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## About the Author

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Eric Whitehead is a freelance writer in Tallahassee, Florida. He taught the Kids First Class, a court-ordered divorce parenting class, from 1996 until 2006 as an Instructor for the Leon County School District. Over the years, his classes averaged between 20 to 30 parents per class, and he taught two classes per month. He assisted with several revisions of the Kids First curriculum.

Whitehead is married with twin teenage girls. His parents divorced when he was seven years of age. Whitehead actually lived many of the issues addressed in the book. He has a Master's Degree from Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio.

## About the Book

**Title:** Putting Children First, Nine Steps to Success for Divorcing and Single Parents, Eric F. Whitehead, Author.

**Description:** "Putting Children First" is a complete guide to divorce and single parenting that is written for the average reader. The book does not contain legalese, is not clinical, and is not academic. The book is filled with strategies for successful parenting. It covers the emotions experienced by parents and children, understanding a child's behavior, developing a shared parenting agreement, tackling difficult issues, effective communications between parents, and seeking divine inspiration.

**Endorsements:** *"The need for this book is undeniable. The strategies offered in this book have been found to be effective in minimizing the potential harm to children..."*

*James G. Brown, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist*

*"It is significant that Mr. Whitehead, the son of divorced parents, brings sensitivity to this subject that is transparent in his writing. It sparkles with gems of wisdom discerned from years of teaching and listening to stories of people facing separation and divorce."*

*Barbara A. Greadington, Ph.D.*



**PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST**  
**BY ERIC F. WHITEHEAD**  
**NINE STEPS TO SUCCESS FOR**  
**DIVORCING AND SINGLE PARENTS**

<b>Step 1</b>	<i>Know and understand the prevalence of divorce and the legal aspects of divorce.</i>
<b>Step 2</b>	<i>Learn to manage your feelings toward the other parent and not let the other parent have dominion over your emotions.</i>
<b>Step 3</b>	<i>Help your child adjust because she or he is hurting too.</i>
<b>Step 4</b>	<i>Equip yourself with knowledge about your child's behavior.</i>
<b>Step 5</b>	<i>Share the responsibility for parenting and your child's upbringing with the other parent.</i>
<b>Step 6</b>	<i>Communicate without offending or attacking the other parent.</i>
<b>Step 7</b>	<i>Equip yourself to work through the difficult times.</i>
<b>Step 8</b>	<i>Seek a higher power to help you become a more effective parent.</i>
<b>Step 9</b>	<i>Make use of information and programs in your community.</i>



## Florida Divorce Statistics

<i>YEAR</i>	<i>NUMBER OF MARRIAGES</i>	<i>NUMBER OF DISSOLUTIONS*</i>	<i>DISSOLUTIONS COMPARED TO MARRIAGES</i>
1995	145,090	78,416	54%
1996	150,599	77,750	52%
1997	158,783	82,161	52%
1998	141,344	80,466	57%
1999	136,403	80,983	60%
2000	145,300	81,439	57%
2001	153,298	85,259	56%
2002	157,554	85,181	55%
2003	153,023	85,367	56%
2004	154,453	83,306	54%
2005	158,192	81,287	51%

Dissolutions are defined as divorces and annulments. Data in this table obtained from  
The Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics,  
Florida Vital Statistics Annual Report 2005.

A few counties that were above the state average of 51% for 2005 were Leon, home to the Florida Capitol, at 54%, and Miami-Dade at 54%. Leon County had 1,822 marriages in 2005 and 989 dissolutions in 2005. Of the larger urban counties in the state, Duval/Jacksonville had the highest percentage of dissolutions as compared to marriages at 68%.

Comparison statistics for smaller counties surrounding Leon were Calhoun at 56%, Gadsden at 43%, Jefferson at 51%, Liberty at 49%, Taylor at 57%, and Wakulla at 46%.