



U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
Administration for Children
and Families
Office of Family Assistance

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NRFC Research Review

October 2008



NON-RESIDENT FATHERS AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (7-10)

Definitions and Topics

- **Non-Resident fathers** are men who do not co-reside with their children.
- **Academic achievement/performance** refers to school-age children's grades, test scores, cognitive abilities, and overall school performance and functioning.
- **Externalizing behavior problems** involve antisocial conduct such as fighting, non-compliance, poor performance in school, and delinquent behavior.
- **Father-child contact** refers to non-resident fathers' direct contact with their children (including visits), and indirect social contact (such as phone calls or mail correspondence).
- **Father engagement** refers to fathers' demonstration of warmth, use of authoritative (demanding and responsive) parenting, sensitivity, and participation in activities with the child.
- **Financial support** refers to child support payments or the provision of other forms of informal support and child-related resources.
- **Social development** refers to children's self-efficacy, feelings of self-worth, and development of positive relationships with peers and other adults outside the family.

Academic Achievement/ Performance

Father-Child Contact

- Children of non-resident fathers who are involved in their schooling are more likely to receive A's and less likely to repeat a grade or be suspended or expelled than their counterparts with non-resident fathers who are not involved in their child's schooling. The study included 5, 064 children in 1st through 12th grade with a nonresident father.
Source: Nord, C. and W., Jerry. (2001). *Fathers' and mothers' involvement in their schools by family type and resident status*, NCES 2001-032. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
- Among children living with a single mother, sons and daughters that spent a greater number of days with their nonresident father in the prior year had higher academic performance measured by their GPA. This study consisted of 136 children ages 9 to 12.
Source: Bronstein, P., Frankel Stoll, M.F., Clauson, J., Abrams, C.L., & Briones, M. (1994). *Fathering after separation or divorce: Factors predicting children's adjustment*. *Family Relations*, 43, 469-479.
- Among children living with a stepparent, sons and daughters that spent a greater number of days with their nonresident father in the past year had better classroom behavior measured by teachers' assessments of their social, emotional, and academic functioning in the classroom. This study consisted of 136 children ages 9 to 12.
Source: Bronstein, P., Frankel Stoll, M.F., Clauson, J., Abrams, C.L., & Briones, M. (1994). *Fathering after separation or divorce: Factors predicting children's adjustment*. *Family Relations*, 43, 469-479.

Take Time to Be a Dad Today

- More frequent visitation among nonresidential fathers is not associated with children's improved math and reading aptitude. The study examined the cognitive abilities of 1,501 children ages 4 – 18 in 1988.
Source: King, V. (1994). Nonresident Father Involvement and Child Well-being: Can Dads Make a Difference? *Journal of Family Issues*, 15(1), 79-96.
- For black children, more frequent nonresident father visitation is associated with children's lower math aptitude. The study examined the cognitive development of 1,501 children ages 4 – 18 in 1988.
Source: King, V. (1994). Variation in the Consequences of Nonresident Father Involvement for Children's Well-being. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 56, 963-972.

Father Engagement

- Children who have warm and responsive interactions with their non-resident fathers perform better academically, as measured by the school-administered Metropolitan Achievement Test and the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test. Warm and responsive interactions were measured by teaching, disciplining, and participating in leisure activities with children. The study included 111 third and fourth grade children.
Source: Coley, R. (1998). Children's socialization experiences and functioning in single-mother households: the importance of fathers and other men. *Child Development*, 69(1), 219-230.
- Higher levels of non-resident father control are associated with greater academic achievement for children, as measured by the school-administered Metropolitan Achievement Test and the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test. Warm and responsive interactions were measured by teaching, disciplining, and participating in leisure activities with children. The study included 111 third and fourth grade children.
Source: Coley, R. (1998). Children's socialization experiences and functioning in single-mother households: the importance of fathers and other men. *Child Development*, 69(1), 219-230.
- A more positive relationship with non-resident fathers is associated with children's greater originality and independent learning abilities, and improved reading grades. The study included 341 children from first, third, and fifth grades.
Source: Guidubaldi, J., Cleminshaw, H., Perry, J., and Nastasi, B., and Lightel, J. (1986). The role of selected family environment factors in children's post-divorce adjustment. *Family Relations*, 35(1), 141-151.
- Among children living with a single mother, sons and daughters that participated in more activities with their nonresident father including celebrating holidays together, attending school or church events, and participating in leisure activities together had higher academic performance measured by their GPA. This study consisted of 136 children ages 9 to 12.
Source: Bronstein, P., Frankel Stoll, M.F., Clauson, J., Abrams, C.L., & Briones, M. (1994). Fathering after separation or divorce: Factors predicting children's adjustment. *Family Relations*, 43, 469-479.
- Among children living with a stepparent, sons and daughters that participated in more activities with their nonresident father including celebrating holidays together, attending school or church events, and participating in leisure activities together had better classroom behavior measured by teachers' assessments of their social, emotional, and academic functioning in the classroom. This study consisted of 136 children ages 9 to 12.
Source: Bronstein, P., Frankel Stoll, M.F., Clauson, J., Abrams, C.L., & Briones, M. (1994). Fathering after separation or divorce: Factors predicting children's adjustment. *Family Relations*, 43, 469-479.

Financial Support

- Non-resident fathers' greater financial support is associated with their child's improved reading recognition and math performance, and a better home intellectual environment as measured by the Peabody Individual Achievement Test and Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment Inventory. The study included 1,290 children between the ages of 5-10.
Source: Knox, V. (1996). The effects of child support payments on developmental outcomes for elementary school-age children. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 31(4), 816-840.
- Non-resident fathers' provision of child support is associated with their child's improved cognitive ability as measured by the Peabody Individual Math and Reading Recognition achievement test, which measures number recognition, geometry, trigonometry, word recognition, and pronunciation ability. The study included children, ages 5-8, of 845 divorced or never married mothers.
Source: Argys, L., Peters, E., Brooks-Gunn, J., and Smith, J. (1998). The impact of child support on cognitive outcomes of young children. *Demography*, 35(2), 159-173.
- Children of non-resident fathers who voluntarily provide financial support have a higher verbal ability, as measured by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, than their counterparts whose non-resident fathers are court-ordered to provide child support. The study included children, ages 5-8, of 845 divorced or never married mothers.
Source: Argys, L., Peters, E., Brooks-Gunn, J., and Smith, J. (1998). The impact of child support on cognitive outcomes of young children. *Demography*, 35(2), 159-173.
- Greater amounts of financial support received from nonresidential fathers are associated with children's improved math and reading aptitude. The study examined the cognitive abilities of 1,501 children ages 4 – 18 in 1988.
Source: King, V. (1994). Nonresident Father Involvement and Child Well-being: Can Dads Make a Difference? *Journal of Family Issues*, 15(1), 79-96.
- Children of non-resident fathers who paid child support in the prior year are more likely to receive A's and less likely to repeat a grade or be suspended or expelled than their counterparts with non-resident fathers who did not pay child support. The study included 5, 064 children in 1st through 12th grade with a nonresident father.
Source: Nord, C. and W., Jerry. (2001). *Fathers' and mothers' involvement in their schools by family type and resident status*, NCES 2001-032. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Social Development

Father-Child Contact

- Regular contact with non-resident fathers is associated with better quality parent-child relationships in terms of parent-child conflict, time spent together, affection, discipline and parents' love and interest. The study included 2,279 children between the ages of 7 and 11.
Source: Furstenberg, F. and Nord, C. (1985). Parenting apart: patterns of childrearing after marital disruption. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 47(4), 893-904.
- More frequent non-resident father visitation was not associated with children's positive feelings of self-worth. The study examined the social and emotional development of 1,501 children ages 4 – 18 in 1988.
Source: King, V. (1994). Nonresident Father Involvement and Child Well-being: Can Dads Make a Difference? *Journal of Family Issues*, 15(1), 79-96.

- A study of 1,172 households of children ages 5-18 found that higher levels of nonresident father visitation are associated with children's higher levels of well-being measured by how well their mother feels their life is going, but only if mothers are satisfied with the non-resident fathers' level of involvement.
Source: King, V. and Heard, H. (1999). Nonresident father visitation, parental conflict, and mother's satisfaction: what's best for child well-being? *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 61(2), 385-396.
- Nonresident fathers' greater participation in a wide range of daily activities with their children including reading, watching TV, attending entertainment events, doing homework, visiting, and shopping is associated with children's improved psychological well-being measured by their adjustment to divorce, positive mood, and lower levels of depression. These results are based on a study of 115 children of divorce ages 5 to 13 living apart from their biological fathers in Southern California.
Source: Clarke-Stewart, K. & Hayward, C. (1996). Advantages of father custody and contact for the psychological well-being of school-age children. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 17, 239 – 270.
- Daughters of non-resident fathers with regular child contact are less likely to have seen a doctor or therapist for emotional or behavioral problems. The study included 1,285 children between the ages of 5 and 18.
Source: Amato, P. and Rezac, S. (1994). Contact with nonresident parents, interparental conflict, and children's behavior. *Journal of Family Issues*, 15(2), 191-207.
- Among children living with a single mother, daughters that spent a greater number of days with their nonresident father in the prior year exhibited more popularity with their peers. This study consisted of 136 children ages 9 to 12.
Source: Bronstein, P., Frankel Stoll, M.F., Clauson, J., Abrams, C.L., & Briones, M. (1994). Fathering after separation or divorce: Factors predicting children's adjustment. *Family Relations*, 43, 469-479.

Father Engagement

- A study of 111 third and fourth grade children found that non-resident father warmth is not associated with children's improved self-esteem, more positive social behaviors, or fewer misbehaviors. Father warmth was measured by teaching, disciplining, and participating in leisure activities with children.
Source: Coley, R. (1998). Children's socialization experiences and functioning in single-mother households: the importance of fathers and other men. *Child Development*, 69(1), 219-230.
- Among children living with a single mother, daughters that participated in more activities with their nonresident father including celebrating holidays together, attending school or church events, and participating in leisure activities together exhibited more popularity with their peers. This study consisted of 136 children ages 9 to 12.
Source: Bronstein, P., Frankel Stoll, M.F., Clauson, J., Abrams, C.L., & Briones, M. (1994). Fathering after separation or divorce: Factors predicting children's adjustment. *Family Relations*, 43, 469-479.
- Children who have a more positive relationship with their non-resident fathers are more likely to demonstrate more productive interactions with peers, have less irrelevant talk, are less socially over-involved, and have better peer relationships. The study included 341 children from first, third, and fifth grades.
Source: Guidubaldi, J., Cleminshaw, H., Perry, J., and Nastasi, B., and Lightel, J. (1986). The role of selected family environment factors in children's post-divorce adjustment. *Family Relations*, 35(1), 141-151.

- Children who have a more positive relationship with their non-resident fathers are more likely to be better adjusted after divorce than their counterparts with a less positive father-child relationship. The study included 341 children from first, third, and fifth grades.
Source: Guidubaldi, J., Cleminshaw, H., Perry, J., and Nastasi, B., and Lightel, J. (1986). The role of selected family environment factors in children's post-divorce adjustment. *Family Relations*, 35(1), 141-151.
- Among children living with a stepparent, sons and daughters who participated in more activities with their nonresident father including celebrating holidays together, attending school or church events, and participating in leisure activities together experienced fewer psychological problems such as restlessness, jumpiness, and trouble sleeping. This study consisted of 136 children ages 9 to 12.
Source: Bronstein, P., Frankel Stoll, M.F., Clauson, J., Abrams, C.L., & Briones, M. (1994). Fathering after separation or divorce: Factors predicting children's adjustment. *Family Relations*, 43, 469-479.
- Among children living with a stepparent, sons and daughters who participated in more activities with their nonresident father including celebrating holidays together, attending school or church events, and participating in leisure activities together had higher ratings of self-worth. This study consisted of 136 children ages 9 to 12.
Source: Bronstein, P., Frankel Stoll, M.F., Clauson, J., Abrams, C.L., & Briones, M. (1994). Fathering after separation or divorce: Factors predicting children's adjustment. *Family Relations*, 43, 469-479.
- A study of 1,431 children between 3 and 12 years old found that greater warmth from nonresident fathers is associated with children's positive pro-social development as measured by children's health, friendships, prospects for the future, and feelings of self-worth.
Source: Harper, S.E. and Fine, M.A. (2006). The Effects of Involved Nonresidential Fathers' Distress, Parenting Behaviors, Inter-Parental Conflict, and the Quality of Father-Child Relationships on Children's Well-Being. *Fathering*, 4(3), 286-311.

Financial Support

- For Hispanic children, greater amounts of financial support received from nonresidential fathers are associated with fewer child problem behaviors as measured by the Behavior Problem Index. The study measure of social and emotional development of 1,501 children ages children ages 4 – 18 in 1988.
Source: King, V. (1994). Variation in the Consequences of Nonresident Father Involvement for Children's Well-being. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 56, 963-972.

Externalizing Behaviors

Father-Child Contact

- A study of 1,172 households of children ages 5-18 found that higher levels of nonresident father visitation are associated with reductions in children's behavior problems measured by items such as whether or not the child has been suspended or expelled, ran away from home, or is difficult to raise, but only if mothers are satisfied with the non-resident fathers' level of involvement.
Source: King, V. and Heard, H. (1999). Nonresident father visitation, parental conflict, and mother's satisfaction: what's best for child well-being? *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 61(2), 385-396.
- Daughters of non-resident fathers with regular child contact are less likely to have behavior problems, as measured by children's in-school behavior and criminal behavior. The study included 1,285 children between the ages of 5 and 18.
Source: Amato, P. and Rezac, S. (1994). Contact with nonresident parents, interparental conflict, and children's behavior. *Journal of Family Issues*, 15(2), 191-207.

- Nonresident fathers' greater participation in a wide range of daily activities with their children including reading, watching TV, attending entertainment events, doing homework, visiting, and shopping is associated with children's engagement in fewer problem behaviors including kicking or hitting, complaining, ignoring parents, and acting defiant. These results are based on a study of 115 children of divorce ages 5 to 13 living apart from their biological fathers in Southern California.

Source: Clarke-Stewart, K. & Hayward, C. (1996). Advantages of father custody and contact for the psychological well-being of school-age children. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 17, 239 – 270.

- For black children, more frequent nonresident father visitation is associated with children's engagement in more problem behaviors as measured by the Behavior Problem Index. The study examined the problem behaviors of 1,501 children ages 4 – 18 in 1988.

Source: King, V. (1994). Variation in the Consequences of Nonresident Father Involvement for Children's Well-being. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 56, 963-972.

Father Engagement

- Higher levels of non-resident father contact and involvement are associated with children's improved classroom behavior, as measured by teacher ratings on the Inferred Self-Concept Scale. The study included 136 fifth grade children between the ages of 9 and 12.

Source: Bronstein, P., Stoll, M., Clauson, J., Abrams, C., and Briones, M. (1994). Fathering after separation or divorce: factors predicting children's adjustment. *Family Relations*, 43(4), 469-479.

- Children who have a more positive relationship with their non-resident fathers are more likely to have a better grade in conduct and are less likely to blame others for their actions. The study included 341 children from first, third, and fifth grades.

Source: Guidubaldi, J., Cleminshaw, H., Perry, J., and Nastasi, B., and Lightel, J. (1986). The role of selected family environment factors in children's post-divorce adjustment. *Family Relations*, 35(1), 141-151.