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ABSTRACT

Using data from the 1984 (sixth wave) survey of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, this report describes the household structure and parental characteristics of about 4,400 children born to a national cross-section of American mothers 19 to 27 years of age. About 80 percent of the children were under 6 years of age and most of the rest were between 6 and 9 years old. The children were representative of the first 30 percent of all children born to a typical contemporary cohort of American women entering the childbearing years. In addition, the homes of the school-aged children were typical of the homes of younger elementary school students with adolescent mothers. The homes of subjects below school age were considered representative of the homes of a normal cross-section of children whose mothers were between 18 and 25 years old. Parental household structure was described in terms of father's presence or absence; relationships between household structure, employment, and poverty status; employment of selected household members; maternal employment; child care utilization; and poverty status. Patterns of contact with the father among children with absent fathers were described, along with characteristics of the 5 percent of children living with their fathers but not with mothers. (RH)

A View from the Cradle: Household and Parental Characteristics and Behaviors from the Perspective of Young Children

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The Ohio State University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report uses data from the 1984 (sixth wave) survey of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) to describe the household structure and parental characteristics of about 4,400 children born to a national cross-section of American mothers 19 to 27 years of age. About 80 percent of these children were under the age of six and most of the rest were between ages six and nine.

These children are representative of the first thirty percent of all children born to a typical contemporary cohort of American women entering the childbearing years. The children in this survey include about the first twenty-five percent of children born to white women, the first forty percent to Hispanic women, and the first fifty percent to black women. The home environment of the older children, those of school age, is typical of the home environment of younger elementary school age children who were born to adolescent mothers. The home environment of those below school age may be considered as representative of the homes of a normal cross-section of children, mostly born to women between the ages of 18 and 25. This study profiles the home situation of a national cross-section of children and, as the study details, suggests results considerably different from those which are typically presented using cross-sectional data for adult respondents. It focuses on the 95 percent of all children who are living with their mother.

HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

1. About two of every three of the children are living with both their parents. This ranges from better than three of four for white children to about one of three for black children. Overall, almost one in five of the children has a mother who has never been married, two of three have a mother who is currently married, and the remaining fifteen percent have a mother who is currently separated, divorced, or widowed.

2. The households of black or Hispanic children whose fathers are absent are, on average, larger than households where the father is present. The opposite is true for the household of white children. The minority father-absent households are larger almost entirely because of the presence of additional children who are not children of the female respondent. The number of adults in minority father-absent households is essentially identical to father-present households; other adults, including grandparents and siblings of the mother are in the home instead of the father.

3. About one in three father-absent families have a grandparent present and thirty percent have other blood relatives of the child (excluding siblings) present, compared with four percent for each of these relationship types in father-present homes.

4. Overall, for about seven percent of children who are living with both parents, the father is defined as a partner and 93 percent as spouses of the mother. For children whose father is absent, fifteen percent live with a mother who is married and seven percent live with a mother who has a partner in the house. Maternal partners are slightly more prevalent in the households of older children and in minority households.

5. Fully forty percent of children in father-absent environments are living in households where their mother is the only adult. The youngest white children but the oldest black children are most likely to be in this household situation. For children six and older, fully 50 percent of black children in father-absent homes are living only with their mother, compared with 32 percent for white children.

EMPLOYMENT

1. About 70 percent of all adults in the children's household were employed at some time during the past year; seventy-five percent where the father was present and fifty-eight percent where the father was absent. Most of this difference between household types reflects the absence of the father, who tends to be the dominant wage earner.

2. Overall, about forty percent of the children had mothers who were employed during the week preceding the survey; forty-three percent of the white mothers were employed, thirty-six percent of black mothers, and thirty-two percent of Hispanic mothers.

3. White mothers in households where the father was absent were much more likely (fifty percent, compared with forty-one percent) to be employed than their counterparts in father-present households. Opposite patterns were noted for minority households, where maternal employment was much more prevalent in father-present households than father-absent households.

CHILD CARE

1. Forty-five percent of white mothers are utilizing childcare arrangements in order to work or complete education or training programs, in comparison with forty-two percent for black and thirty-five percent for Hispanic women. White women are much more likely to have the assistance of the child's father or stepfather, or to use non-relatives in the home or non-home environment. Minority children are more likely to stay with their grandparents (primarily grandmothers), other relatives, or to be in formal nursery or group daycare arrangements. The greater utilization of relatives by minority children is associated with the greater likelihood that these relatives are living in the home or living in the neighborhood.

POVERTY STATUS

1. According to standard federal government definitions, 33.5 percent of the children in the NLSY sample are living in a family unit which is in poverty, about 18 percent for children where where the father is present and 66 percent where the father is absent.

2. If one alters the definition of what constitutes a family to include partners of a spouse as family members, the overall percent in poverty declines to 31.4 percent--16 percent where the father is present and about 63 percent where the father is absent.

3. Not including a partner's income in family units which included a partner can seriously distort the family income statistics for this growing subset of the population. For family units which include a partner, 41 percent are defined as in poverty if the partner's income is included, compared with 77 percent if the partner's income is not included. This definitional distinction is of major importance for white, black, and Hispanic family units.

4. While the presence of a partner greatly reduces the likelihood of a child being in poverty, his impact on poverty reduction in the family is not as great as that of a spouse.

5. The presence or absence of a maternal spouse or partner is a much more important indicator of poverty status than is race or ethnicity.

CONTACT WITH ABSENT FATHER

1. About one in three children not living with their father has not seen him in the past twelve months. About one in three see their father at least once a week.

2. Black children are more likely to see their father very frequently—on a daily basis. This is associated with the fact that absent black fathers are more likely to be living nearby.

3. Older children and children of mothers who have remarried are least likely to frequently see their father, but slightly more likely to see him for a longer duration when they do see him. The decline in frequency of visitation associated with age is prevalent mainly for minority children. Part of this age (for minority children) and marital status difference is related to the fact that older children and children whose mother has remarried live further from their father.

CHILD SUPPORT

1. About one in four children not living with his or her father receives child support from the father. Children living close to their father or having more frequent contact with their father are more likely to receive support.

CHILDREN LIVING ONLY WITH THEIR FATHER

1. About one in three children who live only with their fathers never see their mothers--virtually identical to the one-third of those living with their mothers who never see their fathers. In general, their visitation patterns with mothers seem to be similar to visitation patterns of their counterparts who live only with their mothers. However, on average these children live further from their mothers than their mother-resident counterparts live from their father.

A VIEW FROM THE CRADLE: HOUSEHOLD AND PARENTAL CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIORS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF YOUNG CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

With some exceptions, available data on household and family structure and women's employment profile ongoing family situations from the perspective of the household or the woman herself as the unit of observation.[1] For many purposes, this is quite appropriate, particularly where the objective is to focus on the employment or family status of the woman herself. However, if one's objective is to examine the family, its employment profile, or its internal structure from the perspective of the child, this approach can lead to major misinterpretations or misunderstandings. In particular, in the aggregate, it can lead to a significant misrepresentation of the overall status of American children.

Two examples should clarify these premises. Maternal employment statistics are usually reported from the perspective of the mother, taking into account the age of her youngest child, reflecting the fact that this child is the most significant employment impediment for the mother. As expected, as the youngest child in a household ages, mother's employment or labor force participation rates rise. However, from the perspective of the children, this masks the important fact that many older children are in households which also include younger children--particularly where the mother is still relatively young. In this situation, from the older child's viewpoint, the maternal employment situation is essentially conditioned by the presence or absence of a younger child. Thus, an overall profile (i.e., percent employed full or part-time) of maternal employment

viewed from all of the children's perspective may be quite different from the traditionally-viewed maternal employment patterns which (1) are geared to the youngest child in a household, and (2) will count a mother only once, even if she has several children.

The second issue is tied in closely with the above. If mothers with selected characteristics or in selected household structures are more or less likely than others to bear multiple children or to space their children more closely, specific social situations can easily be misinterpreted if one views households in the standard manner (from the perspective of one adult individual) rather than from the perspective of a child. For example, a woman with three children who is the economic head of her family unit will only be counted as one "broken" family unit with children. In reality, we have here a situation where there are three children living in a household headed by a woman. As this report will document, the nature and magnitude of any problems relating to unusual family situations is quite different when one views the household from the perspective of children.

This report will use the 1984 (sixth wave) survey round of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Labor Market Experience (NLSY) to examine a variety of dimensions of family life, including the presence and absence of selected family members, parental visitation patterns, and childcare from the perspective of the children in the household. In other words, unless otherwise specified, the statistics cited in this report will count each child in a household as a respondent and view the family in that manner. If there are three children in a household, then, for example, the employment status of the mother will be counted three times. This will be a profile of the world as seen through the eyes of preschool age and younger elementary school age children. If programs are to be developed which are geared to the needs of children, it is most appropriate that we also have statistics which view potential social and economic problems of children in a similar manner. A particular focus of this report will be on examining the status of children generally felt to be at greater risk, children in family units where the father is not present.

THE DATA SET AND SAMPLE AND ANALYTICAL LIMITATIONS

The overall NLSY sample in 1984 included male and female respondents between the ages of 19 to 27, approximately 95 percent of the original nationally representative sample of 12,686 interviewed in 1979. The focus of this study will be on the 4,452 children born to the 2,724 women in the sample who had borne at least one child by the 1984 survey date. Since the principal focus of this study is on the children of these women, the child sample may be viewed as the children which have been born to a nationally representative sample of American mothers between the ages of 19 and 27. In this regard, it is important to note that, reflecting the age constraints of the sample, most of the older children have been born to adolescent mothers. This is one reason why, as will be seen, such a large proportion of the older children are living in "broken families"; they are the children of adolescent childbearers. These older children are, however, a representative component of children born to women in this age range.

These mothers and children may be considered as representative of all younger childbearers and earlier-born children to American mothers. As of 1984, this cohort of 19- to 27-year-old women have completed about the first 30 percent of their childbearing. This ranges from about the first 25 percent of childbearing for white women to 40 percent for Hispanic and about 50 percent for black women.[2] The higher minority percentages reflect the fact that Hispanic and black women, on average, begin childbearing earlier and maintain a greater pace of childbearing during their adolescent and early adult years. Thus, this report profiles the household and family situation of the full spectrum of children born to younger American women. Because the white mothers are not as far along in their childbearing, one may conclude that the household situations depicted for the white children are somewhat less typical of that of all white children than the situations for their minority counterparts.

The sample also includes an overrepresentation of black and Hispanic women so as to permit statistically reliable racial and ethnic comparisons. Partly as a result of this sample selection and partly because early childbearers disproportionately tend to be minority women, the unweighted sample of mothers and children in this study includes a heavy representation of minority women and children. However, all of the statistics presented in this study are based on weighted data. That is, the unweighted sample cases are weighted up in such a manner as to produce overall as well as separate racial and ethnic statistics which are representative of those population groups. The sample sizes indicated in the tabular material are the unweighted number of sample cases.

With minor exceptions, the thrust of this analysis will be to examine various dimensions of mother and child for children who are living with their mother. This is primarily for the pragmatic reason that virtually all—about 95 percent—of children born to women in this age range are living with their mother. As will be shown, however, substantial proportions of these children do not have their father present in the home, and a major focus of this analysis is to contrast the situation of women and children between father present and father absent environments. The data presented in this report are drawn from 1984 interviews with the mothers of the children.[3] Thus, any information which focuses on interactions with a missing father were provided by the mother, and will provide only her perspective. For example, documentation of visitation patterns between children and missing fathers might differ if the information was being collected from the father, rather than from the mother.

In addition, it should be emphasized that this profile presents a cross-sectional perspective: it examines the household and family situations as of one point in time, the 1984 survey date. As has been extensively documented elsewhere, households are dynamic institutions constantly undergoing structural changes (Bumpass and Rindfuss, 1979; Glick, 1979; Bane, 1976). Many of the children who are described in this study as living with only one parent were in the recent past living with both parents. In addition,

Table 1 Residence of Children by Mother's Marital Status, Race, and Age of Child

	Mother's Marital Status				Age of Children			Mother's Race		
Total	Total	Never Married	Married, Spouse Present	Separated/ Divorced/ Widowed	0-2	3-5	6 and over	Hispanic	Black	White
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
In household	94.8	91.6	97.1	88.7	96.9	94.0	90.8	96.4	94.2	94.7
Not in household	5.2	8.4	2.9	11.3	3.1	6.0	9.2	3.6	5.8	5.3
Other parents	1.3	0.5	0.5	6.3	0.7	1.7	2.3	1.0	0.8	1.6
Other relatives	1.3	3.6	0.4	2.4	0.3	1.5	3.2	1.4	2.6	0.8
Foster parent	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
Adopted out	0.6	2.0	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.6	1.4	0.0	0.2	0.9
Institutionalized	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0
Deceased	1.7	2.2	1.5	1.8	1.5	1.7	2.1	0.5	2.1	1.7
Other	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Sample size	4397	1113	2550	732	2050	1487	860	785	1433	2191

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

the composition of the other household members in the home is constantly subject to change as grandparents come and go, siblings are born and other relatives or friends make a temporary presence. Similarly, children currently living with a separated or divorced mother will in some instances be living with a remarried mother in the near future. This report thus focuses on a temporally static situation, the structure of the household and some of its social and economic implications, as of one point in time, the 1984 survey date. As of 1984, about one-third of all these children are not living with their father. Bumpass and Rindfuss (1977) estimated that over one-third of all children spend a portion of their childhood during which their mothers are between marriages, although their estimates were based on data for a full cross-section of children during the 1970s. Glick (1979) estimated that 45 percent of children born in 1977 will reside in one-parent families sometime before they reach age 18. A comparison of these statistics reinforces the notion that the children in our study are not representative of all children, but rather, typify the children of younger childbearers. Future reports with the NLSY data set will introduce additional dynamic elements and examine shorter-term household structural changes.

PARENTAL HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

This study focuses on the approximately 4,400 children who have been born to the 2,700 mothers in the NLS sample by 1984. As may be seen from Table 1, about 95 percent of these children live in their mothers' household, 1.7 percent are deceased, .6 percent adopted, and most of the remainder, 2.9 percent, live with their father or other relatives. These statistics do not vary to any great extent between black, white, or Hispanic children,[4] but they are sensitive to the age of the child and the marital status of the mother, two factors which are interrelated with each other; very young children are more likely to live in a home which includes both parents, as the parental marriage

whose mothers are never married, separated, or divorced are living with their mother, compared with 97 percent for children whose mothers are currently married (although not necessarily to the child's father). Parallelling this, only about nine of ten children age six and above are living with their mother. These are children who for the most part were born to adolescent mothers. Notwithstanding the above, as Table 2 indicates, regardless of parental marital status, race or ethnicity or child's age (up to about age ten with a small number at ages 11 or 12), there are only relatively modest proportions of children who are not living with their mothers.

While a principal focus of this monograph will be on examining the family situation of children who are living only with their mother, it is useful to consider briefly the marital situation of the mother, since this is typically considered an important manifestation of family stability and economic wellbeing. This concept differs from the father present or absent concept, as in many situations a father may be present with the mother not being married, or conversely, a child's father may be absent but the mother is married to a different individual. The extensiveness of these non-normative family profiles will be described below.

Table 3 indicates that almost one in five of all children in this sample are living with mothers who have never been married; about half of all black children are living in this marital environment, compared with about 20 percent of Hispanic children and seven percent of white children. Older children (over age six) are much more likely than younger children (under age three) to be living with a separated or divorced mother, reflecting the passage of years since the mother's marriage. Indeed, almost one in four children age six and over are living with a separated or divorced mother. In this regard, it may be noted that there only is a modest tendency for black women with children to move out of the never married status as their children age. In addition, only 56 percent of all children age six and over are living in a home which includes a mother and her legal husband, strongly suggesting that the traditional view of children in home environments

Table 2 Percent of Children Living with Mother by Age of Child, Race/Ethnicity, and Mother's Marital Status

	All Mothers				Never Married				Married, Spouse Present				Separated/Widowed/Divorced			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Total	94.8	94.7 (2191)	94.2 (1433)	96.5 (785)	91.6	84.7 (206)	94.2 (749)	92.6 (163)	97.1	97.1 (1578)	96.1 (482)	98.3 (490)	88.7	87.5 (408)	90.0 (197)	93.7 (127)
0-2	96.9	96.8 (1069)	96.4 (593)	98.8 (397)	94.7	90.5 (108)	96.6 (329)	97.8 (80)	98.3	98.1 (835)	99.1 (214)	99.1 (264)	90.9	90.5 (125)	86.1 (50)	98.7 (53)
3-5	94.0	93.5 (753)	94.7 (479)	95.8 (257)	88.8	74.8 (71)	94.2 (249)	83.9 (56)	96.9	96.9 (510)	94.9 (164)	99.1 (162)	89.0	86.1 (174)	96.3 (64)	97.3 (38)
6 and over	90.8	91.1 (369)	90.3 (361)	91.5 (131)	88.6	78.3 (27)	90.0 (171)	96.0 (27)	93.4	93.7 (233)	92.4 (104)	93.6 (64)	86.3	86.0 (109)	87.7 (83)	83.4 (36)

Percent of Children with Mothers in Different Marital Arrangements by Race/Ethnicity and Age of Child

	Total				White				Black				Hispanic			
	All Ages	0-2	3-5	6 and over	All Ages	0-2	3-5	6 and over	All Ages	0-2	3-5	6 and over	All Ages	0-2	3-5	6 and over
with who are:	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
arried	18.6	18.7	17.8	19.7	7.1	8.5	5.8	5.2	53.6	57.5	53.9	47.4	18.9	18.9	20.0	16.8
, spouse	66.7	71.7	65.6	56.1	78.7	82.3	76.7	71.8	31.2	33.2	31.3	28.0	63.5	66.5	65.8	51.4
ed, , d	14.9	9.9	16.8	23.9	14.6	9.5	17.9	23.5	14.9	9.3	14.5	23.5	16.7	14.5	13.9	27.8

ercentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

which include two married parents can be perhaps rather far from reality--at least for a large segment of American children and mothers.

Shifting from a marital status to a parental presence concept clarifies to some degree the extent to which the former concept can lead to misinterpretation, if one's concern is parental presence. Table 4 indicates that about two-thirds of all the children in the sample are living with both of their natural parents--about 78 percent for white children, 68 percent for Hispanic children, and about one-third of black children. A comparison of the parent presence statistic with the overall percentages of children living in married spouse present (MSP) arrangements would seem to suggest a virtual identity between the concepts. However, this would significantly misrepresent a reality in which, over time, children are not only more likely to be living in homes where the mother is not married, but additionally, are likely to be living in homes where the mother has remarried; for example, 56 percent of children age six and over are living with married mothers, but only about 46 percent of these same children are living with both of their natural parents.

Father's Presence or Absence: Implications for Household Structure from the Child's Perspective

The size and composition of a household has important implications for how well that household is able to function internally as well as how well it can cope with the external environment, particularly the world of work. From the perspective of the child, the presence of siblings or other relatives or non-relatives can provide a social network which lends support in times of personal or family crisis. While outside relatives and friends can also certainly help, the more immediate presence of friends and family can be an important psychological buffer in times of stress.

The presence of other adults, particularly grandparents, can also increase the viability of employment for the children's mother by providing childcare or other in-home support services. Finally, examining the relationship between the number of children and

Table 4 Percent of Children Living with Two Parents by Age of Child and Race/Ethnicity

	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Total	66.4	77.7	31.3	67.6
0-2	75.7	85.0	40.0	73.9
3-5	64.7	74.9	32.2	68.2
6 and over	46.0	61.2	18.3	46.5

the number of adults in the home can help clarify the economic self-sufficiency of the household unit; everything else being equal, a high proportion of adults in the household or, more precisely, the proportion of household members or the proportion of adults with an attachment to the labor force is important presumptive evidence of the household unit's economic viability.

Tables 5 through 9 profile the household structure of the households in which this large nationally-representative sample of children live, contrasting the situations where the child's father is present or absent. Table 5 indicates the structure of the household as viewed by the child. That is, the relationships specified are the relationships of the various household members to the child himself or herself. Overall, about 32 percent of household members are siblings of the child, another 21 percent are the child's mother, and 14 percent the husband of the child's mother, most typically the child's father. An additional four percent are grandparents and about six percent are other blood relatives of the child, most typically siblings of a parent. Of course, 21 percent of the household members are accounted for by the reference (or "index") child.

These patterns vary to some extent between white, black, and Hispanic units. The major distinctions in household composition are that minority families are much less likely to include the mother's spouse, but much more likely to include grandparents or other blood relatives of the child. For example, about seven percent of the household members in the black households are grandparents and about 16 percent are other blood relatives, compared with less than three percent for each of these two relationship types in white families.

Part of this racial/ethnic difference reflects the different likelihoods of black, white, and Hispanic women to be married. For example, when one examines the household structure of the different racial/ethnic groups for the father present and father absent household units, very few father present units include grandparents, but substantial proportions of father-absent units, about nine percent, include grandparents.

able 5 Household Structure from the Perspective of Young Children: Distribution of All Household Members by Presence or Absence of Father and Race/Ethnicity

					Father Absent				Father Present			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
child	20.5	21.6	18.2	18.4	19.6	22.3	17.8	18.0	20.9	21.5	19.1	18.7
Mother of child	20.5	21.6	18.2	18.4	19.6	22.3	17.8	18.0	20.9	21.5	19.1	18.7
Spouse of mother	13.9	17.4	5.6	12.1	2.9	5.1	1.4	2.1	19.8	20.8	15.7	17.2
Sibling(s) of child	32.2	31.8	32.1	33.7	29.8	28.4	30.5	32.0	33.3	32.7	36.0	34.6
Grandparent(s) of child	3.9	2.6	7.1	4.6	9.1	8.9	9.1	9.8	1.1	0.9	2.3	1.9
Other blood relative(s) of child												
Under 18	3.1	1.0	7.9	4.7	7.6	3.1	10.4	10.	0.7	0.5	1.5	2.0
18 and over	3.1	1.2	7.9	3.3	7.5	4.0	10.6	5.7	0.0	0.4	1.3	2.0
Non-blood relative(s) of child												
Under 18	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5
18 and over	1.0	0.8	0.9	1.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8	1.0	0.8	1.1	2.3
Partner of mother	1.2	1.0	1.5	1.3	1.4	2.2	0.8	1.1	1.0	0.7	3.1	1.5
Other												
Under 18	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.7	1.1	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.4
18 and over	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.7	0.9	1.6	0.3	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5
Sample size	21257	9661	7479	4117	9238	2628	5196	1414	12019	7033	2283	2703

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Table 6 A Comparison of Household Size and Structure by Race/Ethnicity: Comparing Children's Household Structure with Their Mother's Household Structure

	Total		White		Black		Hispanic	
	Child's Perspective	Mother's Perspective	Child's Perspective	Mother's Perspective	Child's Perspective	Mother's Perspective	Child's Perspective	Mother's Perspective
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mother	20.5	25.4	21.6	27.0	18.2	21.8	18.4	23.1
All children of mother[a]	52.7	40.1	53.4	41.8	50.3	36.1	52.1	38.9
Spouse of mother	13.9	10.8	17.4	21.2	5.6	6.2	12.1	14.7
Grandparents of child(ren)	3.9	5.4	2.6	3.6	7.1	10.2	4.6	6.5
Other blood relative of child								
Under 18	3.1	4.1	1.0	1.2	7.9	10.9	4.7	6.2
18 and over	3.1	4.2	1.2	1.5	7.9	11.1	3.3	4.6
Non-blood relative of child								
Under 18	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.6
18 and over	1.0	1.1	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.8	2.2
Partner of mother	1.2	1.5	1.0	1.4	1.5	1.7	1.3	1.6
Other								
Under 18	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
18 and over	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.7	1.1
Number of household members	21257	10817	9661	5013	7479	3799	4117	2005
Number of households	4167	2616	2050	1331	1356	825	761	460
Mean household size	4.89	3.95	4.62	3.70	5.51	4.58	5.42	4.34
Mean number of own children	2.57	1.58	2.47	1.55	2.77	1.65	2.83	1.69
Mean number of other childrne	0.18	0.19	0.07	0.07	0.46	0.53	0.31	0.31
Mean number of adults	2.14	2.18	2.08	2.08	2.28	2.40	2.28	2.34
Percent of household which is adult	43.8	55.2	45.0	56.2	41.4	52.4	42.1	53.8

[a]Including "index" child.

Table 7 Household Structure from the Perspective of Young Children: Distribution of All Household Members by Presence or Absence of Father and Age of Child

	All Households			Father Absent			Father Present		
	0-2	3-5	6 and over	0-2	3-5	6 and over	0-2	3-5	6 and over
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Child	21.7	19.7	18.8	19.4	20.1	19.2	22.5	19.6	18.6
Mother of child	21.7	19.7	18.8	19.4	20.1	19.2	22.5	19.6	18.6
Spouse of mother	15.8	13.2	10.6	1.1	3.2	4.6	21.2	18.7	17.3
Sibling(s) of child	26.5	34.3	40.6	22.2	28.5	39.5	28.2	37.4	41.8
Grandparent(s) of child	4.1	3.9	3.6	12.1	9.1	5.7	1.1	1.1	1.1
Other blood relative(s) of child									
Under 18	3.8	2.9	2.1	11.7	7.2	3.5	0.9	0.5	0.4
18 and over	3.1	3.1	3.0	9.8	7.8	5.1	0.6	0.7	0.6
Non-blood relative(s) of child									
Under 18	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.0
18 and over	1.1	1.0	0.5	1.1	0.6	0.6	1.1	1.1	0.3
Partner of mother	1.1	1.1	1.5	0.8	1.5	1.9	1.2	1.1	1.1
Other									
Under 18	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0
18 and over	0.5	0.5	0.2	1.1	1.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	1.6
Sample size	9543	7167	4343	3291	3159	2696	6252	4008	1647

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Table 8 Mean Household Statistics by Race/Ethnicity, Father's Presence or Absence, and Age of Child

	All Households				Father Absent				Father Present			
	Total	0-2	3-5	6 & over	Total	0-2	3-5	6 & over	Total	0-2	3-5	6 & over
Total												
Mean household size	4.89	4.62	5.07	5.30	5.11	5.15	4.99	5.23	4.78	4.45	5.11	5.40
Mean number of children to mother	2.57	2.23	2.74	3.15	2.52	2.14	2.42	3.07	2.59	2.25	2.91	3.25
Mean other children	0.18	0.21	0.17	0.13	0.43	0.67	0.39	0.21	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.03
Mean number of adults	2.14	2.18	2.16	2.02	2.16	2.34	2.18	1.95	2.14	2.14	2.15	2.12
Percent of household which is adult	43.8	47.2	42.6	38.1	42.3	45.4	43.7	37.3	44.8	48.1	42.1	39.3
White												
Mean household size	4.62	4.29	4.85	5.18	4.49	4.29	4.36	4.92	4.66	4.29	5.02	5.35
Mean number of children to mother	2.47	2.13	2.70	3.07	2.28	1.88	2.23	2.82	2.52	2.17	2.86	3.23
Mean other children	0.07	0.08	0.06	0.05	0.21	0.35	0.14	0.12	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.02
Mean number of adults	2.08	2.08	2.09	2.06	2.00	2.06	1.99	1.98	2.11	2.09	2.13	2.10
Percent of household which is adult	45.0	48.5	43.1	39.8	44.5	48.0	45.6	40.2	45.3	48.7	42.4	39.3
Black												
Mean household size	5.51	5.58	5.50	5.47	5.62	5.88	5.83	5.45	5.24	5.12	5.32	5.52
Mean number of children to mother	2.77	2.48	2.74	3.24	2.72	2.34	2.58	3.32	2.89	2.68	3.06	3.23
Mean other children	0.46	0.60	0.47	0.25	0.61	0.92	0.64	0.29	0.11	0.12	0.11	0.08
Mean number of adults	2.28	2.50	2.29	1.98	2.29	2.62	2.61	1.84	2.24	2.32	2.15	2.21
Percent of household which is adult	41.4	44.8	41.6	36.2	40.7	44.6	44.8	33.8	42.7	45.3	40.4	40.0
Hispanic												
Mean household size	5.42	5.24	5.62	5.53	5.57	5.67	5.57	5.45	5.35	5.09	5.64	5.63
Mean number of children to mother	2.83	2.52	2.97	3.42	2.78	2.42	2.69	3.36	2.85	2.55	3.10	3.49
Mean other children	0.31	0.38	0.29	0.13	0.63	0.96	0.60	0.22	0.15	0.18	0.14	0.02
Mean number of adults	2.28	2.34	2.36	1.98	2.16	2.29	2.28	1.87	2.35	2.36	2.40	2.12
Percent of household which is adult	42.1	44.7	42.0	35.8	38.8	40.4	40.9	34.3	43.9	46.4	42.6	37.7

Table 9 Percent of Households Which Includes Specified Category of Household Member, by Presence or Absence of Father and Race/Ethnicity

	All Households				Father Absent				Father Present			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispani
Mother of child	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Spouse of mother	67.8	80.2	31.0	65.6	14.9	22.6	7.9	11.6	94.7	96.1	82.1	91.5
Sibling of child	63.5	61.7	66.8	68.0	59.1	52.2	65.2	62.7	65.7	64.5	70.3	70.6
Grandparent(s) of child	13.2	7.8	28.4	16.3	31.8	25.1	37.5	36.5	3.8	2.9	8.3	6.7
Other blood relative(s) of child	12.7	6.7	28.5	17.9	29.6	19.7	38.0	36.0	4.1	3.0	7.5	9.2
Non-blood relative(s) of child	3.3	2.8	3.2	7.6	3.5	3.5	2.9	6.0	3.3	2.5	4.0	8.3
Partner of mother	5.7	4.7	8.2	7.2	7.0	9.8	4.5	5.9	5.0	3.2	16.5	7.9
Other	2.2	1.9	2.3	3.2	4.4	6.0	2.8	5.1	1.0	0.7	2.2	2.3
Number of children	4167	2050	1356	761	1732	562	913	259	2435	1488	443	504

These statistics do not vary between white, black, and Hispanic units. In this regard, the pattern parallels that reported by Hernandez and Myers (1985) using 1980 Census data.

In contrast, other blood relatives, most typically siblings of the mother, are rarely present in intact (i.e., two parents present) family units, but are frequently present in households where the father is absent--but most typically in minority households. Indeed, about 21 percent of the black and 16 percent of the Hispanic household members in units where the father is absent are other blood relatives, compared with about seven percent for white units. It is of some interest to note that a substantial proportion of these relatives are minors, suggesting that there may be a greater tendency for minority family units of related individuals to join together for economic or psychological support in times of family crisis. The extent to which these linkages are related to the employment of the mother or other family members and implications for the economic viability of these family types will be considered below.

It is also useful to note from Table 5 that the prevalence of parental partners is a relatively rare situation, accounting for about one percent of household members in both father absent and father present situations. In household units where the child's father is present, partners account for about five percent of parental companions. This statistic is somewhat higher for minority households; partners account for about eight percent of Hispanic and 17 percent of black, in comparison with three percent of white resident companions.

Before examining household structure from a child's perspective in greater detail, it is useful to contrast parental and children's perspectives on this issue. Recall that the traditional way of viewing households, which counts a household only once (e.g., from an adult respondent's perspective) provides a quite different account. For example, if a woman has three children, her household will appear only once in a standard survey data collection effort; if one were surveying individual children as respondents, her household would appear three times. Thus, a world viewed from a children's perspective would

profile households which are more heavily represented by children and include a lesser representation of adults. Table 6 contrasts these perspectives for all the mothers and children in our nationally representative sample. Overall, about forty percent of the household members in the mother's households are her own children, and another five percent are other children under the age of eighteen. Thus, from the traditional household perspective, about forty-five percent of the household members in the mother's households are minors and fifty-five percent are age eighteen or over. However, when one focuses on the children's households, about fifty-three percent are either the child him or herself or a sibling of that child and an additional 3.6 percent are other children under age eighteen--a total of about fifty-six percent of all household members. It may be noted that the discrepancy using these two approaches is even somewhat greater for minority mothers and children, reflecting the fact that a larger proportion of black and Hispanic households have more than one child.

Summary statistics contrasting these two household perspectives may be found at the bottom of Table 6. They indicate that, on average, a child's household is almost one person greater than a mother's household and that all of this difference is related to the greater number of children. The average number of adults in white households when viewed from the two perspectives is virtually identical because multiple child and single child white households each include about the same number of adults. Minority households viewed from the child's perspective have slightly fewer adults than minority mother households because multiple child minority households have slightly fewer adults than their single child counterpart households.

It is useful to briefly consider the economic and social implications of these contrasting perspectives. The average mother lives in a household which includes 3.95 individuals and 1.77 children (her own and others). The average child lives in a household which includes 4.89 individuals and 2.75 children. The mother's household is fifty-five percent adult, whereas the child's household is forty-four percent adult. In terms of the

respective housing units being economically viable, everything else being equal, more children need to be supported in the children's than in the mothers' households by a smaller proportion of the household members. From a social-psychological perspective, the average mother has a home environment where a larger proportion of adults are interacting with a smaller number of children. In contrast, the average child is in an environment which is more child-intensive. Thus, from the perspective of social policy, program needs viewed from the two sampling approaches differ considerably.

We now shift to Table 7, which indicates how the household structure viewed from the child's perspective is quite sensitive to the age of the child. Not surprisingly, the older the child is, the greater the proportion of household residents who are siblings to that child. For children six and over, about 40 percent of all household members are siblings of that child. It should be noted that this particular statistic holds equally for children living with and without their father. For these older children, the major difference in household structure (independent of the actual household size, which will be considered in Table 8) between father-present and father-absent units reflects the greater importance of grandparents and other blood relatives in the home where the father is absent. It is also worth noting the relatively modest contribution of parental spouses or partners to these units when viewed from the child's perspective; the mothers of seven percent of children in father-absent households have a spouse or partner, compared with about 18 percent where the father is present. While many women ultimately will remarry or form new permanent relationships, it is clear that at least in the short run, this practice does not have a major impact on household structure, at least for mothers in this 19 to 27 age range.

The above tables have described the household composition of household units where the child's father is present or absent. It is of equal importance to describe how these different household situations are associated with household size per se, in particularly, the mix between children and adults. This distinction is of particular

importance because the economic viability of the household unit rests to a considerable degree on the employment status of the various adult household members. Table 8 synthesizes a number of these household size dimensions according to the race or ethnicity of the mothers, the presence or absence of the child's father, and the age of the child. All of these mean household statistics of course include the respondent child. It should be noted that to the casual reader these household size statistics will appear large in comparison with other American household statistics. This is because, by definition, every household in this sample must include at least one child (the index child) and the age range of the maternal sample guarantees that many of the households will have several children as well as a spouse. Overall, the average household we are considering has close to five individuals (4.89 individuals). This statistic is of course also biased upward because we are examining households from each child's perspective; thus, a household with three children will be counted three times, whereas a household with one child will only be counted once. However, this perspective is appropriate if what one wishes to examine is what a household looks like when viewed from the perspective of a child population.

There are substantial variations in household size by race/ethnicity, with the average black household being almost one person larger (5.5) than the average white household (4.6). The average Hispanic household (5.4) approaches the black household in size. Almost half of the racial/ethnic differences in household size reflect differences in the number of children present. White households average 2.47 children, almost all children of the female respondent. Black and Hispanic families included 3.23 and 3.14 children, respectively, with about half the difference between the white and minority families reflecting the fact that minority families are more likely than white families to include other children who were not born to the child's mother.

There are significant differences in household size between households where the child's father is present or absent, but the pattern, at first glance, appears counter-

intuitive; father-absent households are larger than father-present households. This pattern reflects entirely the fact that black and Hispanic father-absent households are significantly larger than their father-present counterparts. For white households, the opposite pattern exists. The minority father-absent household units are larger than the father-present almost entirely because of the presence of additional children not belonging to the female respondent. Interestingly, the total number of adults in the black father-absent households is essentially identical to, and the total number of adults in Hispanic households is only slightly below, the number of adults in the father-present hourseholds, as other related family members are present instead of the absent father. As Table 5 indicates, these are presumably grandparents and other blood relatives of the child. These other blood relatives apparently also typically have their own children who are incorporated into the household unit. White father-absent household units, in contrast, are somewhat smaller than their father-present counterparts, reflecting both a modestly smaller number of children and adults in the father-absent households.

The net result of the above differences in the number of adults and children in the father-present and father-absent households is that households without fathers include a somewhat lower proportion of adults. This is particularly true for minority families. The percent of Hispanic household members who are adult are 44 and 39 percent, respectively, in the two household types and the comparable black statistics are 43 and 41. Thus, it is perhaps fair to conclude that the father-absent minority households are frequently augmented by secondary families or that, conversely, the woman and her children move in with other related family units. There is considerable replacement of fathers by other adult family members. These adults typically have substantial numbers of children of their own with the net impact of the transition from father-present to father-absent typically being a decrease in the percentage of the household which is adult and a concomitant increase in the proportion of household members who are economically dependent.

In Tables 5 through 7 we described the overall distribution of all household members. It is useful to now consider the household structure from a slightly different perspective--whether or not selected categories of relatives or non-relatives are present in the household. From a social networking perspective, it is important to know whether or not a child lives in the same environment as, for example, a sibling or grandparent. The presence of a grandparent can perhaps increase the viability of employment options for the child's mother, while at the same time leaving the young child in an emotionally supportive environment. The presence of siblings is known to be related to the nature of a child's intellectual and emotional development (e.g., Zajonc, 1976; Mott and Haurin, 1982) and, in addition, is an important indicator of the extent to which potential resources need to be shared.

As may be seen in Table 9, overall, 63 percent of all the NLSY children have at least one sibling in their home, with the percentage being slightly higher where the father of the child is present and slightly lower where he is absent. In all family situations, minority children are more likely to have a sibling. Also, about one in three father-absent children have at least one grandparent present, and 30 percent have at least one other blood relative in their home, compared with very small percentages for children who are living with both parents. Once again, the presence of these relative types is much more common in minority families.

There are also racial and ethnic distinctions in the presence of a maternal partner, regardless of whether or not this partner is the child's father. In households where the child's father is present, about one in six black fathers are defined as a partner rather than spouse. In contrast, in households where the father is absent, only a modest proportion, about five percent, of minority family units include a maternal partner, but ten percent of white family units include a partner. In addition, white children not living with their fathers are much more likely to have a remarried mother than their minority counterpart. About 23 percent of white children not living with their father have a

remarried mother, compared with about 12 percent for comparable Hispanic and eight percent for black children. While interpreting the rationale for these racial/ethnic differences are beyond the scope of this paper, it certainly suggests that the motivations behind the lack of a father's presence may vary between the different groups.

Table 10 documents how the presence of different relationship categories in father-present and father-absent households is closely related to the age of the child. For example, in father-absent households, grandparents and other blood relatives are much more prevalent when the child is young, undoubtedly reflecting the greater need of the child's mother for psychological support as well as childcare assistance. One should also consider in this context the essentially different nature and complexity of the parental situation where the child is very young in comparison with when the child is older. If the father is no longer present when the child is very young, the implication is that the child was born and raised almost from birth in a father-absent environment, where the mother typically might require help from other family members. In contrast, a father-absent household for a six-year-old child might present a considerably different environment, as in many instances the father would have been present in the household through the child's infant and preschool years.

In addition, for older children in a father-absent environment, the presence of a new father figure--either a new spouse or partner to the mother--is not a rare event. Whereas the mother of only about ten percent of father-absent children under the age of three has a new man in the house (either spouse or partner), this statistic has increased to about 33 percent where the child is six or older. This of course reflects the fact that, on average, the mothers of older children have had more years in which to form new permanent relationships.

The above discussion has focused on the presence of various relatives or non-relatives in the child's home. From both an economic and psychological perspective, perhaps the most important dimension of household structure in the father-absent

Table 10 Percent of Households Which Include Specified Category of Household Member by Presence or Absence of Father and Age of Child

	All Households				Father Absent				Father Present			
	Total	0-2	3-5	6 & over	Total	0-2	3-5	6 & over	Total	0-2	3-5	6 & over
Mother of child	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Spouse of mother	67.8	72.9	67.3	56.1	14.9	5.8	16.1	23.9	94.7	94.4	95.2	93.8
Sibling of child	63.5	51.5	71.0	80.3	59.1	45.8	56.2	76.6	65.7	53.3	79.1	84.6
Grandparent(s) of child	13.2	13.0	13.3	13.7	31.8	42.6	30.0	22.1	3.8	3.5	4.2	3.9
Other blood relative(s) of child	12.7	12.7	12.6	13.0	29.6	39.1	28.5	20.7	4.1	4.3	3.9	3.9
Non-blood relative(s) of child	3.3	3.8	3.2	2.1	3.5	5.5	2.5	2.4	3.3	3.3	3.5	1.7
Partner of mother	5.7	5.0	5.6	7.9	7.0	4.2	7.4	9.8	5.0	5.2	4.6	5.7
Other	2.2	2.3	2.1	1.7	4.4	5.5	5.0	2.5	1.0	1.3	0.6	0
Number of children	4167	1931	1391	801	1732	600	615	497	2435	1331	776	304

situation is whether or not any adult other than the mother is present. The presence of other adults can act as a psychological buffer for the mother and child during times of crisis. Also, other adults undoubtedly ease childcare constraints for mothers who wish to work. As Table 11 shows, fully forty percent of children in father-absent environments live in homes where the mother is the only resident adult. This pattern varies modestly by race, being greatest for black and least for white homes. However, the relationship between the likelihood of other adults being present and the child's age shows considerable variation by race. The youngest white children are most likely to be living only with their mother, but the likelihood of no other adult being present declines as the child ages. In contrast, the youngest black children are much less likely to be living only with their mother (as the only other adult present), but this likelihood increases sharply as the child ages. Indeed, for children age six and over, fully half of black children in father-absent homes live with their mother as the only adult, compared with thirty-two percent for white children. This partly reflects the lesser tendency of black women to marry or remarry. It also is strongly consistent with the notion that stereotypical ideas of black youth having more support from readily available extended family networks are not always entirely accurate. The large proportions of black school-age children living only with their mother, in conjunction with their lower family income, suggests that there may be a greater need for black children to cope on their own in "latchkey" situations than is true for white school-age children.

Household Structure, Employment, and Poverty Status

From an economic perspective, one important value of the presence of other adult household members rests on their ability to contribute to the household's income. The series of tables which follow clarify the extent to which variations in the presence or absence of particular categories of relatives or friends (which we know are closely associated with the mother's marital status or from the perspective of a child, the

Table 11 Percent of Children Living in Households Where the Mother is the Only Adult: Children in Father-Absent Households

		Age of Child		
	Total	0-2	3-5	6 and over
Total	40.8	39.0	41.0	42.2
White	37.9	40.7	39.5	31.7
Black	43.7	36.3	43.6	51.2
Hispanic	40.9	43.8	36.8	42.7

Note: All cell sample sizes exceed 50.

presence of a father) impact on the ability of a household unit to maintain its economic viability.

Employment of Selected Household Members. Table 12 indicates the percent of adult (age 18 and over) household members who worked at some time during the year preceding the interview date and shows how the employment likelihood of different categories of friends or relatives is sensitive to the race or ethnicity of the respondent as well as the presence or absence of the child's father.

Overall, about 69 percent of all adults and 31 percent of all household members (regardless of age) in the child's household indicated that they were employed at some time during the preceding year. Where the child's father was present, 75 percent of adults indicated some employment, compared with 58 percent of adults in households where the child's father was absent. Substantial differences between the father-present and father-absent households are also evidenced if one compares statistics for all household members.

Most of the difference in the employment level of adults between father-present and father-absent households reflects the fact that the dominant wage earner, the mother's spouse, is absent from the father-absent households. While we have seen that there is a substantial replacement of spouses by other relatives, particularly grandparents and friends, these other relatives are substantially less likely to be employed than is the mother's spouse. The relative importance of changing household structure and changing employment tendencies of specific categories of household members is synthesized in Table 13. In this table, the proportions of the decline in overall adult employment (which may be attributed to these two components) as one moves from father-present to father-absent households is noted. Overall, of the 17 percentage point decline (from 75 percent to 58 percent) in the percent of adults 18 and over employed, about 14 percentage points may be attributed to changes in the composition of adult household members and three percentage points to changes in the

Table 12 Proportion of Each Category of Household Member (Age 18 and Above) Who Worked During the Year, by Father Presence or Absence Status and Race/Ethnicity

					Father Present				Father Absent			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Mother of child	56.7	59.5	51.6	48.8	58.8	58.7	63.6	53.9	52.7	62.3	46.2	38.1
Spouse of mother	93.5	94.9	86.7	88.9	93.5	94.6	88.1	89.0	94.2	99.8	80.3	88.0[a]
Grandparent(s) of child	62.6	69.0	58.6	55.4	64.4	66.6	72.0[a]	47.8	62.2	69.8	57.3	58.2
Other blood relative(s) of child	51.0	66.4	44.2	55.6	67.8	75.9[a]	59.5[a]	61.7	48.1	62.8	43.5	51.8
Non-blood relative(s) of child	70.3	77.7	62.9	60.4	74.1	78.4	67.6[a]	67.8	61.1	75.3[a]	59.6[a]	27.1[b]
Partner of mother	85.9	87.9	84.9	79.3	80.3	84.4	78.4	71.8[a]	93.6	91.8[a]	95.8[a]	100.0[b]
Other	61.5	59.5	57.9[a]	75.0	61.5	61.4[a]	28.7[b]	79.9[b]	61.4	58.9[a]	66.0[b]	70.3[b]
Percent of adults employed	69.3	74.8	57.1	63.2	75.2	76.3	73.7	69.2	58.0	69.4	50.1	50.3
Percent of all household members employed	30.8	33.8	24.6	27.5	33.7	34.4	31.8	30.8	25.5	31.7	21.5	20.8

[a]Cell size < 50.

[b]Cell size < 25.

likelihood of specific categories of adults (e.g., grandparents, non-blood relatives) being employed.[5] There are substantial racial/ethnic differences, however, not only in how the absence of a father is associated with the overall household employment, but also how the changes reflect changes in household structure in comparison with changes in household category-specific employment rates. It may be seen that the absence of a father is only associated with modest differences in adult employment in white households, but much more substantial differences in adult employment for minority families. In addition, in white households, a fairly substantial negative impact of household structure on employment is partially offset by a compensating higher level of employment for some household members in father-absent households, in comparison with their father-present counterparts. For example, mothers, their spouses or partners, and grandparents are slightly more likely to be employed in white households when a child's father is not present.

In contrast, the very substantial difference in overall adult employment levels between father-present and father-absent minority households reflects in a major way both differences in household structure as well as a much lower level of employment by many of their major household actors. In black households, the absence of a father is associated with much lower levels of employment by the child's mother (46 percent compared with 64 percent), grandparent(s) (57 percent compared with 72 percent) and other blood relatives, primarily aunts or uncles of the child, (60 percent compared with 68 percent). In Hispanic households, the major reason for the component of the decline due to household category-specific employment rates is the lower levels of employment in father-absent families by the child's mother (38 percent compared with 58 percent) and other blood relatives of the child. In summary, it may be concluded that virtually all of the differences between white and minority father-present and father-absent household employment rates reflect the lesser tendency of specific minority father-absent household members to be employed; the impact of changes in household structure per se on employment levels is virtually identical across the races.

Table 13 Difference in Annual (Adult) Employment Attachment Between Father Present and Father Absent Households Which Can Be Attributed to Changes in (1) Household Structure and (2) Household Category-Specific Employment Rates

	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Differences in percentage employed (father absent-father present)	-17.2	-6.9	-23.6	-18.9
Due to household structure difference	-14.3	-10.9	-13.1	-10.4
Due to employment rate difference	-2.9	+4.0	-10.5	-8.5

Maternal Employment. We now focus more specifically on the mother's employment, how it is related to different family arrangements, and how interpreting the significance of maternal employment is extremely sensitive to the household perspective one is utilizing.[6] Viewing maternal employment from the perspective of a child is considerably different from the standard ways in which one considers female employment--from the women's own perspective, usually in relation to her youngest child. We will utilize the more detailed employment statistics available for the mother for the week preceding the 1984 interview.

Table 14 indicates that, from the perspective of the children (i.e., counting a mother one time for each child she has in the household), about 40 percent of children's mothers were employed during the survey week, with white mothers having substantially higher levels of employment than minority mothers. In all cases, children in households which also included at least one sibling (i.e., where the mother has at least two children) were substantially less likely to be employed. For white women, the presence of a grandparent of the child (primarily grandmother) in the home substantially enhanced her employment probability (51 percent compared with an overall 43 percent). However, no similar effect was found for minority women who, if anything, were somewhat less likely to be working if a grandparent was present.

There are major differences between white and minority mothers in how having a child's father present or absent is associated with their own employment. While white mothers in father-absent homes are substantially more likely to have been employed (50 percent compared with 41 percent) than white mothers in father-present homes, a substantial association in the opposite direction appears for minority, particularly black, mothers. Only about 31 percent of the black mothers in father-absent homes are employed, compared with 47 percent of their father-present counterparts. In addition, the presence of grandparents or other adult relatives in households where the child's father is not present apparently has an employment-enhancing effect only in white

Table 14 Mother's Survey Week Employment by Father Presence or Absence Status, Race/Ethnicity, and the Presence or Absence of Selected Other Family Members: The Child's Perspective

	Total	Father Present	Father Absent
Total Race			
All mothers	40.3	40.8	39.3
Spouse present	40.9	40.7	42.7
Child sibling(s) present	32.8	33.7	30.8
Grandparent(s) present	39.8	37.8	40.2
Other blood relatives	36.6	33.6	37.4
White			
All mothers	42.9	40.8	50.3
Spouse present	40.9	40.6	45.2
Child sibling(s) present	34.6	33.1	41.4
Grandparent(s) present	50.9	35.1	57.2
Other blood relative(s)	44.0	31.7	50.7
Black			
All mothers	35.6	46.5	30.8
Spouse present	47.2	49.1	38.2
Child sibling(s) present	31.2	44.2	25.0
Grandparent(s) present	32.8	54.9	30.6
Other blood relative(s)	33.3	44.8	32.2
Hispanic			
All mothers	32.2	34.4	27.8
Spouse present	34.0	34.0	33.7
Child sibling(s) present	24.6	27.7	17.2
Grandparent(s) present	29.4	24.2	31.4
Other blood relative(s)	28.5	28.9	28.2

households, although the effect tends to be modest. In general, the presence of other adult relatives in the black father-absent household (with the exception of a spouse) does not enhance the likelihood of a mother's employment.

Table 15 provides survey week employment statistics generated in the more traditional manner, counting a woman in a family only once. These employment rates are systematically higher--since a woman in a household is counted only once even if she has several children, and women with more than one child are somewhat less likely to be employed than mothers with only one child. If the substantive focus of one's research is on maternal behavior, then this table would be more appropriate for analysis than Table 14. However, if one's focus is on the implications of maternal behavior for the child, then Table 14 would lead to misinterpretations regarding the relevance of some dimensions of maternal employment, in the aggregate, for children's outcomes. From the children's perspectives, the reality of the situation is that their mothers are somewhat less likely to be working than standard maternal employment statistics would suggest.

Tables 16 and 17 present the maternal employment statistics in somewhat greater detail in relationship to children's age, race/ethnicity, and father's presence or absence, comparing once again the maternal employment patterns when considered from the children's as well as the mother's perspective. Overall, a total of about 40 percent of the children had a mother who worked either part or full time at some time during the survey week, (Table 16), but about 45 percent of the mothers reported that they worked during that week (Table 17).

The employment rates in relation to the age of the children illustrate more dramatically how the different ways of assembling the data can provide different perspectives regarding the potential impact of mother's employment on children--when one is focusing on an age group of women who are currently building families at a rapid rate. It may be seen in Table 16, which focuses on mother's employment from the perspective of all their children, that the levels of maternal employment are essentially

Table 15 Mother's Survey Week Employment by Father's Presence or Absence Status, Race/Ethnicity, and the Presence or Absence of Selected Other Family Members: The Mother's Perspective

	Total	Father Present	Father Absent
Total Race			
All mothers	45.2	45.7	44.3
Spouse present	45.7	46.0	43.4
Child sibling present	34.5	35.0	33.6
Grandparent(s) present	43.6	40.2	44.3
Other blood relative(s)	39.2	42.8	39.8
White			
All mothers	47.9	45.9	53.6
Spouse present	45.7	45.9	43.0
Child sibling present	36.2	34.5	42.5
Grandparent(s) present	55.5	36.4	61.6
Other blood relative(s)	47.1	37.1	64.5
Black			
All mothers	38.7	48.4	35.0
Spouse present	51.3	52.6	45.9
Child sibling present	31.8	44.4	27.0
Grandparent(s) present	34.5	55.8	32.7
Other blood relative(s)	34.5	42.0	34.0
Hispanic			
All mothers	39.1	40.6	36.5
Spouse present	40.4	40.4	40.6
Child sibling present	28.1	30.1	24.1
Grandparent(s) present	37.5	32.7	39.0
Other blood relative(s)	35.7	29.5	38.3

Table 16 Mother's Survey Week Employment Status by Race/Ethnicity, Age of Child, and Father Presence/Absence: The Child's Perspective

	Total				Father Present				Father Absent			
	Percent Fulltime	Percent Part time	Percent Not working	Sample Size	Percent Fulltime	Percent Part time	Percent Not working	Sample Size	Percent Fulltime	Percent Part time	Percent Not working	Sample Size
Total	28.9	11.3	59.8	3938	28.5	12.3	59.3	2282	29.8	9.5	60.7	1656
0-2	27.2	11.9	60.8	1828	27.0	13.0	60.0	1247	28.1	8.5	63.4	581
3-5	30.5	11.9	57.6	1337	30.3	12.7	56.9	743	30.8	10.4	58.8	594
6 and over	30.4	8.8	60.8	773	30.1	7.9	62.0	292	30.6	9.6	59.8	481
White	30.8	12.1	57.1	1950	28.1	12.7	59.2	1414	40.4	9.9	49.7	536
0-2	29.3	12.8	57.9	946	27.3	13.3	59.4	774	40.6	9.9	49.5	172
3-5	31.9	12.3	55.8	660	29.2	13.0	57.8	443	39.9	10.4	49.7	217
6 and over	33.4	8.4	58.2	327	29.4	7.8	62.8	183	40.0	9.3	50.7	144
Black	24.9	10.7	64.4	1284	33.4	13.1	53.5	398	21.2	9.7	69.2	886
0-2	21.2	9.9	69.9	510	26.9	13.8	59.3	201	17.5	7.4	75.1	309
3-5	27.3	12.7	60.0	432	39.8	15.4	44.8	141	21.5	11.5	67.0	291
6 and over	27.1	9.9	63.0	327	41.3	6.5	52.2	53	24.1	10.6	65.3	274
Hispanic	24.2	8.0	67.8	747	25.2	9.2	65.6	493	22.3	5.5	72.2	254
0-2	22.7	9.1	68.2	372	23.8	10.0	66.2	272	19.5	6.8	73.8	100
3-5	27.9	6.9	65.2	245	29.0	7.9	63.2	159	25.6	4.8	69.5	86
6 and over	21.6	7.6	70.8	119	21.7	10.7	67.6	56	21.5	5.0	73.6	63

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Mother Survey Week Employment Status by Race/Ethnicity, Age of Youngest Child, and Father's Presence/Absence: The Mother's Perspective

	Total				Father Present				Father Absent			
	Percent Fulltime	Percent Part time	Percent Not working	Sample Size	Percent Fulltime	Percent Part time	Percent Not working	Sample Size	Percent Fulltime	Percent Part time	Percent Not working	Sample Size
	32.4	12.8	54.8	2455	31.1	14.4	54.5	1445	35.1	9.4	55.5	1010
	28.5	12.8	58.8	1579	28.0	14.1	57.9	1066	29.8	8.7	61.5	513
	37.7	14.4	47.9	664	39.5	16.8	43.7	312	35.5	11.6	52.9	352
er	47.9	7.9	44.2	212	43.4	9.6	47.1	67	50.5	7.0	42.6	145
	34.0	13.9	52.1	1261	30.5	15.1	54.4	916	45.6	9.9	44.5	345
	30.0	13.9	56.1	834	28.0	14.5	57.4	676	40.5	10.5	49.0	158
	40.0	15.1	44.9	324	38.3	17.1	44.6	189	43.3	11.2	45.5	135
er	54.2	7.3	38.5	90	42.9	9.6	47.4	41	64.4	5.3	30.3	49
	28.0	10.7	61.3	779	34.9	13.9	51.2	247	24.9	9.2	65.9	532
	23.7	9.2	67.1	432	30.4	12.9	56.8	160	19.7	7.1	73.2	272
	30.6	15.3	54.1	240	41.4	20.7	38.0	68	26.5	13.3	60.2	172
er	39.0	7.2	53.7	95	NA	NA	NA	16	35.7	8.7	55.7	79
	29.8	9.4	60.9	449	29.7	10.8	59.5	300	29.9	6.4	63.7	149
	25.3	10.2	65.4	313	26.0	11.2	62.8	230	22.9	7.4	69.7	83
	41.4	5.7	52.9	100	48.3	6.6	45.1	55	32.5	4.4	63.1	45
er	NA	NA	NA	27	NA	NA	NA	10	NA	NA	NA	17

rcentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.
= Sample size under 40.

invariant with the age of the child. This is because in most cases the older children have younger siblings who essentially determine the level of the mother's employment. This table presents a more realistic picture of maternal employment from the children's perspective.

In contrast, Table 17, which relates maternal employment in the more traditional manner to the age of the mother's youngest child, documents sharp increases in maternal employment as the youngest child ages. Thus, the overall employment rate for mothers whose youngest child is six or over of about 56 percent (48 percent full and 8 percent part-time) portrays a situation which holds for only a small proportion--about 25 percent--of the children age six and above in the sample. Thus, while a full cross-section of children age six and above in the sample has about 40 percent of their mothers working, the percentage rises to about 56 percent when focusing on that unrepresentative subset who are six or older, but with no younger siblings. Essentially, the traditional way of examining employment statistics, which focuses on the mother from the perspective of the youngest child, leads to a major overstatement in quantifying the implications of maternal employment for child outcomes or behaviors.[7]

Regardless of which employment perspectives are considered, it is clear that the differences in the pattern of female employment in relationship to the presence or absence of the child's father are extremely sensitive to the race or ethnicity of the mother. This issue has already been considered from the perspective of all household members earlier in this paper. Regardless of the age of the child, white children in father-absent households are much more likely to have working mothers than comparable children in father-present homes. In sharp contrast, the opposite result appears for black households, with the Hispanic pattern being somewhat erratic but closer to the black pattern. About 50 percent of the white mothers of father-absent children are employed full or part time, compared with about 30 percent for their black or Hispanic counterparts, and, as explained earlier, this pattern is essentially insensitive to the age of the child.

Most of the difference in maternal employment between the two perspectives is in the fulltime component of employment. The differences in the percent of mothers working part-time is modest, indicating that differences in part-time employment patterns between women with one or several children are not consequential.

The policy implications and the causal reasoning behind the racial distinctions is beyond the scope of this paper. It is, however, fair to conclude that to the extent maternal employment enhances a family's economic well-being but perhaps in some respects has detrimental implications for a child's development, this racial/ethnic distinction warrants further examination.

Child Care Utilization. For those mothers who are employed, their ability to access child care, and the nature of the child care arrangement is also sensitive to the race or ethnicity of the mother and the presence or absence of the father in the household.[8] As Table 18 indicates, there are distinct racial and ethnic differences in the tendency of a mother to access childcare, whether it be a formal group arrangement or a more casual use of relatives or friends. These differences are most apparent in those households where the child's father is not present; whereas about half of the youngest children in white father-absent households are utilizing childcare, significantly smaller percentages—about 37 percent of black and 29 percent of Hispanic—children are being cared for in childcare arrangements.

In addition to the overall racial/ethnic distinctions, it may be seen that there are major differences in the type of childcare assistance a mother utilizes.[9] Overall, white mothers are much more likely to report that their husband or partner is watching their youngest child than are minority mothers (24 percent of childcare users compared with ten percent). White children are also more likely to be watched by non-relatives in their own or other homes than are minority children. In contrast, minority children are much more likely to be watched by grandparents or other relatives and slightly more likely to be in formal preschool or daycare arrangements.

Table 18 Type of (Primary) Child Care Use for Youngest Child, by Presence or Absence of Father and Race/Ethnicity

					Father Present				Father Absent			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percent using child care for employment, training, or education	43.6	45.4	41.6	35.4	44.1	43.8	51.0	38.5	42.6	50.7	37.4	29.0
Total users	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Child's father, stepfather, or partner	19.8	24.0	10.0	9.4	26.1	28.7	20.3	10.4	7.1	9.8	3.7	6.6
Grandparent	25.3	21.8	34.4	32.5	23.5	21.5	29.3	33.5	29.1	22.6	37.5	29.7
Other relative	12.7	9.6	21.3	17.3	10.4	8.2	18.8	20.6	17.3	14.0	22.8	8.1
Nonrelative in child's home	4.2	5.0	1.7	4.5	3.8	3.9	2.6	5.0	5.0	8.1	1.1	3.0
Nonrelative in other home	18.8	21.2	11.6	17.4	17.8	19.2	10.3	15.0	21.1	27.3	12.4	23.8
Nursery/professional/group daycare/school	12.2	10.9	15.7	13.9	11.3	10.6	15.8	11.1	14.1	11.8	15.7	21.6
Watches child while working	6.1	7.4	2.6	3.7	6.8	7.9	1.8	4.3	4.1	5.8	3.2	1.9
Other	0.8	0.2	2.7	1.4	0.1	0.0	1.1	0.0	2.3	0.8	3.7	5.4

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

While some of the overall racial/ethnic differences reflect the greater tendency of minority, particularly black, children to be in homes where the father is absent, most of the differences are genuine reflections of racial and ethnic differences in childcare utilization independent of the presence or absence of a child's father. These differences can of course reflect differing cultural orientations towards child raising, ecological factors relating to the ready accessibility of friends or relatives or differences in economic resources. In all likelihood, they are related to all of these factors. For example, focusing on households where a child's father is present, white mothers are most likely to utilize a child's father for childcare assistance, black mothers somewhat less, and Hispanic mothers the least. In contrast, minority mothers are much more likely to use grandparental assistance, partly reflecting the fact, clearly shown in Table 9, that minority households are somewhat more likely than white households to have a grandparent living in the home (of course, they may also be more likely to have a grandmother living in the neighborhood). Minority mothers in households where the child's father is present are also much more likely than white mothers to utilize other relatives for childcare help. This may also partly reflect a greater physical proximity of other relatives in minority environments.

An examination of childcare use patterns in the father absent households also suggests major racial/ethnic differences, but the pattern is somewhat more erratic. White mothers are most likely and black mothers least likely to utilize a spouse for childcare assistance, paralleling the racial/ethnic differences in marriage and remarriage patterns. Blacks in particular, but also Hispanics, are more likely to utilize grandparental assistance, also reflecting the greater tendency of minority families to have a grandparent (primarily grandmother) present when the father of the child is absent.

Black women are also more likely than others to utilize other relatives for assistance. In contrast, Hispanic mothers in father-absent environments are least likely

to use other blood relatives of the child for help. These Hispanic mothers are, however, most likely to utilize formal group arrangements. Finally, white and Hispanic mothers are much more likely to take their children to be supervised by non-relatives in other non-home arrangements but which are not formal daycare.

Poverty Status. From an economic perspective, the most direct test of whether the differences in household situations and the work propensities of various household members between households where the father is present or absent make a difference is whether these factors impact on the ability of the household unit to maintain an acceptable standard of living. The father-absent household is handicapped for a variety of reasons--the much lower probability that a male breadwinner is present, the need for the mother to make acceptable childcare arrangements at reasonable costs if she wants to work, the mother's probable lesser ability to obtain reasonable employment at a livable wage, the somewhat greater proportion of household members who are children, and, for minority families, the significantly lower probability that other adult household members will be working.

It should be noted that the official definition of family poverty status (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1985: Appendix A) would not include a partner as a member of the family or include his income in the family income definition. In order to consider the importance of the partner's contribution to the family, we have altered the poverty definition to incorporate the partner and his income into the family unit. While we would have liked to include the income of other non-relatives in our analysis, this was not possible because the information was not available. This should not cause any major distortion in the discussion, because, as may be noted from many of the tabulations, adult non-wrelatives (excluding a partner) account for only a very small proportion of all household members. In any event, for this section only, the focus of the discussion must of necessity switch to a family (all relatives plus partner) from a household (all residents) concept.

Table 19 contrasts the proportions of children living in poverty using the standard definition of "family" and our alternative definition which considers a partner as a family member and includes his earnings in the family's income. Overall, 33.5 percent of all the children reside in a family which has an income below the poverty threshhold, when the official definition of "family" and poverty status is utilized; this percentage declines slightly to 31.4 percent when the partner is incorporated into the family unit. It may also be noted from Table 19 that children in father-absent families are much more likely to be living in poverty, regardless of the definition of family/poverty utilized. When partners are included, about 16 percent of children in father-present families are living in poverty, compared with 63 percent of children in families where the father is absent.[10] It is important to note that it is the absence of a maternal spouse or to a lesser degree, a maternal partner, more than the absence of a child's father per se which appears to be the relevent consideration. From an economic perspective, children living with parental spouses who are indeed the children's father are more advantaged, children living with parental spouses who are not the children's father are slightly less well off, and children living with parental partners are slightly more disadvantaged than either of the above two groups. The lesser advantage of children who are living with spousal partners undoubtedly reflects a number of factors. Maternal partners are less likely to be employed than maternal spouses (see Table 12). Also, a partner's presence in the home is probably, on average, more transient, and thus may contribute less to the household income on an annual basis. An average partner may also have less of a psychological commitment to the mother and households and thus may be less willing to contribute financially to its support. Finally, the average young partner may be less educated and skilled than the average spouse, earning a lower wage, and thus be in a poorer position to contribute to the household's well-being.

Focusing more specifically on families which include partners, it may be seen that the evidenced well-being of children in those families is heavily contingent on the

Table 19 Percent of Children Living in Family Units Which are in Poverty, by Race/Ethnicity, Father's Presence or Absence, and Maternal Partner Presence or Absence: The Impact of Including and Excluding Partners' Income

	Total		Total		Total		Total	
	Including Partner	Excluding Partner	Including Partner	Excluding Partner	Including Partner	Excluding Partner	Including Partner	Excluding Partner
Total	31.4	33.5 (3751)	21.3	23.0 (1919)	60.4	63.8 (1194)	40.5	42.7 (638)
Spouse present	--	14.8	--	12.5	--	25.8	--	24.8
Partner present	41.2	77.0	35.7	72.1	49.1	87.1	45.4	72.8
Spouse and partner absent	--	72.5	--	63.8	--	78.5	--	76.9
Father present	15.9	17.6 (2205)	13.3	14.2 (1393)	28.0	35.5 (392)	26.8	28.5 (420)
Spouse present	--	14.2	--	12.2	--	23.3	--	24.7
Partner present	44.6	77.3	43.5	73.6	44.3	86.3	48.8	68.4
Father absent	62.6	65.6 (1546)	49.5	54.0 (526)	74.8	76.3 (802)	69.5	72.7 (218)
Spouse present	--	22.3	--	16.9	--	39.1	--	NA
Partner absent	36.5	76.6	27.2	70.4	--	NA	--	NA
Spouse and partner absent	--	72.5	--	63.8	--	78.5	--	76.9

Note: Sample sizes in parentheses.

NA = sample size less than 50.

family/poverty definition utilized: when the partner's earnings are excluded, 77 percent of the children are defined as living in poverty, not very different from the 73 percent for children living with a mother who has neither a partner or spouse. When the partner is included, the percent of children in partner-present families living in poverty declines to 41 percent. The above results highlight the importance of presenting official income and poverty statistics utilizing alternative definitions for this increasingly important subset of families.

While white children clearly are living in more favorable economic circumstances than minority children, even after taking into account whether or not the child's father is present, it should be noted that within the father-present or father-absent subsets, racial/ethnic differences in poverty status are greatly reduced. For example (using the partner-inclusive definition), overall, 21 percent of the white children live in poverty, compared with 60 percent for the black children. However, in father-present households the two statistics are 13 and 28 percent, and in father absent households, 50 and 75 percent. Thus, a substantial proportion of the difference between black and white poverty among children is directly associated with differences in household structure, in particular, the lesser presence of the child's father as well as the lesser tendency of other household members to be employed.

Tables 20 and 21 directly compare the structure of households in and out of poverty as well as differences in household structure jointly associated with father presence or absence and poverty status. (These tables incorporate the official definition of poverty. The results cited are unessentially unchanged if the alternate definition is used as, overall, partners constitute only a small percentage of all household members. Using the alternate definition increases slightly the percent of non-poverty household members who are partners and decreases the percentage of poverty household members who are partners.) Table 20 indicates how one clear manifestation of poverty status is household size, particularly the presence of more children and, for both white and minority families, the greater proportions of household members who are children.

Table 20 Distribution of All Household Members by Race/Ethnicity and Family Poverty Status

	Total Race		White		Black		Hispanic	
	In Poverty	Not in Poverty	In Poverty	Not in Poverty	In Poverty	Not in Poverty	In Poverty	Not in Poverty
Total								
Child	18.9	21.8	21.1	22.1	17.1	21.1	17.8	20.3
Mother of child	18.9	21.8	21.1	22.1	17.1	21.1	17.8	20.3
Spouse of mother	5.7	19.0	9.2	20.1	2.1	12.7	6.7	17.2
Sibling(s) of child	33.6	31.1	34.4	31.1	32.2	31.2	35.5	30.8
Grandparent(s) of child	6.1	2.4	4.1	1.9	7.9	5.4	6.5	2.9
Other blood relative(s) of child								
Less than 18	6.2	1.0	1.7	0.6	10.5	2.4	5.8	2.7
18 and over	5.8	1.3	2.3	0.8	9.4	3.6	4.4	2.1
Non-blood relative(s) of child								
Less than 18	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.6
18 and over	0.6	0.9	0.3	0.6	0.7	1.7	0.8	2.0
Partner of mother	2.6	0.5	3.2	0.4	2.1	0.7	2.5	0.8
Other								
Less than 18	0.7	0.1	0.9	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.8	0.0
18 and over	1.0	0.2	1.6	0.2	0.4	0.1	1.3	0.4
Sample size	8723	10046	2829	6113	4280	2220	1614	1713
Mean household size	5.29	4.59	4.74	4.53	5.84	4.74	5.62	4.92
Mean number of own children of mother	2.77	2.43	2.63	2.41	2.89	2.48	2.99	2.52
Mean other children	0.37	0.05	0.13	0.03	0.65	0.13	0.37	0.16
Mean number of adults (18 and over)	2.15	2.11	1.98	2.09	2.30	2.13	2.26	2.24
Percent of household which is adult	40.6	46.0	41.8	46.1	39.4	44.9	40.2	45.5

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Table 21 Distribution of All Household Members by Race/Ethnicity, Presence or Absence of Father, and Family Poverty Status

	Total Race				White				Black				Hispanic			
	Father Present		Father Absent		Father Present		Father Absent		Father Present		Father Absent		Father Present		Father Absent	
	In Poverty	Not in Poverty	In Poverty	Not in Poverty	In Poverty	Not in Poverty	In Poverty	Not in Poverty	In Poverty	Not in Poverty	In Poverty	Not in Poverty	In Poverty	Not in Poverty	In Poverty	Not in Poverty
Total																
Child	18.8	21.6	19.0	22.7	20.0	21.9	22.2	23.2	17.0	20.5	17.1	21.8	16.7	19.9	18.8	22.8
Mother of child	18.8	21.6	19.0	22.7	20.0	21.9	22.2	23.2	17.0	20.5	17.1	21.8	16.7	19.9	18.8	22.8
Spouse of mother	14.5	21.3	0.9	7.3	16.7	21.6	1.6	9.3	9.0	19.6	0.6	3.8	13.1	19.0	0.6	5.8
Sibling(s) of child	37.9	31.9	31.2	27.2	37.4	31.9	31.4	26.0	38.7	32.5	31.0	29.3	39.1	31.4	32.1	27.1
Grandparent(s) of child	1.5	1.0	8.6	9.2	0.6	0.9	7.5	9.1	3.2	2.1	8.9	9.6	2.4	2.1	10.4	7.8
Other blood relative(s) of child																
Less than 18	1.0	0.6	8.9	2.9	0.2	0.5	3.1	1.8	2.6	1.1	12.2	4.1	2.2	2.1	9.2	6.6
18 and over	1.3	0.5	8.2	4.7	0.3	0.4	4.2	3.4	2.5	0.6	10.8	7.4	3.2	1.7	5.5	4.5
Non-blood relative(s) of child																
Less than 18	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.5	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.0	2.5	0.6	0.0	0.0
18 and over	0.5	0.9	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.7	1.8	0.6	1.5	1.7	2.2	0.1	0.7
Partner of mother	4.3	0.3	1.7	1.2	3.4	0.2	3.0	1.5	7.6	0.8	1.0	0.5	3.5	0.8	1.5	0.8
Other																
Less than 18	0.6	0.0	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.0	1.4	0.9	0.8	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.2	0.0
18 and over	0.8	0.1	1.1	0.8	0.8	0.1	2.3	1.1	0.7	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.9	0.3	1.8	1.2
Sample size	2801	7939	5922	2107	1346	5168	1483	945	699	1311	3581	909	756	1460	858	253
Mean household size	5.31	4.53	5.28	4.41	4.99	4.57	4.50	4.32	5.86	4.87	5.84	4.60	5.99	5.02	5.30	4.39
Mean number of own children of mother	3.01	2.47	2.65	2.20	2.86	2.45	2.41	2.12	3.26	2.58	2.81	2.35	3.34	2.58	2.70	2.19
Mean other children	0.09	0.03	0.53	0.15	0.03	0.02	0.23	0.12	0.21	0.07	0.74	0.19	0.17	0.14	0.55	0.29
Mean number of adults (18 and over)	2.21	2.13	2.10	2.06	2.10	2.10	1.86	2.08	2.39	2.29	2.29	2.06	2.48	2.30	2.05	1.91
Percent of household wht	41.6	46.0	39.8	46.7	42.1	46.0	41.3	48.1	40.8	45.6	39.2	44.8	41.4	45.8	38.7	43.5

From a household perspective, the most overt symptom of poverty is the absence of a male spouse. This is true for all racial/ethnic groups. Table 20 clarifies this factor further by presenting household structures separately for father-present and father-absent family units by whether or not each of these family types are living in poverty. This enables one to remove the effect of father's presence or absence and consider how poverty status is related to household structure independent of the "father effect." First, it may readily be noted from the bottom row of Table 20 that poverty status is most directly associated with the presence of children or conversely, a lower proportion of adults in the household.[11] This lower proportion of adults primarily reflects a greater number of children in poverty households, as there is little difference between poverty and non-poverty households in the number of adults present. Aside from this, poverty status in households where the child's father is present does not appear to relate in any other major way to obvious differences in household structure.

In contrast with the modest differences in household structure between poverty and non-poverty households where a child's father is present, more significant household differences appear where the father is not present. First, children in that environment whose mothers are married (albeit not to the child's father) are much less likely to be living in poverty. Second, poverty children in situations where the father is not present are much more likely to be living in households where other blood relatives, both young and old, are present. This latter situation is primarily a minority family phenomenon, whereas the spousal difference is more prevalent in white families.

CHILDREN WITH ABSENT FATHERS: PATTERNS OF CONTACT WITH THE FATHER

Overall, a substantial proportion of children who have been born to mothers who are now 19 to 27 are living in father-absent homes. This is due to a variety of factors including the youth of many of the mothers when they had their children, their lack of education and employability in comparison with older mothers, and the concomitant low

level of education and job skills by many of the children's fathers. All of these factors are associated with family poverty, as we have demonstrated above. In this section, we describe the pattern of continuing attachment between father and child after the father has left the home. This continuing attachment with the absent parent has been found by at least some researchers to be an important determinant of the child's eventual emotional and intellectual development (Hess and Camara, 1979; Schenenga, 1983). We examine the frequency and length of contact between children and their absent fathers. We also examine how far away the father lives, which of course is associated with the extent of contact. Finally, how this contact may be associated with the tendency of the absent father to contribute financially to the child's support is briefly considered. In this context, variables measuring whether a father lives closer or sees a child more frequently may be proxies for greater physical contact between the mother and ex-spouse as well as a greater paternal psychological commitment to the child; we would expect both of these factors to be associated with a greater paternal financial contribution to the child's upbringing.

Table 22 indicates how frequently (in the past year) children have seen their absent father and how this pattern of visitation varies by the race/ethnicity and age of the child and the mother's current marital status. All of the tabulations referred to in this section exclude cases where the father is known to be deceased. About one in three children have never seen their father during the past year.[12] In contrast, almost 30 percent see their fathers at least once a week. There are major racial/ethnic variations in this regard, as black children are more likely to see their fathers frequently. (This differs from the pattern reported by Furstenberg et al. See note 12.) In particular, black children are much more likely to see their father on a daily basis. As will be shown, this is closely associated with the fact that absent black fathers are the most likely to be living nearby.

Table 22 Frequency of Child's Visits with Father, by Age of Child, Race/Ethnicity, and Mother's Marital Status: Children in Father-Absent Households

	Total Race	White	Black	Hispanic	Mother Never Married	Married, Spouse Present	Separated Widowed/ Divorced
All children	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Daily	9.1	3.1	15.4	6.7	15.8	1.9	4.2
Less than daily but at least weekly	20.4	21.5	18.9	22.2	21.5	8.6	23.5
Less than weekly but at least monthly	14.9	19.3	12.1	6.9	9.4	11.4	22.9
Less than monthly, more than annually	11.5	11.6	11.9	9.6	9.9	9.7	13.8
Annually	12.0	10.3	12.5	17.8	14.0	12.9	9.4
Never	32.2	34.3	29.2	36.8	29.6	55.5	26.2
Sample size	1645	531	875	239	613	219	564
Children 0-2	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Daily	18.7	8.5	29.7	10.8	24.3	7.4	10.9
Less than daily, at least weekly	21.7	19.9	23.1	23.0	22.3	2.5	25.0
Less than weekly, at least monthly	13.5	16.4	11.7	9.4	8.5	10.7	23.3
Less than monthly, more than annually	10.3	10.6	10.8	6.4	10.6	12.7	9.1
Annually	9.6	7.5	8.2	24.6	12.0	14.2	4.2
Never	26.3	37.0	16.4	25.8	22.3	52.5	27.5
Sample size	606	179	326	101	317	41	175
Children 3-5	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Daily	5.4	0.0	11.1	7.1	11.2	1.7	1.2
Less than daily, at least weekly	22.2	24.8	19.5	20.2	23.3	13.1	22.5

Table 22 (continued)

	Total Race	White	Black	Hispanic	Mother Never Married	Married, Spouse Present	Separated Widowed/ Divorced
Less than weekly, at least monthly	16.7	21.5	13.3	5.3	8.6	7.1	27.5
Less than monthly, more than annually	10.6	9.2	11.5	13.9	10.2	5.6	12.8
Annually	13.6	13.2	14.1	13.8	16.1	12.9	11.6
Never	31.6	31.3	30.5	39.8	30.7	59.7	22.3
Sample size	587	217	289	81	194	80	215
Children 6 and over	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Daily	2.0	0.7	3.5	0.0	4.2	0.0	1.5
Less than daily, at least weekly	16.7	18.9	13.6	23.3	17.1	7.5	20.8
Less than weekly, at least monthly	14.6	19.9	11.4	5.1	12.4	14.8	16.8
Less than monthly, at least annually	14.1	15.7	13.4	9.5	7.7	11.7	19.6
Annually	12.8	9.7	15.8	12.2	15.3	12.4	11.5
Never	39.9	35.1	42.4	50.0	43.5	53.6	29.8
Sample size	452	135	260	57	102	90	174

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

It is fair to generalize that the older the children, the less likely they are to see their father, although this pattern reflects primarily the minority visitation pattern: older black and Hispanic patterns are decidely more likely to never see their fathers than young minority children. Indeed, 50 percent of Hispanic children age 6 and over have never seen their father during the past year. For white children, while the pattern of never seeing one's father is erratic in relation to the age of the child, there is clear evidence of decline in the pattern of frequent visitation with age. About 28 percent of father-absent white children under the age of three see their father at least weekly, compared with about 20 percent for children age 6 and above.

Perhaps the single most important predictor of a child not seeing his absent father is the mother's current marital status, as over half of children living with mothers who have remarried never see their father, compared with between 25 and 30 percent of children living with never-married, separated or divorced mothers. A similar pattern was reported for older children by Furstenberg et al. (1983). The reasons for this differential cannot be directly explained by these data, but several interpretations are suggested. First, the average remarried woman may have been apart from the child's father for a somewhat longer period of time, a factor probably associated with a greater psychological and physical distance between father and child. Indeed, as Table 28 shows, fathers of children who are living with remarried mothers typically live much further away from their children than fathers of children whose mothers are in other marital statuses. Also, the remarriage event may create an emotional environment where it is more difficult for the father and mother to communicate regarding the children's visitation. The child's visitations with the absent father may serve as a constant reminder of a marital history which the mother and her spouse may prefer not to dwell on.

Table 23 highlights the fact that only very small percentages of the children visit their fathers for extended time periods, although the average length of visit does tend to increase slightly for older children and be somewhat higher for minority, particularly

Table 23 Length of Child's Visits with Father by Age of Child, Race/Ethnicity and Mother's Marital Status: Children in Father-Absent Households

	Total Race	White	Black	Hispanic	Mother Never Married	Married, Spouse Present	Separated Widowed/ Divorced
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
A day or less	75.8	75.4	75.0	82.4	80.9	58.4	73.8
More than a day to one week	21.2	22.1	21.9	11.4	16.7	32.2	23.8
Greater than a week	3.1	2.5	3.1	6.2	2.4	9.4	2.4
Sample size	1129	348	627	154	613	93	415
Children 0-2	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
A day or less	81.2	85.8	77.3	84.0	82.5	79.5	78.9
More than a day to one week	16.5	14.1	19.9	7.9	15.2	20.5	18.2
Greater than a week	2.3	0.1	2.8	8.1	2.3	0.0	2.9
Sample size	466	114	273	79	317	21	128
Children 3-5	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
A day or less	71.8	70.2	72.8	76.0	78.6	46.8	70.2
More than a day to one week	25.4	29.1	22.4	19.1	17.7	48.6	28.1
Greater than a week	2.8	0.7	4.8	4.9	3.7	4.6	1.7
Sample size	392	144	201	47	194	33	164
Children 6 and over	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
A day or less	73.3	70.6	74.1	87.4	80.2	57.4	73.8
More than a day to one week	22.0	21.4	24.3	8.9	18.9	27.0	23.2
Greater than a week	4.7	7.9	1.6	3.7	0.9	15.6	3.0
Sample size	271	90	153	28	102	39	123

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Distributions exclude deceased fathers.

Hispanic, children. The implications of this finding warrant more careful investigation in subsequent research, as there is some evidence that the quality of visitation with an absent father is more closely associated with the duration than with the frequency of visitations (e.g., Hess and Camara, 1979). Also, paralleling the lower frequency of visitation between fathers and children of remarried mothers, these children, particularly the oldest ones, are somewhat more likely to visit their fathers for longer periods of time. About 16 percent of older children of remarried mothers visit their father for more than a week, when they visit them, compared with much smaller percentages for all other categories of children. If the duration is indeed more important than the frequency of visit, this suggests that the lower frequency but greater duration of visit by older children may represent a preferable form of contact.

Tables 24 and 25 synthesize the relationship between frequency and length of children's visits. It may be seen that children who visit their father less frequently tend to visit them for longer periods of time. This pattern is particularly pronounced in families where the mother is remarried and for Hispanic and white children. However, the dominant finding of these tables is that most children who rarely see their father, still only see them for a short period; overall, two-thirds of children who see their father only once a year, only see them for a day or less. The basic point is that the vast majority of visits with absent fathers tend to be of short duration. Compensations of greater visit length for lower frequency of visit are the exception, not the rule. The traditional image of children visiting an absent father infrequently but then staying with him for a substantial length of time is clearly a myth, at least for children born to relatively younger mothers.

We summarize the patterning of fathers' visits in Table 26 and 27 by profiling the father-absent children jointly in terms of length and frequency of visits including, of course, those children who never (at least in the last 12 months) have visited with their father. If one considers a visitation pattern of at least once a month, regardless of the

length of the visit or visits of less than once a month where the average visit lasts at least two or more days, as representing meaningful contact between father and child, only slightly more than half of all children--about 54 percent--have significant contact with their father. This admittedly arbitrary and possibly overly optimistic definition of significant contact, of course, varies considerably by race/ethnicity, the marital status of the child's mother, and the age of the child. Only 36 percent of father-absent children whose mothers have remarried have significant contact with their fathers compared with much larger percentages for children who have mothers in other marital status. In addition, the likelihood of significant contact declines sharply for minority but not white children with the age of the child. This racial/ethnic variability by age of child parallels the data presented below on the distance between children and absent fathers; as black and Hispanic children in father-absent families grow older, the likelihood of the father living further away increases. This is not as true, however, for white families, where the absent father of older children does not live further away than fathers of younger children. This undoubtedly partly reflects the fact that the average white couple remains together longer before they separate or divorce and thus the absent father has had less time to distance himself, for either personal or employment reasons, from his old environment.[13]

The extent to which a father's absence is detrimental to the development of a child is of course an extraordinarily complex question. Its answer rests on a large number of factors including (but obviously not limited to) the quality of the home environment while the father was present in comparison with when he was absent, the presence and characteristics of new substitute fathers--new spouses or partners in the home, the economic viability of the household with and without the father, and perhaps most importantly, the psychological attributes of the mother. To the extent that one might generalize (and the available evidence seems to support this notion) that on average,

Table 24 The Relationship between Frequency and Length of Children's Visits with Father, by Mother's Marital Status: Children in Father-Absent Households

	Total Children				Mother Never Married				Mother Married, Spouse Present				Mother Separated/Widowed/Divorced			
	Length of Visit				Length of Visit				Length of Visit				Length of Visit			
	Less than a day	A day	More than a day- a week	More than a week	Less than a day	A day	More than a day- a week	More than a week	Less than a day	A day	More than a day- a week	More than a week	Less than a day	A day	More than a day- a week	More than a week
Frequency of visit																
Daily	76.5	23.5	0.0	0.0	79.0	21.0	0.0	0.0	42.2	57.8	0.0	0.0	71.6	28.4	0.0	0.0
Less than daily, at least weekly	62.5	15.5	22.0	0.0	63.9	12.3	23.8	0.0	21.0	31.1	47.9	0.0	66.1	16.9	17.0	0.0
Less than weekly, at least monthly	55.0	18.6	26.0	0.4	65.9	9.7	23.2	1.2	24.8	26.3	48.9	0.0	55.7	21.3	23.0	0.0
Less than monthly, more than annually	59.6	12.1	24.5	3.8	69.7	11.3	15.2	3.8	67.7	16.3	15.7	0.3	47.1	12.0	35.9	5.0
Annually	55.2	11.7	20.8	12.3	63.2	13.6	11.7	11.5	33.7	8.7	22.8	34.8	52.0	9.7	29.5	8.8

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Distribution excludes deceased fathers.

Table 25 The Relationship between Frequency and Length of Child's Visits with Father, by Race/Ethnicity: Children Living in Father-Absent Households

	White				Black				Hispanic			
	Length of Visit				Length of Visit				Length of Visit			
	Less than a day	A day	More than a day-a week	More than a week	Less than a day	A day	More than a day-a week	More than a week	Less than a day	A day	More than a day-a week	More than a week
Frequency of visit												
Daily	87.7	12.3	0.0	0.0	73.8	26.2	0.0	0.0	81.7	18.3	0.0	0.0
Less than daily, but at least weekly	63.6	18.3	18.1	0.0	60.5	8.4	31.1	0.0	65.3	32.7	2.0	0.0
Less than weekly, but at least monthly	44.0	26.2	29.8	0.0	71.8	6.4	21.8	0.0	63.3	17.5	11.0	8.2
Less than monthly, more than annually	64.9	13.9	21.0	0.2	54.9	11.2	26.1	7.8	57.4	6.5	36.1	0.0
Annually	57.0	4.9	24.1	14.0	55.2	15.0	20.8	9.0	49.6	19.4	11.4	19.6

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Distributions exclude deceased fathers.

Table 26 Patterning of Visits between Children and Absent Father, by Race/Ethnicity, Marital Status, or Age of Child, Length and Frequency of Visits

	Mother's Marital Status				Mother's Race			Age of Child		
	Total	Never Married	Married, Husband Present	Separated/ Divorced	White	Black	Hispanic	0-2	3-5	6 and over
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Visit more often than weekly for a day or less	18.5	27.5	6.0	12.0	12.1	23.3	16.7	28.2	15.9	7.0
Visit 1-4 times a month for a day or less	18.6	11.9	8.4	30.1	22.2	13.3	17.3	16.1	18.8	18.2
Visit less than monthly for a day or less	16.9	19.2	15.5	14.4	15.3	16.6	18.0	[illegible]	14.4	19.8
Visit more often than monthly for 2 or more days	3.3	4.3	1.5	2.7	1.7	4.9	0.9	3.5	3.9	1.8
Visit 1-4 times a month for 2 or more days	6.4	4.2	10.0	7.8	8.2	4.9	1.4	5.7	6.1	6.4
Visit less than monthly for 2 or more days	7.5	5.2	9.8	9.5	6.2	7.7	8.8	4.5	9.3	7.9
Visit less than monthly for greater than a month	0.9	0.7	4.8	0.1	1.1	0.6	1.4	0.1	0.8	2.0
Never visits	28.9	27.6	48.7	23.6	34.3	29.2	36.8	26.3	31.6	39.9
Percent visiting at least monthly or else less than monthly for an average visit of 2 or more days	54.3	53.2	35.8	62.0	50.4	54.2	45.2	58.2	54.0	41.3
Sample size	1562	828	191	543	531	875	239	606	587	452

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Distributions exclude deceased fathers.

Table 27 Patterning of Visits between Children and Absent Father, by Age of Child and Race/Ethnicity

	Age less than 3			Age 3-5			Age 6 and over		
	White	Black	Hispanic	White	Black	Hispanic	White	Black	Hispanic
Total									
Visit more often than weekly for a day or less	19.4	38.5	40.8	12.3	19.9	16.1	3.2	9.3	14.7
Visit 1-4 times a month for a day or less	17.8	13.2	22.0	23.2	14.7	14.3	26.0	12.0	13.7
Visit less than monthly for a day or less	16.9	12.8	21.7	12.6	16.2	15.3	16.8	21.3	15.3
Visit more often than weekly for 2 or more days	0.2	7.1	1.2	3.5	4.8	1.4	1.2	2.6	0.0
Visit 1-4 times a month for 2 or more days	7.4	5.5	1.4	8.2	4.5	1.7	9.1	4.8	1.1
Visit less than monthly for 2 or more days	1.3	6.4	9.3	8.9	9.4	11.4	8.7	7.6	5.2
Visit less than monthly for greater than a month	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.9	2.9	3.5	0.6	1.9
Never visits	37.0	16.4	25.8	31.3	30.5	39.8	35.1	42.4	50.0
Percent visiting at least monthly or else less than monthly for an average visit of 2 or more days	46.1	70.8	72.5	56.1	53.3	44.9	48.1	46.3	34.7
Sample size	179	326	101	217	289	81	135	260	57

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Distributions exclude deceased fathers.

regular contact between father and child has perhaps some negative consequences for a child's development, it would appear that a substantial proportion of all the children born to this cohort of mothers suffer some disadvantage.

The importance of the distance factor, and how the distance that the child lives from the father is linked with the frequency of visits, may be noted in Tables 28 and 29. About 15 percent of father-absent children live less than a mile from their father, with this pattern being more prevalent for minority children and children whose mother is not remarried. At the other extreme, Hispanic children are much more likely to live a great distance from their father, with 40 percent living at least 100 miles apart. This may be related to the fact that a substantial proportion of the Hispanic children are of Mexican-American origin and may have fathers who frequently are living in Mexico or are itinerant farm workers following seasonal growing patterns, geographically far afield, in their pursuit of work.

Also, paralleling the frequency of visitation statistics highlighted earlier, older, particularly minority, children, are more likely to live further from their fathers than their younger counterparts. As may be seen in Table 29, the association between distance and frequency is of major significance. Clearly, the frequency of visitation declines precipitously as the distance between father and child increases. At one extreme, about two-thirds of children living within a mile of their father see their father at least weekly. For distances of one to ten miles, the likelihood of daily visits declines sharply, but the probability of weekly visits increases. For distances of ten to 100 miles, the modal visitation pattern is (with the exception of the Hispanic group), monthly, and for distances exceeding 100 miles, the vast majority of children either never see their father or see him rarely, typically on an annual basis. While the motivational process behind father-child visitation patterns is undoubtedly complex, it does appear that physical distance by itself is an important impediment to paternal contact.

Table 28 Distance (Miles) of Father's Residence from Child's Residence by Age of Child, Race/Ethnicity, and Mother's Marital Status: Children in Father-Absent Households

	Total Race	White	Black	Hispanic	Mother Never Married	Mother Married, Spouse Present	Mother Separated/ Divorced
All children	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Within a mile	15.3	10.8	19.4	16.0	19.2	4.2	14.2
1-10 miles	32.6	33.3	34.1	21.1	36.8	20.6	31.7
11-100 miles	23.6	27.3	20.3	22.3	19.9	33.6	24.6
More than 100 miles	28.6	28.6	26.2	40.7	24.1	41.6	29.5
Sample size	1575	505	844	226	831	191	545
Children 0-2	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Within a mile	18.9	12.6	25.9	12.9	21.5	3.3	17.6
1-10 miles	35.2	38.3	34.9	23.7	39.0	23.0	30.8
11-100 miles	21.3	21.9	19.5	27.3	21.1	29.0	20.0
More than 100 miles	24.6	27.3	19.6	36.2	18.4	44.7	31.6
Sample size	591	171	322	98	381	38	172
Children 3-5	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Within a mile	13.5	9.7	17.6	13.2	19.8	3.9	10.6
1-10 miles	31.8	28.7	35.9	27.8	37.1	19.9	30.2
11-100 miles	24.0	30.9	18.0	15.6	15.8	28.0	30.5
More than 100 miles	30.7	30.7	28.6	43.4	27.3	48.2	28.7
Sample size	569	210	280	79	284	73	211
Children 6 and over	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Within a mile	12.7	10.0	13.2	25.0	13.2	4.7	15.5
1-10 miles	30.2	33.3	31.2	7.9	31.2	20.2	34.5
11-100 miles	26.0	27.3	23.6	22.4	23.1	39.2	21.6
More than 100 miles	31.1	28.6	32.0	44.7	32.4	36.0	28.4
Sample size	415	124	242	49	166	80	545

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Distributions exclude deceased fathers.

Other evidence consistent with the notion that frequency of visitation or distance between father and child have more than just emotional significance is suggested by the results in Table 30, which link together the two measures with one economic dimension, the percent of the mothers of the father-absent children who receive child support. Frequency of visits in this context represents not only a father's psychological commitment to a child but perhaps, in addition, more possibilities for a mother to directly approach the child's father for financial assistance. Conversely, low frequency of visits may reflect a conscious avoidance of such a meeting by an ex-husband.

Distance, in an absolute sense, is also obviously important in this regard. It should also be kept in mind that greater distance implies a greater likelihood of the ex-spouse living in a different state, with all its associated legal complications. In addition, women whose ex-spouse lives further away are probably less likely to be able to locate the child's father.

Overall, about one in four children has a father who is providing child support. However, fathers who frequently visit with their children are well above average in their likelihood of contributing, whereas fathers who visit less, particularly those who never visit, are less likely to contribute. Undoubtedly many of the never visiting fathers cannot be located.

Distance between father and child has a similar effect; fathers living nearby are significantly more likely to contribute child support than fathers who are more distant. As conjectured earlier, it may be that fathers who live further away have on average been separated from the mother for a longer period of time and thus feel a lesser commitment to contribute to the child's upbringing--particularly if the mother has remarried. Both of these results relating child support to frequency of visits and distance between father and child parallel similar findings reported by Furstenberg et al. (1983).

by Race/Ethnicity: Children in Father-Absent Households

Distance from father's home	Frequency of Father's Visits							Sample Size
	Total	Daily	Less than daily but at least weekly	Less than weekly but at least monthly	Less than monthly but more than annually	Annually	Never	
Total	100.0	9.7	21.5	15.3	12.2	12.5	28.9	1570
Less than a mile	100.0	32.1	34.2	13.2	6.0	5.3	9.4	250
1-10 miles	100.0	11.0	37.2	17.8	14.7	5.9	13.5	492
11-100 miles	100.0	3.6	15.3	21.8	15.0	12.0	32.3	344
More than 100 miles	100.0	1.2	1.8	8.2	10.3	24.2	54.3	484
White	100.0	3.3	22.8	19.8	12.5	11.0	30.5	503
Less than a mile	100.0	18.0	37.1	27.6	3.4	0.0	13.9	51
1-10 miles	100.0	3.0	44.4	21.4	15.3	4.3	11.8	151
11-100 miles	100.0	1.5	13.1	24.2	18.7	10.4	32.0	132
More than 100 miles	100.0	0.0	1.5	10.9	6.8	23.5	57.4	169
Black	100.0	16.2	19.9	12.5	12.4	12.7	26.5	841
Less than a mile	100.0	41.6	30.2	7.5	5.8	7.6	7.3	167
1-10 miles	100.0	18.1	29.3	16.0	14.0	6.4	16.3	285
11-100 miles	100.0	6.0	16.2	19.5	13.3	12.5	32.6	162
More than 100 miles	100.0	2.9	2.7	6.0	14.3	24.3	49.4	227
Hispanic	100.0	7.1	23.7	7.4	9.5	19.0	33.4	226
Less than a mile	100.0	19.4	49.5	0.0	16.0	8.3	6.9	32
1-10 miles	100.0	13.6	48.6	4.8	15.0	14.6	3.4	56
11-100 miles	100.0	5.1	24.9	18.2	0.0	19.8	31.9	50
More than 100 miles	100.0	0.0	0.0	5.7	9.2	25.0	60.0	88

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Distributions exclude deceased fathers.

A NOTE ON CHILDREN LIVING WITH FATHERS BUT NOT WITH MOTHERS

For a number of data quality and sample size-related reasons, this study has focused on the 95 percent of children who live with their mother. Reflecting various legal and social changes in our society, it is likely that in the years ahead the mirror-image group of children living with fathers but not with mothers will increase substantially. Table 31 includes a very brief summary of a few selected characteristics of children who are living only with their father. Only a small percent have mothers who have remarried. On the average, the mother's residence tends to be somewhat further away than is the father's residence for those children who lived only with their mother. About one-third never see their mother— ually identical to the one-third of those living with mothers who never see their fathers. If they visit their mothers, the visits tend to be short, also similar to their counterparts living with mothers. On the basis of these limited number of characteristics, it would appear that visitation patterns of young children living with mothers and fathers are quite similar.

Table 30 Relationship between Child Support Receipt, Frequency of Child's Contact with Absent Father and Distance from Father's Residence

	Percent receiving child support			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Total	25.3	29.8	23.3	13.2
Frequency of father visit				
Weekly or greater	36.3	46.8	31.5	19.8
1-4 times a month	36.4	43.2	28.3	11.7
Less than once a month	23.7	26.1	22.7	18.9
Never[1]	11.4	12.5	12.0	3.9
Distance to father's residence				
10 miles or less	30.3	38.2	25.8	16.9
11-100 miles	27.4	36.9	18.8	9.8
Greater than 100 miles	20.1	17.2	25.7	11.9

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Distributions exclude deceased fathers.

Table 31 Children Living with Fathers but not with Mothers: A Summary Profile

	Total	White	Black
Marital status of mother			
Percent never married	31.0	22.3	57.9
Percent married, spouse present	28.1	31.5	17.4
Percent divorced/separated	40.9	46.6	24.7
Sample size	183	110	46
Distribution by race	100.0		
White	70.5		
Black	22.0		
Hispanic	7.5		
Distance from mother's residence	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than a mile	8.0	6.4	11.5
1-10 miles	28.3	24.3	36.3
11-100 miles	22.6	20.0	28.9
More than 100 miles	41.1	49.3	23.3
Sample size	170	104	46
Frequency of visit with mother	100.0	100.0	100.0
More than weekly	20.5	12.8	45.8
Weekly	7.0	4.8	13.3
Monthly but less than weekly	12.5	13.3	6.5
Less than monthly/more than annually	20.7	24.7	10.6
Annually	8.1	4.3	15.7
Never	31.2	40.1	8.0
Sample size	183	116	46
Length of visit	100.0	100.0	100.0
A day or less	62.0	57.3	69.7
2 days to a week	33.2	40.9	21.4
More than a week	4.8	1.8	8.9
Sample size	126	69	41
Age of child	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-2	21.0	23.8	17.2
3-5 37.9	42.0	25.0	
6 and over	41.1	34.2	57.9
Sample size	183	116	46

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Notes

[1]Some recent exceptions are Hernandez and Myers (1985), Furstenberg et al. (1983), Glick (1979), and U.S. Bureau of the Census (1985). Hernandez and Myers use 1980 Census statistics to profile some household structure dimensions for children under 15 years of age in 1980. Furstenberg et al. use data from the 1981 follow-up of the 1976-1977 National Survey of Children to provide more comprehensive information about the living arrangements of adolescent children than any other available survey. Glick uses CPS data from the 1960s and 1970s to examine general trends in the living arrangements of children. Also, recent CPS reports on marital status and living arrangements present tabulations on the nature of family arrangements and some family characteristics for children under the age of 18 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1985).

[2]As of 1984, the overall sample of women, white women, Hispanic women, and black women had born an average of .60, .51, .87 and .96 children, respectively. Current Population Statistics for women 18 to 24 in 1983 suggest that these groups of women expect to have about 2.07, 2.10, 2.17 and 1.90 children, respectively (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983).

[3]The sample could have been augmented by including information from the counterpart interviews with men in 1984. However, the female perspective was chosen because a substantial proportion of the fathers in the sample are no longer living with their children and, in some instances, never lived with their children. Thus, the quality of the available information for the child would be much poorer. In addition, the depth of information available about these children's mothers would be much more limited.

[4]We have no separate racial or ethnic identification for each child. The identification is based on the self-defined identity of the mother.

[5]In this analysis, category-specific employment rates for the father-absent household members are applied to the father-present household structure, to indicate what the overall father-absent employment rate would be if those households had the father-present household structure. The difference between this derived rate and the father-present rate is essentially the number of employment percentage points which can be attributed to changes in household structure. The residual is the number of points attributed to changes in rates. Needless to say, all analyses of this type imply specific assumptions about cross-sectional comparisons being appropriate proxies for longitudinal change.

[6]It should be noted that regardless of the perspective utilized, the survey week employment levels are substantially lower than the over the year statistics for the mothers highlighted in Table 12 because they refer to employment during a much shorter time period—a week, rather than a year. Indeed, 40 percent of the children have a mother who worked during the survey week (Table 16) compared with 57 percent who had a mother who worked sometime during the year (Table 12).

[7]It should be noted that in recent years the Bureau of Labor Statistics has been enhancing the presentation of other female employment statistics to some extent by cross-classifying some tabulations by age and number of children. This permits a more meaningful interpretation of the employment statistics from children's perspective.

[8]Actually, the table includes the proportions of mothers utilizing or not utilizing childcare for employment, education, and training. The vast majority of the mothers are utilizing childcare in order to work.

[9]Whether there are cultural differences in the tendency of white, black, and Hispanic mothers to report spouses' assistance in childcare cannot be resolved with these data.

[10]The observant reader will note that this overall 33 percent is well above the 15 percent statistic for all individuals in the United States in 1983, and even the 23 percent for all individuals below the age of 15 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1985: Table 11). It should be recalled at this point that our sample of children is representative of children who have been born to women who are now (in 1984) 19 to 27. As we have documented, this group is over-represented by young childbearers, minorities, and mothers heading their own household--all categories of individuals who are prone to be in poverty.

[11]The author acknowledges that there is some inherent circularity in this discussion, as a major component of the poverty definition is the number of family members of which, of course, children are major contributors.

[12]The only useful statistics for comparison with the NLSY data are those presented by Furstenberg et al. (1983) using the 1981 follow-up of the 1976-1977 National Children's Survey. The children in that survey were older than the children reported on here and thus, on average, had been separated from their father for a longer period of time. They also more accurately represented a cross-section of all American father-absent youth with a smaller proportion being poor, minority, or having been born to young mothers. These major sample differences are undoubtedly the primary reason for many of the differences between the NLSY and the Children survey statistics. Furstenberg et al. reported significantly lower levels of visitation between children and absent parents, and a great divergence in patterns of visitation between absent fathers and mothers. Also, Furstenberg et al. found far less visitation with absent black fathers, undoubtedly reflecting the more recent absence of the black fathers in the NLSY.

[13]Supplementary analysis of differences in visitation patterns between fathers and boy and girl children did not disclose any major gender variations, although there is a modest albeit statistically significant tendency for fathers to be more likely to visit daughters than sons. This pattern was most pronounced with regard to the youngest (under 3) children and among blacks. The modest patterns reflected primarily differences in the "never visit" statistic. To the extent that available evidence suggests a greater impact of father absence for boys than for girls, this variation may have some minor implications for gender differences in the social-psychological development of children (e.g., Hess and Camara, 1975; Dornbusch et al., 1985).

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