# **Ways Parental Conflict Affects a Child's Mental Health**

**Source:** [www.timesofindia.com](http://www.timesofindia.com)

### **How parental conflict affects a child?**

There's no relationship that does not falter. Arguments, disagreements and conflicts are extremely common even in a healthy relationship. But while it may seem normal to you, your child may be negatively affected by your and your partner's actions. There is no telling when a squabble between a couple may aggravate and escalate into something ugly, which when witnessed by a child, might devastate them gravely.

In light of parental conflicts, a child may become prone to anxiety, depression, discomfort and even struggle with their relationships in the future. Depending on how severe or aggressive marital dissatisfaction or parental arguments are, it may go on to do as much damage to the child's psyche.

That said, it is important that parents know how to deal with their disagreements privately and maturely, while ensuring that the children are not affected by the same.

### **Why parental conflict impacts a child?**

Every child looks up to their parents for advice, guidance and for support, which is why, if parents reveal their most unpleasant selves to their kids, it is likely to confuse them, making them uncomfortable.

Studies have shown that parents' fights impact their children in the most negative ways. Parents indulging in toxic arguments, name-calling and throwing insults at each other can give away a wrong impression to the kids, leading to emotional damage.

Researchers at the University of Oregon found that children as young as 6 months old can be negatively impacted by harsh parental arguments. Additionally, young adults up to 19 years of age can also be affected by the same. This suggests that a parent's relationship, how they decide on handling their actions, affects how their children grow up to or handle their problems.

Therefore, some of the negative impacts of parental conflict on kids include feeling insecure, stressed, confused about the future and may also strain parent-child relationships. Given that parents involved in a fight may not feel in the right mind or will most probably be distracted with the ongoing crisis, they're less likely to pay attention to the child's needs and wants.

### **How can it affect children in the long run?**

Experts believe unresolved parental conflict can affect a child's life in the long run. The effects may linger on even in their adult life. Just like their parents, they may find it difficult to maintain healthy relationships when they’re older. While they grew up with their parent's fighting with each other, they may find their aggressive nature normal and justified.

Increased aggression may go on to become a problem in a child's adult life. They may become more prone to misconduct and behavioral problems that may lead them to further trouble. Apart from that, children go on to have a pessimistic approach to life and a negative perception of people, leading to impaired social life and low self-esteem. A 2012 study published in the Journal of Youth and Adolescence found that kids who have been subject to parental conflicts are likely to run low on confidence.

### **What should parents do differently?**

Parents who lose their cool in front of their children must know how severely they're affecting their child's mental wellbeing. It is important to note that it is your duty to give your child a healthy childhood rather than a turbulent one. Having said that, while fights and arguments are absolutely natural, here are some things parents can do to minimize the damage done to a child's mind.

- Keep your discussions private. Avoid involving the children.

- Be polite and courteous, so children know that shouting and screaming are not the only way to resolve issues.

- Communicate productively. Do not overlap each other, rather take turns to speak.

- Focus on finding a solution rather than revisiting the mistake.

- Amid all the chaos, do not neglect your children.

- Make sure you let your child know that they are not the problem.