PF, their views, perceptions and knowledge about divorce/separation changed. Individuals reporting a high knowledge of:

- understanding that divorce is a complex process and involves many changes: before PF-34%, after PF-69%.
- understanding how children are affected by divorce due to grief/loss and responses at different ages and stages: before PF-25%, after PF-66%.
- recognizing patterns to avoid that might hurt children and what I can do to help them cope with the divorce process: before PF-18%, after PF-69%.
- understanding effective communication strategies to use with my former partner during divorce and how I can use them in co-parenting: before PF-9%, after PF-58%.
- learning to manage parenting concerns during divorce and how to keep children “out of the middle” of issues with the other parent: before PF-22%, after PF-61%.
- understanding tips to help myself and my children adjust to a new life path: before PF-7%, after PF-60%.

Feedback
- “(I) know my boundaries and all that I can do to help my child develop properly and in a stable manner.”
- “(I) learned to remain positive no matter if my ex-spouse is negative, and to make my child feel better and learn how to cope with different changes.”
- “(I learned) how my kids felt about the divorce and what they are probably going through.”
- “(I will) not allow my child to be caught in the middle of me and my ex.”
- “(I) see how the different aspects of divorce affect my kids throughout their ages.”
- “(I) got insight on how kids feel based upon how parents act”
- “(I appreciate) the emphasis on doing things in the best interest of the child.”
- “(I learned) how to reduce conflict.”
- “(I learned) ideas on how I can change negative situations between my ex-spouse and me.”
- “(I learned) communication skills and tips for use with both my son and his mother.”
- “(I learned the tools I need to co-parent.”
- “(I learned positive ways to talk to my ex-spouse.”

Contact
Holly M. Arnold-Extension Parent Educator
Region 2 Parent Resource Center
315 3rd St. SE, PO Box 5005, Minot ND 58702
701-857-6450  holly.arnold@ndsu.edu

County commissions, North Dakota State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. North Dakota State University does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, public assistance status, sex, sexual orientation, status as a U.S. veteran, race or religion. Direct inquiries to the Vice President for Equity, Diversity and Global Outreach, 205 Old Main, (701) 231-7708. This publication will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities upon request, (701) 231-7881. 2015