



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

# NRFC Research Review

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## RESIDENT FATHERS AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT EMERGING ADULTHOOD (18+)

### Definitions and Topics

- **Resident fathers** are men who co-reside with their children.
- **Academic performance** refers to grades, test scores, cognitive abilities, and overall school performance and functioning.
- **Externalizing behavior problems** include antisocial conduct such as fighting, non-compliance, poor performance in school, delinquent behavior, and substance use.
- **Father Engagement** refers to fathers' use direct participation in activities with the child.
- **Father Warmth/Sensitivity/Closeness** refers to fathers' demonstration of warmth and affection for his child (e.g., hugging), his sensitivity to his child's needs and desires, and the degree of closeness or intimacy in the relationship between the father and his child.
- **Socioemotional development** refers to young adults' mental health, self-efficacy, feelings of self-worth, and development of positive relationships with peers and other adults outside the family.
- **Work performance** refers to a young adult's jobs, training, and occupational experiences and achievements.

### Resident Fathers and Academic and work achievement/ performance

#### Father Warmth/ Sensitivity/ Closeness

- Resident Fathers' emotional involvement (e.g., closeness, warmth, satisfaction with the father-child relationship) with adolescent children is positively associated with better educational and economic attainment in young adulthood (ages 17-22).  
*Source:* Harris, K. M., Furstenberg, F. F., & Marmer, J. K. (1998). Paternal involvement with adolescents in intact families: The influence of fathers over the life course. *Demography*, 35(2), 201-216.

#### Father Engagement

- Resident Fathers' behavioral involvement (doing things together, praising) with adolescent children is positively associated with better educational and economic attainment, less delinquency, and less psychological distress in young adulthood (ages 17-22).  
*Source:* Harris, K. M., Furstenberg, F. F., & Marmer, J. K. (1998). Paternal involvement with adolescents in intact families: The influence of fathers over the life course. *Demography*, 35(2), 201-216.
- Children whose resident fathers were highly involved at age 7 (e.g., took child on outings, read to child, talked to child) have higher educational attainment at age 20 compared with young adults whose fathers were less involved when they were age 7.  
*Source:* Flouri, E. & Buchanan, A. (2004). Early father's and mother's involvement and child's later educational outcomes. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 74, 141-153.
- Resident Fathers who show interest in their 10-year-old's education have daughters with higher educational attainment by the time they are age 26.

*Take Time to Be a Dad Today*

Source: Flouri, E. (2006). Parental interest in children's education, children's self-esteem and locus of control, and later educational attainment: Twenty-six year follow-up of the 1970 British Birth Cohort. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 76 Issue 1, 41-55.

- Young adult males whose resident fathers exercised precautionary behaviors in their childhood home environments (e.g., used seat belts, had car insurance, had precautionary savings) have higher educational attainment and higher wages.  
Source: Yeung, W. J., Duncan, G. J., & Hill, M. S. (2000). Putting fathers back in the picture: Parental activities and children's adult outcomes. *Marriage & Family Review*, 29(2/3), 97-113.
- Frequent church attendance by resident fathers during their sons' childhoods is associated with higher educational attainment among young adult sons.  
Source: Yeung, W. J., Duncan, G. J., & Hill, M. S. (2000). Putting fathers back in the picture: Parental activities and children's adult outcomes. *Marriage & Family Review*, 29(2/3), 97-113.
- Resident Fathers who expressed a high level of personal control over their lives during their sons' childhoods have sons who have higher levels of educational attainment as young adults.  
Source: Yeung, W. J., Duncan, G. J., & Hill, M. S. (2000). Putting fathers back in the picture: Parental activities and children's adult outcomes. *Marriage & Family Review*, 29(2/3), 97-113.

## Socioemotional Development

### Father Warmth/ Sensitivity/ Closeness

- Resident Fathers' greater emotional involvement (e.g., closeness, warmth, satisfaction with the father-child relationship) with adolescent children is associated with less psychological distress in young adulthood (ages 17-22). A decrease in father involvement over the course of adolescence is associated with higher rates of depression in early adulthood.  
Source: Harris, K. M., Furstenberg, F. F., & Marmer, J. K. (1998). Paternal involvement with adolescents in intact families: The influence of fathers over the life course. *Demography*, 35(2), 201-216.
- Attachment to resident fathers (i.e., perceptions of paternal affect and support, measured by the Parental Attachment Questionnaire, PAQ) is positively associated with higher self esteem (measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, RSES) in young adults between the ages of 18 and 24.  
Source: McCurdy, S. J., & Scherman, A. (1996). Effects of family structure on the adolescent separation-individuation process. *Adolescence*, 31(122), 307-323.
- Greater perceived closeness to resident fathers (measured by the Positive Affect Scale, which assesses understanding, trust, respect, fairness, and affection) is associated with higher ratings of happiness and life satisfaction and lower ratings of psychological distress in young adult offspring.  
Source: Amato, P. R. (1994). Father-child relations, mother-child relations, and offspring psychological well-being in early adulthood. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 56, 1031-1042.
- Nineteen-year-old males who reported feeling close to their resident fathers when they were in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade have more positive attitudes toward their own future marriages (i.e., believed they were less likely to divorce), compared with males who reported less closeness with their fathers.  
Source: Risch, S. C., Jodl, K. M., & Eccles, J. S. (2004). Role of father-adolescent relationship in shaping adolescents' attitudes toward divorce. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 66, 46-58.

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- Resident fathers who are more involved in child rearing have children who exhibit more internal locus of control in early adulthood, particularly among sons, compared with young adult children whose fathers were less involved.

Source: Williams, E., & Radin, N. (1999). Effects of father participation in child rearing: twenty-year follow-up. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 69(3), 328-36.

## Externalizing Behaviors

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