The Shoe Fits – Now Wear It
Retrospective Exploration of Young Adult’s Experience of Home, School, Sport and Friendships Following Parental Separation

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Today we will briefly discuss –

- What benefits and harms children experiencing parental separation

- Whether parental involvement matters in sports, school and friendships

- The Australian context for this research

- A glimpse at what young adults have to say about their experience of parental conflict
Children experiencing separation benefit from –

- Quality parenting
- Parents that are co-operative
- Having a say in their living arrangements

(Cashmore et al, 2010)
In contrast children may experience harm where –

- There is high conflict between parents
- There is little quality parenting, regardless of time spent with parent
- There is little warmth or boundaries in the child’s emotional climate
- There is inadequate housing and income

(Fehlberg et al. 2011)
Parental involvement is an important factor in children’s enjoyment of, and view on, the importance of sport.

(Hoyle & Leff, 1996)
Parental involvement has been related to children’s academic achievement with longitudinal studies reporting parental involvement as leading to academic improvement, and being a protective factor across the child’s life.

(Westerlund, Gustafsso, Theorell, Janlert & Hammarstrom, 2013)
Friendships become increasingly important during adolescence, however parental involvement still plays a vital role in this socio-emotional developmental stage.

(Tian, Chen, Wang, Liu & Zhang, 2012)
In 2006 the government introduced changes to the Family Law Act (1975) Cth.

There has been an increase in judicially determined shared care arrangements from 4% pre-reform to 34% post-reform in the five to 12 year old age group.

(Weston, et al., 2011)
At this early stage of data collection … participant’s comments in relation to their experience of parental conflict …

- ‘… I was an emotional train wreck …’ Female, 22 years
- ‘… it cut, exactly, felt like a knife in my heart …’ Female, 27 years
- ‘… it probably did add to the confusion for me …’ Female, 23 years
- ‘… a lot of emotional stuff for me … its still horrible …’ Female, 22 years
- ‘… made it hard to have a relationship with my father …’ Female, 25 years
- ‘… not to say I’m still not struggling with it …’ Female, 22 years
- ‘… I told her to stop and that she wasn’t divorcing me she was divorcing dad and unless she wanted to divorce me well she had to deal with dad and not me …’ Female, 27 years
- feeling ‘… traumatised …’ and ‘… mildly suicidal …’ Male, 19 years
- ‘… it is bitter, really bitter … she makes snarky remarks and dad gets really angry because of the way it is affecting my brother. They don’t talk, my mum speaks to my dad through my brother…’ Female, 20 years