

Kelly, 2002). Generally, she had to find work outside the home because of the reduction in the father's economic contribution to her and the children. In addition, she had to find someone to care for the children. The father, in turn, had to assume the domestic duties associated with his separate household or else hire someone to clean, cook, shop, and do laundry. If the mother was employed outside the home before the divorce, the father may have shared domestic responsibilities with her; so after the divorce, his chores became hers.

Emotional Support

The isolation of the nuclear family from relatives compounds the dilemma of the burdens thrust upon the divorced family—relatives cannot be called upon for help with child care, household duties, or emotional support. Because emotional support is one of the functions of the family, and divorce removes one adult from the context, the remaining adult no longer has someone with whom to share the burdens and joys of child rearing. Neither is there someone with whom to share the daily decision-making and to provide needed psychological support.

Effects of Divorce on Children

The National Center for Health Statistics stopped publishing numbers of divorce and remarriage in 2000 because some states no longer count them. However, based on past data, almost one out of two marriages ends in divorce. Most divorces occur within the first ten years for both first marriages and first remarriages. Children experience a deep sense of loss, develop divided loyalties, and often feel helpless against forces beyond their control. In summarizing the last three decades of research on the effects of divorce, Hetherington and Kelly (2002) report that although children of divorced parents, as a group, have more adjustment problems than do children of never-divorced parents, the divorce per se is not necessarily the major cause of these problems; rather, the negative effects of conflict in troubled marriages can be observed in children years before the divorce takes place. Ahrons (2007) found similar results interviewing 173 grown children 20 years after the divorce.

Parental divorce involves a series of stressful interactions between children and their environment as the family restructures. However, not all children react to divorce in the same way (Lansford, 2009). Children's reactions depend on the various personalities involved, their coping skills, and the parents' relations with their children, as well as with each other (Ahrons, 2007; Cowan, Powell, & Cowan, 1998). Reactions also depend on such factors as children's age and gender, how much family disharmony existed before the divorce, and how available other people are to the parents for emotional support and to the children for role models (Kelly & Emery, 2003; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2002). Studies by Hetherington (1988, 1989, 1993) show that during and after parental divorce, children often exhibit marked changes in behavior, such as acting out, particularly in school. An analysis of academic achievement of high school students showed that those from divorced families had significantly lower achievement levels than those from married families (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).

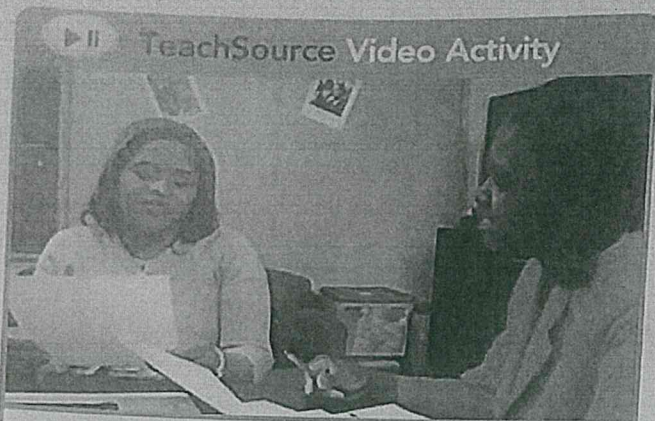
Child's Age and Divorce Effects

Preschool-age children's self-concept was found to be affected by divorce (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1996; Wallerstein, Lewis, & Blakeslee, 2001). In particular, the child's views of the dependability and predictability of relationships were disrupted. Some children blamed themselves for the breakup. For example, one 5-year-old child said, "If only I didn't whine like Daddy said, he wouldn't have left me." Even a year later, in a follow-up study, almost half the children in the sample still displayed heightened anxiety and aggression. These authors also found that school-age children responded to divorce with sadness, fear, feelings of deprivation, and some anger (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1996; Wallerstein, Lewis, & Blakeslee, 2001). They, like the preschool children, were still struggling after a year with the changes in their lives. School-age children had difficulty focusing their attention on school-related tasks.



This girl waves goodbye to spend time

Denise Heger/Catchlight Visuals



Watch the video entitled *Communicating with Families: Best Practices in an Early Childhood Setting*. The cooperation between the parents seems idealistic.

1. Based on your own or friends' experiences, how would you describe the reality of divorce for kids?
2. What are some events, such as a move, that would impact the success of coparenting?

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In various studies (Amato, 2000; Amato, 2010; Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992; Lansford, 2009), young children of divorce were found to be more dependent, aggressive, whiny, demanding, unaffectionate, and disobedient than children from married families. They feared abandonment, loss of love, and bodily harm. The behavior and fears expressed were due, in part, to the parents' preoccupation with their own needs, as well as to the ensuing role conflicts. When compared to parents of married families, divorced parents of preschoolers were less consistent in their discipline and less nurturant. Also, communication was not as effective, and parents made fewer demands for mature behavior from their children.

Adolescents, unlike younger children, feel little sense of blame for the separation of their parents, but they feel resentment. They are often pawns in each parent's bid for loyalty: "She tells me terrible things about my dad; when I'm with him, he tells me terrible things about her." They are also still burdened by painful memories of the divorce 25 years later (Wallerstein, Lewis, & Blakeslee, 2001) and especially if one or both parents remarried (Ahrns, 2007).

Child's Gender and Divorce Effects

Gender influences the impact of divorce, with research showing that boys are harder hit. Two years after the divorce, many boys have trouble concentrating, do poorly on intelligence tests, and have difficulty with math. Also, they interact aggressively with their mothers, their teachers, and boys their own age. Monitoring of boys was lower in divorced, non-remarried households, and the boys engaged in more antisocial behavior (Hetherington, 1993; Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992; Amato, 2010). Girls tend to cry and whine to vent their sadness—and this gets them support. Although preadolescent girls seem to adjust to the divorce within two to three years, evidence has accumulated showing problems related to feminine gender-role development emerging at adolescence. Problems include difficult heterosexual relationships, precocious sexual activity, and confrontational exchanges with the mother (Ellis et al., 2003; Hetherington, 1993; Mustonen, Huure, Kiviruusu, Haukkala, & Aro, 2011).

Children from a divorced family lack the live-in gender-role model of one parent, usually the father, who resides separately. As children grow, each parent interprets society to them. According to Lamb (2004), the father's role in the socialization of children is very important in that he not only models and teaches gender roles, he also models and teaches other values and morals. Opposite-sex role models for children, however, are available in the form of relatives, teachers, coaches, or community service personnel.

Child's Emotional Support and Divorce Effects

Although divorce is upsetting to everyone involved, it is probably worse for a child to live in an embattled household. For parents, divorce is a very stressful time, and feelings of depression, loss of self-esteem, and helplessness interfere with parenting abilities. Parents must find support outside the family to bolster their confidence in themselves and their ability to parent. They must tell the child that even though they are divorcing each other, they are not divorcing the child. Relatives, teachers, friends, and community services are resources for support and can mediate the effects of the divorce on the child (Mustonen et al., 2011).

Child's Marriage Role Models and Divorce Effects

A serious long-range effect of divorce is the removal of marriage role models. Unrealistic expectations of future mates occur. Children may grow up idealizing the absent parent.

Ideals are wishes for perfection; they are untempered by reality. For example, a child growing up in a two-parent home may experience such things as parents' disagreements and how they are (or are not) worked out, time demands on parents from sources outside the family, and physical affection from both parents. The child growing up in a single-parent home may fantasize situations and relationships regarding the missing parent; reality inevitably brings disappointment.

3-3b Child Custody Arrangements

Children involved in custody battles are the most torn by divorce (Kelly, 2000). However, a large longitudinal study (Pruett, Williams, Insabella, & Little, 2003) showed that child outcomes from parent conflict were mediated by paternal involvement, the parent-child relationship, and attorney involvement. To avoid a win-or-lose situation regarding custody, some judges mandate joint custody, sharing responsibility for children while others rule based on the child's "best interests." Factors included in "best interests" are parental capacity to provide adequate care, sibling and other family relationships, and the child's wishes (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013).

How do custody arrangements affect the child?

Single-Parent Custody

In the United States, the percentage of children living with a single parent is about 28 percent. About six times as many children live with mothers as compared to fathers (FIFCFS, 2013).

Single parenthood can occur through death, desertion, divorce, births outside marriage (including via various reproductive technologies), and adoption without marriage. Single-parent custody refers to a judicial decision. To ensure children's legal status and rights, the federal government passed the Uniform Parentage Act of 2002. It provides a comprehensive framework establishing the parentage of children born to both married and unmarried couples, whether those children were conceived through sexual intercourse, assisted reproduction, or through a gestational agreement, such as surrogacy. Most states have variations of the federal law. Once parenting is established, the court may support orders for child custody, child support, visitation, health insurance, name change, and more.

Single-parent mothers experience economic as well as emotional and physical strain (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992; Peterson, 1996). Frequently, female-headed families are poor; at the least, a drop in the family's standard of living occurs if the woman was previously married (CDF, 2012).

Compared to children raised by single-parent mothers, research on children being raised by single-parent fathers is relatively new. Compared to single-parent mothers, single-parent fathers generally have more economic resources and generally have more authority over their children. However, compared to two-parent families, single-parent fathers, like single-parent mothers, have fewer economic resources (Patterson & Hastings, 2007).

Problems for fathers raising children are similar to those of mothers. In general, fathers find it difficult to obtain child-care help (day care, after-school care, housekeepers). Sometimes day-care centers' hours do not coincide with work hours, and the cost of a housekeeper or nanny is prohibitive. There is also role overload in having to work, care for children, and maintain the house. Social life suffers.

While fathers' *economic* responsibility for their children has been the focus of public policy and consequent legislation; fathers' *emotional* responsibility has been ignored until recently (Amato, 2000; Amato & Dorius, 2010). Fathers are now being included in prenatal, preschool, and elementary school programs. Many studies point to the benefit of the father's involvement in child rearing after parents separate (Amato & Dorius, 2010); however, the father's influence is not always beneficial if the father has an antisocial personality or exhibits antisocial behavior (DeGarmo, 2010).

- ◆ Extend availability of day-care facilities to evening hours.
- ◆ Form babysitting cooperatives in neighborhoods or places of employment.
- ◆ Make transportation available for children to and from day care to parent's home or work.
- ◆ Provide classes on single parenthood and opportunities for support groups.
- ◆ Provide Big Sister programs (for girls from mother-absent homes) as well as Big Brother programs (for boys from father-absent homes).

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Joint Custody

Joint custody is a contemporary solution to the quandary facing many judges: Which adult claimant should be given custody of a child? It also provides the rationale for father-mother involvement in child rearing, which enables the child to relate to both male and female role models (Bauserman, 2002).

Joint custody can refer to legal and/or physical custody arrangements. Joint *legal* custody divides decision-making authority for the child between the divorced parents. Typical areas requiring decisions include discipline, education, medical care, and religious upbringing. Sometimes *physical* custody is divided as well. For example, a child may spend weekdays with one parent and weekends and holidays with the other, or six months with one and six months with the other.

As the number of divorces has climbed, so has the number of states giving legal sanction to some form of joint custody. As a result, some nuclear families split by divorce are evolving into a new form, called the **binuclear family**, a pattern in which the children are part of two homes and two family groups. Binuclear families are not limited to joint custody cases, but parents without legal custody eventually tend to become less involved in the child's life.

An extensive analysis of studies on children in joint physical or legal custody showed they were better adjusted than children in sole-custody settings and no different from married families (Bauserman, 2002). "Adjustment" included family relationships, self-esteem, emotional and behavioral adjustment, and divorce-specific adjustment.

The caveat in joint custody, however, is that usually the parents are divorcing because they can no longer communicate or cooperate with one another. So what may happen is that parents divide authority, and the joint-custody child, instead of having two decision-making parents, ends up having none because the parents can't agree. Lack of consensus or inconsistency is confusing to a child and may undermine discipline (Emery, 2011).

If the divorce was bitter, then the increased communication between the parents required by joint custody is likely to become more hostile, thereby exposing the children to even more conflict and psychological damage (Emery, 2004, 2011; Maccoby & Mnookin, 1992; Mason, 1998). Another problem occurs when parents use the child to communicate messages between them (Furstenburg & Cherlin, 1991)—"Tell your father to send the check or he won't get to see you next weekend"—and to inform each parent of the other's activities (Parke & Buriel, 2006).

Although joint custody gives children access to both parents, thereby avoiding the feeling of being abandoned by the noncustodial parent, some children, especially younger ones, are actually harmed by the inevitable continual separation and reattachment. Preschool children have a very difficult time understanding why everyone can't live in the same house and "Why, if Mommy loves me and Daddy loves me, don't they love each other

anymore?" School-age children express confusion and anxiety over their schedules, anxiety that spills over into school performance and relationships with friends (Francke, 1983). For example, a 6-year-old became obsessed with carrying his backpack everywhere because he was afraid of leaving his homework at one parent's house while he stayed at the other's. An 11-year-old girl felt that she could never be anyone's "best" friend because she didn't stay in one house long enough. To her, being a best friend meant being around all the time.

Kin Custody

Kin refers to blood relatives or those related by marriage or adoption. An increasing number of children are being raised by kin other than parents, the most common being grandparents raising grandchildren, especially since the Great Recession around 2007 (Livingston & Parker, 2010). Some of these families have informal arrangements (without legal custody or guardianship); others are part of the formal foster care system. Family relationships beyond the nuclear family are becoming increasingly important in American society (Bengston, 2001). Extended family members help care for children and provide emotional support.

Among children under age 18 not living with either parent, about 55 percent are cared for by a grandparent and about 22 percent are cared for by other relatives (FIFCFS, 2013).

Some reasons for kin care are that the child's parents are deceased, the child was abandoned, or the court granted legal custody to the grandparent(s) because the parents were deemed unfit to nurture and support. Substance abuse, teen pregnancy, divorce, physical and mental illness, abuse, neglect, and incarceration are reasons cited. Many custodial grandparents do not fit the stereotype of senior citizens enjoying retirement activities (Smith & Drew, 2002). Their median age span is about 45 to 69 (Livingston & Parker, 2010), and some have to care for their own parents in addition to their grandchildren. The constant challenge leaves many grandparents physically, emotionally, and financially drained. The challenges faced by parenting grandparents are changes in relationships with their spouse and other family members, financial stress, possible feelings of uncertainty, isolation, anger, grief, fear, and worries about health or death (deToledo & Brown, 1995; Hayslip & Kaminski, 2005; Smith & Drew, 2002).

The challenge faced by children being raised by grandparents is to develop a sense of belonging and stability amid the transition from their own homes. Common feelings are grief, fear, anger, guilt, and embarrassment. Sometimes these feelings are exhibited in such acting-out behaviors as physical or verbal aggression, regression to immature behavior (crying, whining, bed-wetting), manipulation, withdrawal, and hyperactivity (deToledo & Brown, 1995).

3-3c Stepfamilies

Because of the changing nature of families, as well as budgetary constraints, the U.S. Bureau of the Census no longer provides statistics on the number of children residing in stepfamilies (also called blended families). According to the American Psychological Association (2013c), blended families are now the norm in American society.

Because of the increase in the number of stepfamilies, institutions such as schools, hospitals, and courts must adapt to the special needs of stepfamilies (Stewart, 2007). Most societal institutions have policies based on married families. Although they may be full-time parents to their spouses' kids, stepparents, in many cases, have no obligations for child support because they have no legal rights associated with custody or control (Mason, 2014). For example, if a child needs emergency surgery, hospitals almost always require the consent of a biological parent or legal guardian.

In addition to legal issues, psychosocial issues present special problems for the stepfamily. Each family member has experienced the trauma of divorce, death, or separation from a parent or spouse. When a new family is formed, new problems are likely to arise. The impact of remarriage on a family is second only to the crisis of divorce (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).



This grandparent teaches her granddaughter how to use a toy.

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What is your concept of a stepfamily?

The interactions in stepfamilies are similar to those in any other family, which means they are sometimes tainted with anger, jealousy, value conflicts, guilt, and unrealistic expectations. One of the most common unrealistic expectations is the belief in instant love. Stepfamily relationships are, generally, instant; they do not evolve as they do in a family of orientation, where a child is born and grows.

Children in a stepfamily may feel abandoned by the noncustodial parent. Having to live with new rules and values, while still trying to deal with the old rules and values from both parents, places an enormous burden on the child. Also, the stepfamily often adds more children to the household. This involves adjustments in relating to new siblings. Thus, when families blend, all members are very much affected. In the early months of remarriage, there is likely to be less family cohesion, more poorly defined family roles and relationships, poorer family communication, less effective problem resolution, less consistency in setting rules, less effective disciplining, and less emotional responsiveness. Both stepmothers and stepfathers take a considerably less active role in parenting than do custodial parents (Bray, 1999). Even after two years, disengagement is the most common parenting style (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2002). Stepfamilies also may suffer from a lack of external support, fueled by a history of media myths—the wicked stepmother, the molesting stepfather (Rutter, 1994).

In general, families in which the custodial father remarries and a stepmother joins the family experience more resistance and poorer adjustment for children than do families in which the custodial mother remarries and a stepfather joins the family (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2002). The introduction of a stepparent may also strain the child's relationship with the noncustodial parent. Remarriage often presents children with loyalty dilemmas that they are too inexperienced to solve (Francke, 1983). If they like the stepparent, is that disloyal to their noncustodial parent? Or worse, will they lose the love of their biological parent? Does the noncustodial parent compete with the stepparent for the child's loyalty by buying the child things or by humiliating the stepparent? Does the child view the stepparent as usurping the biological parent's role? ("She wants us to call her 'Mother.' I won't," said a 10-year-old girl. "He can't tell me what to do; he's not my real father," said a 7-year-old boy.)

Families in which both parents bring children from a previous marriage tend to be associated with the highest level of behavior problems (Bray, 1999). The addition of instant siblings to the family constellation is both bewildering and taxing to the children (Francke, 1983; Rutter, 1994). For example, overnight the birth-order hierarchy may shift. The child who has been the oldest may acquire an older brother; the child who has been the youngest may acquire a baby sister. Children often compete for attention, especially with the biological parent. Children who have differing histories of upbringing must now live under the same roof with new sets of rules. For example, children who were given choices at mealtime must now adapt to having to eat everything that is put on their plates or "no dessert." A child who has had to make his bed and clean his room now has to share a room with a child who has never had those responsibilities.

At least half of children living in stepfamilies are likely to face an additional strain—the birth of a half-sibling to their biological parent and the new spouse (Stewart, 2007). Not only is there yet another threat to securing parental love, but also common sibling rivalry is intensified by half- versus full-blooded relationships (Francke, 1983; Rutter, 1994).

The complications in roles and relationships faced by the stepparents are evidenced by the increased risk of divorce among remarriages, especially those with children from a previous marriage. Whereas about 50 percent of first marriages end in divorce, for second marriages the estimated divorce rate is 60 percent (Stewart, 2007). Divorce is most likely to occur in remarried families during the first five years, the time in which the new stepfamily is trying to restructure and "refunctionalize" (Parke & Buriel, 2006). After five

years, stepfamilies are as stable as married families of the same duration (Rutter, 1994; Mason, 2014).

In sum, the effect of remarriage on the child depends on several factors (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2002):

- ◆ The presence of additional stressors (moving, finances, stepsiblings)
- ◆ The age, developmental status, and sex of the child
- ◆ The quality of the child's relationship with both biological parents (custodial and noncustodial)
- ◆ The quality of the child's relationship with the stepparent and siblings
- ◆ The temperament, personality, and emotional stability of the child and the parents
- ◆ The availability of parent substitutes or other social supports for the child
- ◆ The parenting styles of biological parents and stepparents
- ◆ The availability of social supports for the parents

3-3d Families of Adopted Children

Families adopt children for many reasons, including an inability to conceive, the desire to care for a child without the sanction of marriage, the desire to care for a child with special needs (one who has been abused or neglected, has disabilities, or comes from another country), or the desire to make a foster care arrangement permanent. Regardless of the reason, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP, 2011d) recommends that the adoptive parent(s) tell the child about the adoption in a way the child can understand based on age and maturity. This enables the child to feel that her adoption was wanted by the family and is a positive experience.

Adoptive parents need to be prepared for children's interpretations of the adoption even years after the situation was explained (AACAP, 2011d). The child may create fantasies about the birth parents and may even deny the reality of the adoption (Pavao, 2005). The child may believe she did something bad and was sent away. Some children believe they were kidnapped by the adoptive parent(s). In adolescence, when identity formation is a normal challenge, the adopted child faces more complex issues, such as whether to tell friends, whether to contact the birth parent(s), what medical history is relevant, and loyalty. The identity issues are even greater in transracial adoptions. Some other issues may be fear of abandonment, painful reminders of identity at birthdays, a need to grieve for what is perceived to be lost, and dealing with the unknown (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2004; Eldridge, 1999).

3-3e Dual-Earner Families

Studies on dual-earner families expanded in scope and coverage during the first decade of the 21st century (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). A major trend was the increased diversity of families and workplaces. Families increasingly diverged from the two-parent family with breadwinner father and homemaker mother to single parent, stepparent, kin, unmarried, and same-sex parent families. Workplaces became more expandable in terms of space and flexible in terms of time. Work could take place anywhere a laptop could get Internet service, and 9 to 5 became 24/7. These changes influenced workers' home lives and the balance between work and family (Schieman, Milkie, & Glavin, 2009).

During the same decade, some studies showed a similarity between women's allocation of time to paid and unpaid work (cooking, laundry, cleaning, shopping, repairs, and child care) (Sayer, 2005). However, despite the increase in fathers' involvement in the home, men still gravitated toward stereotypical male chores, and child care remained much more the purview of mothers than fathers, just as paid work hours remained longer for fathers (Craig, 2006). Even though, in general, workplaces became more expandable and

Why do families adopt children?

What is the effect on children of having both parents work?



This mother leaves her child at a child care center when she goes to work.

Picture Partners: Alamy

flexible, time conflicts between work and family remained (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). Family demands, such as emergency repairs, care of sick children, shared family activities, and involvement in children's activities, often caused parents to have negative feelings, such as guilt, frustration, or anxiety (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). The lack of shared family time had consequences for children. For example, Crouter, Bum-pus, Maguire, and McHale (1999) found it to be related to risky adolescent behavior.

Maternal Employment and Child Well-Being

One of the largest topics in the literature on dual-earner families has continued to be the relationship of parental employment, especially maternal employment, to child well-being (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). Mother employment almost always improves the economic well-being of families with children, and often makes the difference between whether or not they can make ends meet. To the extent that mothers' working keeps children out of poverty and ensures that their basic material needs are met, it has important benefits (FIECFS, 2013). Other benefits of dual-earner families include personal stimulation for the mother (if she enjoys her job), a closer relationship between father and children (because of his increased participation in family matters), and greater sense of

responsibility for the children.

Reviews of the research on maternal employment (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Gottfried, Gottfried, & Buthurst, 2002; Hoffman, 2000) reveal that a variety of effects, depending on individual factors, result when a mother is employed outside the home. Individual factors influencing the impact of a mother's employment are the age, gender, and temperament of the child; the family's socioeconomic status, the family's ethnic orientation, whether the mother works full or part time; age of the child when she became employed; the quality of the parents' marriage; the mother's satisfaction with her job; the father's satisfaction with his job; and the father's involvement with the children and support of the mother.

Child-care arrangements constitute a mediating effect on the impact of maternal employment on the child. Brooks-Gunn, Han, and Walker (2010) examined the links between maternal employment in the child's first 12 months of life and cognitive, social, and emotional outcomes on the child at ages 3, 4, 5, and 7. Data came from the first two phases of the National Institute of Child Health and Development (NICHD) Study of Early Child Care (child care will be discussed in Chapter 5). Results showed some lower cognitive scores, as well as behavior problems at ages 3, 4, 5, and 7 for children whose mothers were employed during their first year compared to children whose mothers stayed home. However, among children whose mothers went to work after their first year of life, results were similar to children whose mothers worked part time or stayed home.

In general, employed mothers provide different role models than do mothers who remain at home. Also, employment affects the mother's emotional state—sometimes providing satisfactions, sometimes stress, and sometimes guilt—and this in turn influences the mother-child interaction. When the mother is satisfied with her career and does not feel guilty about working, her relations with her children are similar to those of nonemployed mothers who are content with their homemaking role.

IN PRACTICE

Coping Strategies for Dual-Earner Families

- ◆ Think of yourself as a household manager who delegates and supervises, rather than does
- ◆ Determine your priorities, as well as what is really essential—clothes ironed or a game played with the children.
- ◆ Set aside routine “quality” time for your spouse and your children. For parents, uninterrupted time away from household and child-care duties will do. For children, any activity that raises the child’s self-esteem is quality time—for example, talking about their day, reading to them, or playing a game with them.
- ◆ Establish traditions and rituals to which both parents and children can regularly look forward.
- ◆ Schedule time alone, time to pursue an interest, time to refresh one’s energy.
- ◆ Learn to say no sometimes. When invited somewhere or asked to help on a committee, you might respond, “Let me check and get back to you.” This response gives you time to evaluate the invitation and see if it fits in with other commitments to family members.
- ◆ Advocate for family-responsive corporate policies such as leaves, flexible work hours, job sharing, child-care support, and seminars dealing with work/family issues.

Note: The American Psychological Association gives Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards



New times call for reformed ideas of roles in the family and in children’s socialization, as exemplified by this young boy who is cleaning the floor.

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One finding that has occurred frequently in various studies is that children of mothers employed outside the home, from kindergarten age through adulthood, have less stereotyped views of gender roles (Gottfried, Gottfried, & Burhurst, 2002; Parke & Buriel, 2006). These views are influenced by the mother’s discussion of her work, as well as by the father’s participation in household tasks and child care.

Some evidence suggests that mothers employed outside the home use different child-rearing practices than do mothers not so employed, particularly in the area of independence training. In general, employed mothers tend to encourage their children to become self-sufficient and assume household tasks at an earlier age (Hoffman & Youngblade, 1999; McMunn, Kelly, Cable, & Bartley, 2012).

Children affect the mother’s attitude about working and being a competent parent. A child’s difficult temperament was found to be significantly associated with mother’s work outcomes (quality of work and emotional rewards from combining work and family responsibilities) (Hyde, Else-Quest, Goldsmith, & Biesanz, 2004).

3-4 Families of Diverse Parents

Diverse parents include unmarried, interethnic, interfaith, and same-sex parents. Challenges for diverse families are within the family system and also outside of it, for example, the macrosystem via political ideology (laws), the exosystem via social services (policies), and the microsystem via community (attitudes).

3-4a Families of Unmarried Parents

Marriage is a legal contract with certain rights and obligations. It is society’s institution for founding and maintaining a family. Families of unmarried parents include heterosexual adults who choose to live together without legal sanction and homosexual adults who live together unwed (with exceptions in some states) because society, in general, doesn’t legalize their relationship. Such unconventional families are increasing (Stewart, 2007) and are discussed here because of their impact on children.



What challenges do people with different values, heritages, or sexual orientations face when they marry and start a family?

What is the effect on children of parents not being married?

marriage a legal contract with certain rights and obligations

Unconventional families can give children love and stability, but it is more difficult because of the general absence of community supports. What makes things more challenging for unconventional families is the fact that traditional rights and obligations are not necessarily expected or implemented. For example, financial requirements for support of children under age 18 are not legalized for the cohabiting partner. The cohabiting partner is not automatically included in the child's school or social functions.

Most research on children growing up without a married mother and father reports a higher incidence of poverty, poor academic performance, emotional or behavioral problems, and substance abuse (CDE, 2012; Patterson & Hastings, 2007). However, numerous factors involved in the circumstances under which children are born to unmarried parents affect developmental outcomes. These factors include socioeconomic status, relationship of biological parents to each other and to the child, relationship of cohabiting adults (if not biologically related) to the child, child's characteristics (age, temperament, cognitive development), mother's and father's characteristics (age, temperament, education, parenting style, history of substance abuse, domestic violence, and/or child abuse), relationships with other children in the household or family, extended family relationships, and neighborhood characteristics (safety, supports, services) (Stewart, 2007). What makes these factors more salient in unmarried households with children is the lack of legal sanctions that accompany the marriage contract to ensure child protection.

What is the impact on marriage and family when parents have had different upbringing regarding values, customs, beliefs, and traditions?

3-4b Interethnic (Racial) and Interfaith (Religious) Families

When people with different heritages marry and have families, they face certain challenges not experienced by those couples who have similar backgrounds. This is also true of parents who adopt children of a different color or ethnicity than theirs. Because interethnic families differ in physical traits, such as color or ethnic features, they are more likely than interfaith families to face the prejudices of others. In addition to the challenges of dealing with stereotyping, both interethnic and interfaith parents must deal with their cultural contrasts, as discussed in Chapter 1 (individualistic or collectivistic orientations), reflected by different values, communication styles, perceptions of appropriate gender roles, beliefs about parenting, and so on. They must decide how to carry on their cultural or religious traditions with their children. They must also enable their children to form a sense of identity (Crohn, 1995).

The number of interethnic and interfaith families has increased (Hitlin, Brown, & Elder, 2006). Research has shown that multicultural children do not differ from other children in self-esteem, comfort with themselves, or number of psychiatric problems (AACAP, 2011e). Also, they generally have a tolerance for diversity even though some interracial families face discrimination in their communities. Some children report teasing, whispers, or stares from others when with their families.

Adolescents from interethnic families develop racial self-identities within overlapping contexts, creating a sense of self that reflects the social reality of their peer group, neighborhood, or school. For example, some adolescents who appear to be white may gravitate toward white friends, while also claiming a minority racial category on a college application to get special treatment (Hitlin, Brown, & Elder, 2006).

3-4c Families of Same-Sex Parents

Families with same-sex parents are becoming more visible in society today (Patterson, 2002, 2006). Most common are pairs of lesbian women living together raising children of one or both from their previous relationships with men. There are also lesbian relationships in which one or both of the women becomes artificially inseminated or adopts a child.

Are children of same-sex parents socialized differently than children of heterosexual parents?

as well as pairs of gay men living together with custody of their biological or adopted children. There are bisexual and transgendered parents, too; the categories of lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgendered individuals are usually grouped together and abbreviated LGBT. About 4 percent of adopted children have LGBT parents.

Many issues faced by families with homosexual parents are similar to those faced in divorced, stepparent, and various custodial arrangements (Patterson, 2002). According to the AACAP (2011h), these issues apply to families with bisexual and transgendered parents, too. Overriding these, however, is how the family manages the stigmatizing attitude of society. As of 2013, 13 states have legally sanctioned same-sex marriages. Some states, cities and businesses, have implemented policies for domestic partnerships or civil unions to provide benefits for the cohabiting partner, such as housing, insurance benefits, and emergency room visits. However, the cohabiting partner is excluded legally where children are concerned, such as the right to sign medical consent or school permission forms.

Attitudes about homosexuality generally stem from one's personal feelings about one's own sexuality. These attitudes include fear, disgust, indifference, and acceptance. Because of perceived negative attitudes, many homosexuals, especially those raising children, hide their relationship by pretending to be heterosexual (Goldberg, 2009). Being open about their homosexuality renders them vulnerable to discrimination and ostracism.

Children of those who are open about their homosexual relationship may be teased by other children (Gollnick & Chinn, 2012)—“Why do you have two mommies?” or “Your dad is a _____.” However, being secret, although arguably adaptive, is accompanied by the consequences of self-betrayal and disconnectedness from social support (Goldberg, 2009). New associations must be continually evaluated regarding the safety of disclosure. Many homosexual parents fear they will lose custody of their children if their sexual orientation is known (Patterson, 2009).

Research on children living with homosexual parents and their partners has focused on three fearful attitudes held by society in general: (1) that the children will become homosexual, (2) that they will be sexually molested, or (3) that psychological damage will result from the stigma of being raised by homosexuals. This research (Gartrell & Bos, 2010; Johnson & O'Conner, 2002; Patterson, 2006) has found no higher incidence of homosexuality among children raised by homosexuals than among those raised by heterosexuals, nor have there been any reported incidents of sexual abuse; also, children reared by homosexuals are not necessarily more psychologically troubled than children reared by heterosexuals.

However, as children approach adolescence and become concerned about their identities and sexual orientation, any family deviations from the norm among their peers can be magnified. The normal developmental changes that occur during adolescence, coupled with the problem of having to cope with stigmatized parents, can multiply the potential problems facing the adolescents and their families. Variables affecting the adolescents' perception of the situation include their relationship with the biological parents, the partner, and friends; level of acceptance in the community; and self-confidence (Goldberg, 2009).



This interethnic (racial) and interfaith (religious) family is coping with the challenges of socializing a child by parents with different backgrounds, ways of doing things, goals, and so on.

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