



Mercer Council is a private, non-profit agency dedicated to strengthening the foundations of individuals and families by empowering them to successfully handle difficult, everyday life situations and the impact of substance abuse. The Council actively provides quality alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse prevention & early intervention services in partnership with individuals, families, schools, communities, businesses, and professionals throughout Mercer County.

Contact Information:

1931 Brunswick Avenue
Lawrence Twp. NJ 08648

Phone:
(609) 396-5874

Fax:
(609) 396-3451

Email:
mcada@mercercouncil.org

Website:
www.mercercouncil.org

Addictions Hotline of NJ:

1-877-652-1148

Mercer Council on alcoholism and Drug Addiction
1931 Brunswick Avenue
Lawrence Twp., NJ 08648

Children in the Middle



*A Program for
Divorced / Separated Parents and Children*

What About the Children?

The census Bureau estimates that 1,300,000 divorces and dissolutions are granted annually in the US. Approximately half of all marriages performed today will end in divorce in the US and Canada. About 60% of divorces involve children. A million children experience their parent's divorce each year.

The divorce or separation of one's parents and the restructuring of the family that follows are among the most painful and agonizing experiences for children of all ages. The problems created by divorce or separation can remain a long-term burden for many children well into their adult lives.

What is 'Children in the Middle'?

Children in the Middle was developed by the Center for Divorce Education in Athens, Ohio with the goal of helping caregivers (parents, grandparents, etc.) and children to minimize harmful effects of divorce. This is a class about communication skills. It is NOT therapy or counseling. It is NOT a workshop on divorce law or on case strategies.

The purpose is to share information about what their divorce may be doing to their children, and to learn skills to minimize their children's burdens.

The Program is a **two session program (one session for parents, one for children) , two hours each.**

Goals of Children in the Middle:

- * To engage parents in recognizing the effects on children caught in the middle of parental problems and conflicts.
- * To help parents and children learn new skills & apply them to their own situations.
- * To encourage parents to let their children know that their reactions to being caught in the middle are normal, and to encourage children to give parents feedback when problems are occurring.
- * To become knowledgeable on how to reduce the main stressors of divorce and separation.



Unlike other programs, Children in the Middle

- is *skill focused* ~ the approach most likely to produce lasting behavior change.
 - recognize how children are put in the middle
 - learn to utilize good communication skills
 - help children lead happier, less stressful lives
- targets the most stress-inducing parental *behaviors*.
- has been *proven effective* through extensive field testing.
- comes with *curricular materials* for parents and children to take home.
- highly *endorsed by parents*, even when mandated to attend.

Topics include but not limited to: Children's reaction to divorce, stressful situations; most common complaints children have about divorcing parents (carrying messages, loyalty conflicts, money problems, quizzing and spying, long distant parenting). And, a better, less stressful method for handling each situation is explained and modeled.