



## DINOSAURS DIVORCE – A GUIDE FOR CHANGING FAMILIES by LAURENE KRANSY BROWN and MARC BROWN (A Review)

Page 1 of 7

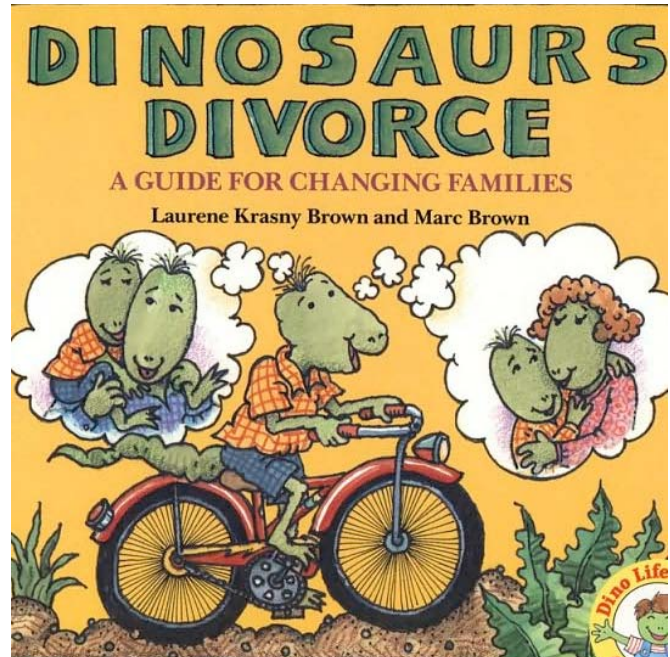
By Wayne D. Stocks

04/23/2012

### Introduction

At Divorce Ministry 4 Kids, we are committed to getting good resources into the hands of those who work with children of divorce. Many times, that means creating resources for those who work with children of divorce, other times that means bringing pre-existing resources to your attention. The book [Dinosaurs Divorce – A Guide For Changing Families](#) by Laurene Krasny Brown and Marc Brown is one such resource intended for children whose parents have gone, or are going, through a divorce.

With over one million children each year suffering through the divorce of their parents, it is encouraging to find resources created specifically for kids. Designed for kids [Dinosaurs Divorce](#) is brilliantly illustrated to help kids understand what divorce is and the many changes and emotions that come along with divorce, dating, remarriage and step families.



As the book jacket describes,

*If dinosaurs got married, no doubt they, like many families today, had to cope with divorce, too. What they needed was [Dinosaurs Divorce](#). This timely, reassuring picture book is the perfect resource to help young children and their families deal with the confusion, misconceptions and anxieties apt to arise when divorce occurs.*

### Brief Synopsis of the Book

The very first page of this book is a kid friendly glossary of terms related to divorce including things like judge, lawyer, child support and several others. The book then proceeds to explore, in a comic book illustrated type of format, the various trials and struggles of dinosaur children dealing with their dinosaur parents' divorce. The book is divided into eleven sections including:

- Why Parents Divorce
- What About You?
- After the Divorce





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Page 2 of 7

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04/23/2012

- Living With One Parent
- Visiting Your Parent
- Having Two Homes
- Celebrating Holidays and Special Occasions
- Telling Your Friends
- Meeting Parents' New Friends
- Living With Stepparents
- Having Stepsisters and Stepbrothers

Each section presents various struggles that a child faces along with advice on how to deal with those struggles.

### **Review of the Book**

I really appreciate this book for what it is – an attempt to help kids to deal with the ramifications of their parents' divorce. This book tackles a wide range of issues from dealing with living in two different homes to feeling like you've lost your place in your family to adapting to stepparents and stepsiblings. The book is written in language that kids will understand and doesn't back down from dealing with the issues they will face as they navigate the path of their post-divorce life.

I appreciate the tone of this book which does not skirt the issues that kids will face but at the same time provides advice for how to deal with those issues. The book is beautifully illustrated, and let's face it, who doesn't like dinosaurs?

There were a couple of things about the book which I did not care for. First, there was an absence of anything having to do with God. This is not a Christian book, and I knew that going in, but as we at Divorce Ministry 4 Kids believe that ultimate healing comes through a relationship with God and the saving grace of Jesus Christ, I would be remiss if I did not mention the lack of this in this particular book. Secondly, the book does in some places fall into the same traps as other kids' books about divorce. Firstly, the response to being uncomfortable about divorce is "there are lots of people in the same boat." That said, unlike some books which try to sell this idea as a "cure all" of sorts for the ails of divorce, this book merely mentions it as an alleviating factor. Secondly, while this is a great book for kids, I did still feel in places like the perspective of the book was distinctly adult.

With all of that said, I believe the positives of this book far outweigh any negatives, and I would recommend it for any child whose parents are getting a divorce. There is much practical help offered by the book in an easy-to-read format that kids will find both inviting and engaging. I believe one of the best features of this book is that it does not shy away from the real issues faced by kids going through the divorce of their parents. I think that parents considering, or going through, a divorce should read this book for a kids' perspective on what is going on.



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**Who Is This Book For?**

The book is written at the first through third grade level. That said, I believe that younger and older children will also benefit from the book. The book covers a wide breadth of topics and situations faced by millions of children of divorce each year, and it handles in a way that kids can comprehend and will appreciate. I think this is also a valuable book for parents who are divorcing, or have divorced, as it will open their eyes to the struggles their kids are going through. I would also recommend that anyone who works with children of divorce also be familiar with this book.

**About the Authors**

From the back book flap:

*“Laurene Kransy Brown and Marc Brown are the coauthors of the highly acclaimed Bionic Bunny Show. Dinosaurs Divorce grew out of their own experiences with divorce as a parent, stepparent, and for Laurie, as a child herself. As part of their research for the book, Marc talked to children across the country, who were eager to share their feelings about divorce. Marc and Laurie live in Hingham, Massachusetts. Marc’s sons, Tolon and Tucker, live with them part of the week. The other part of the week, they live with their mother and stepfather.”*

**Detailed Synopsis**

One thing that I really like about this book is the breadth of topics covered. In the pages of [Dinosaurs Divorce](#), you will find many of the issues faced by children of divorce on a daily basis. The book is broken into sections with a variety of topics covered under each grouping. These include:

*Why Parents Divorce*

TOPIC	APPROACH
<b>Reality of Divorce</b>	It’s not the child’s fault.
<b>Parents Fighting</b>	Some parents fight loudly. Others do so silently.
<b>Parents Anger</b>	Parents sometimes fight with kids because they’re mad at each other.
<b>Harmful Behaviors</b>	Some parents engage in them. Sometimes it’s better for these parents to no longer be together.





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### What About You?

TOPIC	APPROACH
<b>Variety of Emotions (Sadness, Anger, Fear, Confusion, Shame, Guilt, Relief, Worry)</b>	These won't last forever, and there's a lot kids can do to help themselves.
<b>Showing Emotions</b>	It's good to cry.
<b>Dealing with Anger</b>	Find ways to show it that don't hurt anyone.
<b>Dealing with Fear and Confusion</b>	Talk to your parents about it and ask questions.
<b>Keeping Emotions Bottled Up</b>	Imagine what would happen if you keep it all inside!
<b>Counseling</b>	Sometimes it's good to get family counseling.
<b>Child Care and Custody</b>	Sometimes parents can agree. Other times it's left up to a judge.
<b>Hope for Reconciliation</b>	Divorce is usually permanent.
<b>Dealing with both parents</b>	It is O.K. to love both parents. That doesn't change with divorce.

### After the Divorce

TOPIC	APPROACH
<b>Good things about divorce</b>	Parents are calmer and easier to get along with and you can get to know each of them better.
<b>Parents who bad mouth one another</b>	Tell your parents you don't like this. Sometimes you will need to tell them more than once.
<b>Parents who want to use kids as messengers</b>	Tell them to deliver messages themselves.
<b>Patience with parents</b>	Remember this is new to parents too.
<b>Moving</b>	You may have to say good bye to friends, but soon your new house will feel like home.





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### *Living With One Parent*

TOPIC	APPROACH
<b>More responsibility</b>	Parents may need kids to take care of themselves more. You can make things easier on your parents if you offer to pitch in and help.
<b>Growing up fast</b>	You might want to be a grown-up, but a child's job is to be a kid.
<b>Regressing</b>	Sometimes you may want to act younger. Instead, ask for love and affection.
<b>Financial impact</b>	Living with just one parent usually means less money. You will have to give up some things.
<b>Missing the other parent</b>	This will happen.

### *Visiting Your Parent*

TOPIC	APPROACH
<b>Can be uncomfortable</b>	You'll get used to it. Talk to your parents about what you've been doing.
<b>Some parents try to buy your affection</b>	You don't have to spend a lot of money to show your love.
<b>Parents who don't visit</b>	Keep in touch by calling or writing or spend time with other adults you like.
<b>Loving both parents</b>	Don't be embarrassed to show your love for one parent in front of the other.

### *Having Two Homes*

TOPIC	APPROACH
<b>Two homes can be confusing</b>	Try to find favorite things to do with each parent. Make a schedule and have special things at both homes.
<b>Playing one parent against the other</b>	It is not fair to anyone and will get you in trouble.
<b>Different rules</b>	Respect both sets of rules.





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### *Celebrating Holidays and Special Occasions*

TOPIC	APPROACH
May feel pulled at holiday time	Divorce means twice as much celebration.
Changes in holidays	Be open to changes and remember both of your parents on holidays.

### *Telling Your Friends*

TOPIC	APPROACH
Might make you feel different	You are still the same you and there are lots of other people going through the same thing.
Telling friends is hard	Tell one friend at a time. Your real friends will be glad you're honest with them.

### *Meeting Parents' New Friends*

TOPIC	APPROACH
Parents dating	Time with the babysitter might be fun.
Might feel jealous	Be polite to your parents' friends.

### *Living With Stepparents*

TOPIC	APPROACH
You might think stepparents are like those in fairy tales	A step-parent loves your parent just like you do.
Stepparents taking the place of your parent	Most won't try to do that. Try to get along.
Dealing with stepparents	Pick a good name for them. Be patient. Not everyone loves their stepparent, but you need to respect them.





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### *Having Stepsisters and Stepbrothers*

TOPIC	APPROACH
Sharing rooms	Don't feel invaded and agree on space.
Learning to get along	There may be arguments. They might be good people to talk to about divorce.
Finding quiet space	It can be hard, but it also means there is always someone around when you want them.
Finding your role	No matter how many new people are in your family, you are always special.
Dealing with change	One thing that will never change is your parents love for you.

You can find this book, and many others, in our [Divorce Ministry 4 Kids Bookstore](#).

