

Statistics and Data on the Consequences of Father Absence

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 24 million children in America (one out of three) live in biological father-absent homes.

Consequently, there is a **"father factor"** in nearly all of the social issues facing America today.

The Father Factor in POVERTY

1. Children in father-absent homes are almost four times more likely to be poor. In 2011, 12 percent of children in married-couple families were living in poverty, compared to 44 percent of children in mother-only families.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2011, Table C8. Washington D.C.: 2011.
2. In 2008, American poverty rates were 13.2% for the whole population and 19% for children, compared to 28.7% for female-headed households.
Source: Edin, K. & Kissane R. J. (2010). Poverty and the American family: a decade in review. Journal of Marriage and Family, 72, 460-479.
3. From 1970-1996, there was a 5% increase in child poverty that was nearly all attributed to the rise in single-parent families, especially never-married mothers.
Source: Sawhill, I. V. (2006). Teenage sex, pregnancy, and nonmarital births. Gender Issues, 23, 48-59.
4. A study of nearly 5,000 children born to parents in 20 large US cities found that unmarried childbearing helped sustain high poverty rates due to multiple partner fertility and relationship instability.
Source: McLanahan, S. (2009). Fragile families and the reproduction of poverty. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 621, 111-131.

The Father Factor in EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

1. Data from three waves of the Fragile Families Study (N= 2,111) was used to examine the prevalence and effects of mothers' relationship changes between birth and age 3 on their children's well being. Children born to single mothers show higher levels of aggressive behavior than children born to married mothers. Living in a single-mother household is equivalent to experiencing 5.25 partnership transitions.
Source: Osborne, C., & McLanahan, S. (2007). Partnership instability and child well-being. Journal of Marriage and Family, 69, 1065-1083.

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2. A sample of 4,027 resident fathers and children from the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Survey was used to investigate the effects of a biological father's multipartner fertility (having at least one child with more than one mother) on adolescent health. Resident fathers engaging in multipartner fertility were older, more likely to be White, and had lower education levels and income, compared to fathers with one partner. Results indicated children's externalizing behaviors were negatively affected directly and indirectly when their biological father had children with multiple partners.

Source: Bronte-Tinkew, J., Horowitz, A., & Scott, M. E. (2009). Fathering with multiple partners: Links to children's well-being in early childhood. Journal of Marriage and Family, 71, 608–631.

3. A study of 1,977 children age 3 and older living with a residential father or father figure found that children living with married biological parents had significantly fewer externalizing and internalizing behavioral problems than children living with at least one nonbiological parent.

Source: Hofferth, S. L. (2006). Residential father family type and child well-being: investment versus selection. Demography, 43, 53-78.

The Father Factor in MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

1. Infant mortality rates are 1.8 times higher for infants of unmarried mothers than for married mothers.

Source: Matthews, T.J., Sally C. Curtin, and Marian F. MacDorman. Infant Mortality Statistics from the 1998 Period Linked Birth/Infant Death Data Set. National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 48, No. 12. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2000.

2. High-quality interaction by any type of father predicts better infant health.

Source: Carr, D. & Springer, K. W. (2010). Advances in families and health research in the 21st century. Journal of Marriage and Family, 72, 743-761.

3. Children living with their married biological or adoptive parents have better access to health care than children living in any other family type.

Source: Gorman, B. G., & Braverman, K. (2008). Family structure differences in health care utilization among U.S. children. Social Science and Medicine, 67, 1766–1775.

4. Premature infants who have increased visits from their fathers during hospitalization have improved weight gain and score higher on developmental tests.

Source: Coleman WL, Garfield CF, and the Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health. "Fathers and Pediatricians: Enhancing Men's Roles in the Care and Development of their Children". American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement, Pediatrics, May, 2004.

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5. When fathers are involved during the pregnancy, babies have fewer complications at birth.
Source: Alio, A.P., Mbah, A.K., Kornosky, J.L., Marty, P.J. & Salihu, H.M. "The Impact of Paternal Involvement on Feto-Infant Morbidity among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics". Matern Child Health J. 2010; 14(5): 735-41.
6. Babies with a father's name on the birth certificate are 4 times more likely to live past 1 year of age.
Source: Alio, A.P., Mbah, A.K., Kornosky, J.L., Marty, P.J. & Salihu, H.M. "The Impact of Paternal Involvement on Feto-Infant Morbidity among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics". Matern Child Health J. 2010; 14(5): 735-41.
7. Expectant fathers can play a powerful role as advocates of breastfeeding to their wives. Three-fourths of women whose partners attended a breastfeeding promotion class initiated breastfeeding.
Source: Wolfberg, Adam J., et al. "Dads as breastfeeding advocates: results from a randomized controlled trial of an educational intervention." American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology 191 (September 2004): 708-712.
8. Fathers' knowledge about breastfeeding increases the likelihood that a child will be breastfed. Children whose fathers knew more had a 1.76 higher chance of being breastfed at the end of the first month and 1.91 higher chance of receiving maternal milk at the end of the third month.
Source: Susin, Lurie R.O. "Does Parental Breastfeeding Knowledge Increase Breastfeeding Rates?" BIRTH 26 (September 1999): 149-155.
9. Twenty-three percent of unmarried mothers in large U.S. cities reported cigarette use during their pregnancy. Seventy-one percent were on Medicare.
Source: McLanahan, Sara. The Fragile Families and Child Well-being Study: Baseline National Report. Table 7. Princeton, NJ: Center for Research on Child Well-being, 2003: 16.
10. A study of 2,921 mothers revealed that single mothers were twice as likely as married mothers to experience a bout of depression in the prior year. Single mothers also reported higher levels of stress, fewer contacts with family and friends, less involvement with church or social groups and less overall social support.
Source: Cairney, John and Michael Boyle et al. "Stress, Social Support and Depression in Single and Married Mothers." Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology 38 (August 2003): 442-449.
11. A study of 3,400 middle schoolers indicated that not living with both biological parents quadruples the risk of having an affective disorder.
Source: Cuffe, Steven P., Robert E. McKeown, Cheryl L. Addy, and Carol Z. Garrison. "Family Psychosocial Risk Factors in a Longitudinal Epidemiological Study of Adolescents." Journal of American Academic Child Adolescent Psychiatry 44 (February 2005): 121-129.

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12. Children who live apart from their fathers are more likely to be diagnosed with asthma and experience an asthma-related emergency even after taking into account demographic and socioeconomic conditions. Unmarried, cohabiting parents and unmarried parents living apart are 1.76 and 2.61 times, respectively, more likely to have their child diagnosed with asthma. Marital disruption after birth is associated with a 6-fold increase in the likelihood a children will require an emergency room visit and 5-fold increase of an asthma-related emergency.

Source: Harknett, Kristin. Children's Elevated Risk of Asthma in Unmarried Families: Underlying Structural and Behavioral Mechanisms. Working Paper #2005-01-FF. Princeton, NJ: Center for Research on Child Well-being, 2005: 19-27.

The Father Factor in INCARCERATION

1. Even after controlling for income, youths in father-absent households still had significantly higher odds of incarceration than those in mother-father families. Youths who never had a father in the household experienced the highest odds.

Source: Harper, Cynthia C. and Sara S. McLanahan. "Father Absence and Youth Incarceration." Journal of Research on Adolescence 14 (September 2004): 369-397.

2. A 2002 Department of Justice survey of 7,000 inmates revealed that 39% of jail inmates lived in mother-only households. Approximately forty-six percent of jail inmates in 2002 had a previously incarcerated family member. One-fifth experienced a father in prison or jail.

Source: James, Doris J. Profile of Jail Inmates, 2002. (NCJ 201932). Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, July 2004.

The Father Factor in CRIME

1. A study of 109 juvenile offenders indicated that family structure significantly predicts delinquency.

Source: Bush, Connee, Ronald L. Mullis, and Ann K. Mullis. "Differences in Empathy Between Offender and Nonoffender Youth." Journal of Youth and Adolescence 29 (August 2000): 467-478.

2. A study of low-income minority adolescents aged 10-14 years found that higher social encounters and frequent communication with nonresident biological fathers decreased adolescent delinquency.

Source: Coley, R. L., & Medeiros, B. L. (2007). Reciprocal longitudinal relations between nonresident father involvement and adolescent delinquency. Child Development, 78, 132-147.

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3. In a study using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth 1997, the researchers examined father-child relationship and father's parenting style as predictors of first delinquency and substance use among adolescents in intact families. The results indicated that a more positive father-child relationship predicts a reduced risk of engagement in multiple first risky behaviors. The positive influence of the father-child relationship on risk behaviors seemed to be stronger for male than for female adolescents.

Source: Bronte-Tinkew, J., Moore, K.M., & Carrano, J. (2006). The father-child relationship, parenting styles, and adolescent risk behaviors in intact families. Journal of Family Issues, 27, 850-881.

4. A study using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health explored the relationship between family structure and risk of violent acts in neighborhoods. The results revealed that if the number of fathers is low in a neighborhood, then there is an increase in acts of teen violence. The statistical data showed that a 1 percent increase in the proportion of single-parent families in a neighborhood is associated with a 3 percent increase in an adolescent's level of violence. In other words, adolescents who live in neighborhoods with lower proportions of single-parent families and who report higher levels of family integration commit less violence.

Source: Knoester, C., & Hayne, D. A. (2005). Community context, social integration into family, and youth violence. Journal of Marriage and Family, 67, 767-780.

5. Adolescents, particularly boys, in single-parent families were at higher risk of status, property and person delinquencies. Moreover, students attending schools with a high proportion of children of single parents are also at risk.

Source: Anderson, Amy L. "Individual and contextual influences on delinquency: the role of the single-parent family." Journal of Criminal Justice 30 (November 2002): 575-587.

6. In a study of INTERPOL crime statistics of 39 countries, it was found that single parenthood ratios were strongly correlated with violent crimes. This was not true 18 years ago.

Source: Barber, Nigel. "Single Parenthood As a Predictor of Cross-National Variation in Violent Crime." Cross-Cultural Research 38 (November 2004): 343-358.

The Father Factor in TEEN PREGNANCY & SEXUAL ACTIVITY

1. Being raised by a single mother raises the risk of teen pregnancy, marrying with less than a high school degree, and forming a marriage where both partners have less than a high school degree.

Source: Teachman, Jay D. "The Childhood Living Arrangements of Children and the Characteristics of Their Marriages." Journal of Family Issues 25 (January 2004): 86-111.

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2. Separation or frequent changes increase a woman's risk of early menarche, sexual activity and pregnancy. Women whose parents separated between birth and six years old experienced twice the risk of early menstruation, more than four times the risk of early sexual intercourse, and two and a half times higher risk of early pregnancy when compared to women in intact families. The longer a woman lived with both parents, the lower her risk of early reproductive development. Women who experienced three or more changes in her family environment exhibited similar risks but were five times more likely to have an early pregnancy.

Source: Quinlan, Robert J. "Father absence, parental care, and female reproductive development." Evolution and Human Behavior 24 (November 2003): 376-390.

3. A study using data from two waves of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health investigates the influence of the parent-child relationship on adolescent virginity status. The researchers examined how adolescents' perceptions of the quality of their parent-child relationships influence the likelihood of first sex among a sample of adolescent virgins living in biologically intact, two-parent families. The results indicate that girls with close father-child relationship were less likely to report first sex between study waves. The results did not indicate a direct relationship for boys or with the mother-child relationship.

Source: Regnerus, M. D., & Luchies, L.B. (2006). The Parent-Child Relationship and Opportunities for Adolescents' First Sex. Journal of Family Issues, 27, 159-183.

4. A study using a sample of 1,409 rural southern adolescents (851 females and 558 males) aged 11 to 18 years, investigated the correlation between father absence and self-reported sexual activity. The results revealed that adolescents in father-absent homes were more likely to report being sexually active compared to adolescents living with their fathers. The analysis indicates that father absence can have a detrimental effect on adolescents' lifestyle choices. This study also revealed a statistical significance between father absence and adolescent self-esteem.

Source: Hendricks, C. S., Cesario, S. K., Murdaugh, C., Gibbons, M. E., Servonsky, E. J., Bobadilla, R. V., Hendricks, D. L., Spencer-Morgan, B., & Tavakoli, A. (2005). The influence of father absence on the self-esteem and self-reported sexual activity of rural southern adolescents. ABNF Journal, 16, 124-131.

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5. A study assessing the risk and protective factors associated with early sexual intercourse among low-income adolescents revealed that variables such as, age, gender, race, two-parent households, separated households, households where the mother formed a union, transitioning onto welfare, and delinquency increased the odds that adolescents were sexually active. The researchers found that maternal education and father involvement were the only protective factors for early sexual activity. In addition, the risk factors for early sexual contact were age, gender, race, two-parent households, separated households, and delinquency. Among all of the family processes, father involvement was the only factor that decreased the odds of engaging in sexual activity and none of the other family processes was found to be statistically significant.

Source: Jordahl, T., & Lohman, B.J. (2009). A bioecological analysis of risk and protective factors associated with early sexual intercourse of young adolescents. Children and Youth Services Review 31, 1272–1282.

6. In a study exploring the perspectives of daughters who experienced father absence during their childhood and/or adolescent years, the researchers interviewed nine women aged 22-46. During the interviews, participants expressed difficulties forming healthy relationships with men and they associated these difficulties with their experiences of father absence. The interviewees also revealed a strong need for attention and affection from men which was also associated by the participants with the lack of affection received from their fathers. The desire for affection made these females more vulnerable to male attention which put them at higher risk of being exploited by any male who expressed any positive interest in them. Some of their poor relationship decisions were attributed to this vulnerability. One of the participants, when describing her first sexual relationship, stated that the sexual encounter with a friend's father occurred because of her desire for affection and attention from a father figure:

My first sexual encounter... I felt that I had seduced a friend's father ... And I thought, no I'm not punishing my father by sleeping with someone else's father. Dad will never know this. Why did I do this?

Source: East, L., Jackson, D., & O'Brien, L. (2007). 'I don't want to hate him forever': Understanding daughter's experiences of father absence. Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing, 24, 14-18.

7. In a phenomenological study of adolescent mothers' experiences of having become sexually active, it was revealed that teen mothers' experiences of living without a strong father figure were an important factor for having become sexually active. Based on the study findings, the inability to bond in satisfactory ways with a father or father figure may result in earlier onset of sexual activity and the higher risk of teen pregnancy.

Source: Burn, V. E. (2008). Living without a strong father figure: A context for teen mothers' experience of having become sexually active. Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 29, 279–297.

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8. Adolescent girls who reported higher levels of relationship quality with their fathers were less likely to have sex before age 16, compared with adolescent girls who reported lower levels of father-daughter relationship quality.

Source: Ikramullah, E., Manlove, J., Cui, C., & Moore, K. A. (2009). Parents matter: The role of parents in teens' decisions about sex. Washington, D.C.: Child Trends.

9. Adolescent boys who had dinner with their family every day were less likely to have had sex before age 16, compared with those who report they eat dinner with their family less than five nights a week. 31 percent of teen boys who reported having dinner with their family every day were estimated to have had sex before age 16, compared with 37 percent of teen boys who reported that they had dinner with their family fewer than five days a week.

Source: Ikramullah, E., Manlove, J., Cui, C., & Moore, K. A. (2009). Parents matter: The role of parents in teens' decisions about sex. Washington, D.C.: Child Trends.

10. Researchers using a pool from both the U.S. and New Zealand found strong evidence that father absence has an effect on early sexual activity and teenage pregnancy. Teens without fathers were twice as likely to be involved in early sexual activity and seven times more likely to get pregnant as an adolescent.

Source: Ellis, Bruce J., John E. Bates, Kenneth A. Dodge, David M. Ferguson, L. John Horwood, Gregory S. Pettit, and Lianne Woodward. "Does Father Absence Place Daughters at Special Risk for Early Sexual Activity and Teenage Pregnancy." Child Development 74 (May/June 2003): 801-821.

The Father Factor in CHILD ABUSE

1. A study using data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study revealed that in many cases the absence of a biological father contributes to increased risk of child maltreatment. The results suggest that Child Protective Services (CPS) agencies have some justification in viewing the presence of a social father as increasing children's risk of abuse and neglect. It is believed that in families with a non-biological (social) father figure, there is a higher risk of abuse and neglect to children, despite the social father living in the household or only dating the mother.

Source: "CPS Involvement in Families with Social Fathers." Fragile Families Research Brief No. 46. Princeton, NJ and New York, NY: Bendheim-Thomas Center for Research on Child Wellbeing and Social Indicators Survey Center, 2010.

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2. In a study examining father-related factors predicting maternal physical child abuse risk, researchers conducted interviews with mothers of 3-year-old children. The results revealed that mothers who were married to fathers were at lower risk for maternal physical child abuse. Moreover, it was found that higher educational attainment and positive father involvement with their children were significant predictors of lower maternal physical child abuse risk.

Source: Guterman, N.B., Yookyong, L., Lee, S. J., Waldfogel, J., & Rathouz, P. J. (2009). Fathers and maternal risk for physical child abuse. Child Maltreatment, 14, 277-290.

The Father Factor in DRUG & ALCOHOL ABUSE

1. Even after controlling for community context, there is significantly more drug use among children who do not live with their mother and father.

Source: Hoffmann, John P. "The Community Context of Family Structure and Adolescent Drug Use." Journal of Marriage and Family 64 (May 2002): 314-330.

2. In a study of 6,500 children from the ADDHEALTH database, father closeness was negatively correlated with the number of a child's friends who smoke, drink, and smoke marijuana. Closeness was also correlated with a child's use of alcohol, cigarettes, and hard drugs and was connected to family structure. Intact families ranked higher on father closeness than single-parent families.

Source: National Fatherhood Initiative. "Family Structure, Father Closeness, & Drug Abuse." Gaithersburg, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative, 2004: 20-22.

3. Youths are more at risk of first substance use without a highly involved father. Each unit increase in father involvement is associated with 1% reduction in substance use. Living in an intact family also decreases the risk of first substance use.

Source: Bronte-Tinkew, Jacinta, Kristin A. Moore, Randolph C. Capps, and Jonathan Zaff. "The influence of father involvement on youth risk behaviors among adolescents: A comparison of native-born and immigrant families." Article in Press. Social Science Research December 2004.

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4. Using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, researchers examined the relationship between parent-child involvement, such as shared communication, shared activity participation, and emotional closeness and three adolescent alcohol outcomes, including alcohol use, alcohol related problems, and risky behavior co-occurring with alcohol use. This study investigated both paternal and maternal involvement in understanding adolescent alcohol outcomes. The results indicate that shared communication with fathers and emotional closeness to fathers, but not shared activity participation, had a unique impact on each alcohol outcome and were not related to maternal involvement.

Source: Goncy, E.A., & van Dulmena, M.H. (2010). Fathers do make a difference: Parental involvement and adolescent alcohol use. Fathering, 8, 93-108.

5. A study with 441 college students revealed that a poor parental bond with one's father was highly predictive of depression, a well-known predictor of alcohol abuse and related problems for both females and males. These findings suggest evidence for parental influences on pathways to alcohol abuse through depression.

Source: Patock-Peckham, J. A., & Morgan-Lopez, A. A. (2007). College drinking behaviors: Mediatonal links between parenting styles, parental bonds, depression, and alcohol problems. Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, 21, 297-306.

6. A study of 296 at-risk adolescents whose fathers were drug abusers revealed that paternal smoking and drug use lead to strained father-child relationships. This weakened relationship led to greater adolescent maladjustment with family and friends and a higher risk for adolescent drug use and smoking. Fathers who smoke cigarettes were less likely to enforce antismoking rules for their children and had weaker bonds in terms of adolescent admiration and emulation.

Source: Brook, D. W., Brook, J. S., Rubenstone, E., Zhang, C., & Gerochi, C. (2006). Cigarette smoking in the adolescent children of drug-abusing fathers. Pediatrics, 117, 1339-1347.

7. In a study using a sample of 86 African American adolescents, the researchers assessed the effects of father's absence on adolescent drug use. The results revealed that boys from father-absent homes were more likely than those from father-present homes to use drugs. Interestingly, the results didn't reveal any difference between father-present and father-absent girls' self-reported drug usage. For girls, friends' drug use was the main predictor of drug use, while father absence was for boys. African American boys from father-absent homes might be at increased risk for drug use problems.

Source: Mandara, J., & Murray, C. B. (2006). Father's absence and African American adolescent drug use. Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 46, 1-12.

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8. Even after controlling for community context, there is significantly more drug use among children who do not live with their mother and father.

Source: Hoffmann, John P. "The Community Context of Family Structure and Adolescent Drug Use." Journal of Marriage and Family 64 (May 2002): 314-330.

The Father Factor in EDUCATION

1. Father involvement in schools is associated with the higher likelihood of a student getting mostly A's. This was true for fathers in biological parent families, for stepfathers, and for fathers heading single-parent families.

Source: Nord, Christine Winqvist, and Jerry West. Fathers' and Mothers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools by Family Type and Resident Status. (NCES 2001-032). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2001.

2. A study assessing 4,109 two-parent families examined the effects of early maternal and paternal depression on child expressive language at age 24 months and the role that parent-to-child reading may play in child's language development. The results revealed that for mothers and fathers, depressive symptoms were negatively associated with parent-to-child reading. Only for fathers, however, was earlier depression associated with later reading to child and related child expressive vocabulary development. The less the fathers read to their infants, the worse their toddler scored on a standard measure of expressive vocabulary at age two. Parents' depression has more impact on how often fathers read to their child compared to mothers, which in turn influences the child's language development.

Source: Paulson, J.F., Keefe, H.A., & Leiferman, J. A. (2009). Early parental depression and child language development. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 50, 254-262.

3. A study revealed that youth who have experienced divorce, separation, or a nonunion birth have significantly higher levels of behavioral problems in school than do youth who have always lived with both biological parents. In contrast to previous GPA findings, youth living in stepfamilies or single-parent families are both more susceptible to school-related behavioral problems than youth who have always lived with both biological parents.

Source: Tillman, K. H. (2007). Family structure pathways and academic disadvantage among adolescents in stepfamilies. Sociological Inquiry, 77, 383-424.

4. Students living in father-absent homes are twice as likely to repeat a grade in school; 10 percent of children living with both parents have ever repeated a grade, compared to 20 percent of children in stepfather families and 18 percent in mother-only families.

Source: Nord, Christine Winqvist, and Jerry West. Fathers' and Mothers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools by Family Type and Resident Status. (NCES 2001-032). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2001.

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5. Students in single-parent families or stepfamilies are significantly less likely than students living in intact families to have parents involved in their schools. About half of students living in single-parent families or stepfamilies have parents who are highly involved, while 62 percent of students living with both their parents have parents who are highly involved in their schools.

Source: Nord, Christine Winqvist, and Jerry West. Fathers' and Mothers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools by Family Type and Resident Status. (NCES 2001-032). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2001.

6. In 2001, 61 percent of 3- to 5-year olds living with two parents were read aloud to everyday by a family member, compared to 48% of children living in single- or no-parent families.

Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002. Table ED1. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003.

7. Kindergarteners who live with single-parents are over-represented in those lagging in health, social and emotional, and cognitive outcomes. Thirty-three percent of children who were behind in all three areas were living with single parents while only 22% were not lagging behind.

Source: Wertheimer, Richard and Tara Croan, et al. Attending Kindergarten and Already Behind: A Statistical Portrait of Vulnerable Young Children. Child Trends Research Brief. Publication #2003-20. Washington, DC: Child Trends, 2003.

8. In two-parent families, children under the age of 13 spend an average of 1.77 hours engaged in activities with their fathers and 2.35 hours doing so with their mothers on a daily basis in 1997. Children in single parent families spent on .42 hours with their fathers and 1.26 hours with their mothers on daily basis.

Source: Lippman, Laura, et al. Indicators of Child, Family, and Community Connections. Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, 2004.

9. A study of 1330 children from the PSID showed that fathers who are involved on a personal level with their child schooling increases the likelihood of their child's achievement. When fathers assume a positive role in their child's education, students feel a positive impact.

Source: McBride, Brent A., Sarah K. Schoppe-Sullivan, and Moon-Ho Ho. "The mediating role of fathers' school involvement on student achievement." Applied Developmental Psychology 26 (2005): 201-216.

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10. A national two-generation longitudinal survey revealed that children who experienced multiple family transitions were more at risk for developmental problems than children who lived in stable, two-parent families. Additionally, the research found that black children experience more familial instability than white children.

- White children raised in a mother-only household for at least 75% of their first four years greatly increased externalizing behaviors and decreased cognitive achievement scores.

- Black children's well-being and achievement scores are more reliant on current family structure than household status at birth. Black children are less likely than white children to be affected by family transitions.

Source: Fomby, P. & Cherlin, A. J. (2007). Family instability and child well-being. American Sociological Review, 72, 181-204.