THE INFLUENCE OF ADULT MALE PRESENCE ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, it is estimated that between one-third and one-half of all children will experience the divorce of their parents before these children reach their eighteenth birthday (Furstenberg, Morgan, & Allison, 1987; Fox & Blanton, 1995; Munsch, Woodward, & Darling, 1995). When one adds that number to the substantial number of children born out of wedlock, it then translates into the alarming fact of nearly one out of every two children spending some portion of their life in a single parent family. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census data (1992, cited in Mott, 1994), approximately 90% of the children who live in a single parent household live with their mother. The question of interest now becomes: How is the development of children affected by the lack of an adult male presence in the home?

To date, this topic has not been adequately researched. Though some efforts have been made to examine the impact of nonpaternal, coresident adult males on child development, (Dornbusch et al., 1985; Kellam, Ensminger, & Turner, 1977; Pearson, Ialongo, Hunter, & Kellam, 1994; Vaden-Kiernan, Ialongo, Pearson, & Kellam, 1995) the majority of the literature concerning the effect of the presence of an adult male in the home on child development has focused on the biological father or a stepfather as the adult male of interest. Hawkins and Eggebeen (1991) state, "if we want to understand how men influence children's well-being and development, we need to consider not just biological fathers but social fathers as well" (p. 959).

Another limitation of the research currently available is that the impact of an adult male's presence within or absence from the household has been examined primarily within

the context of divorced families and stepfamilies (Barber & Lyons, 1994; Demo & Acock, 1996; Garnefski & Diekstra, 1997; Pong, 1997; Suh, Schutz, & Johanson, 1996; Thomas, Farrell, & Barnes, 1996). For the most part, research concerning the impact of male presence on child development has ignored children born out of wedlock (for exceptions see Gringlas & Weinraub, 1995; Thomson, Hanson, & McLanahan, 1994). Furthermore, with few exceptions, most of the research done to date has examined the effects of the absence of adult male presence on the developmental outcomes of adolescents (Curtner-Smith & MacKinnon-Lewis, 1994; Hoffmann, 1995; Mason, Cauce, Gonzales, & Hiraga, 1994; Paschall, Ennet, & Flewelling, 1995; Salts, Lindholm, Goddard, & Duncan, 1995; Steinberg, 1987). Far less attention has been paid to outcomes in young children.

Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to extend current knowledge by examining the impact of the presence of an adult male within the household on the social competence and behavioral outcomes of children in kindergarten. Impact is assessed on children who live with their mother and her long-term (stable) adult male partner, be it the child's biological father or otherwise. Impact is also assessed on children who live with their mother and her short-term (unstable) adult male partner (i.e. a "new" boyfriend, a grandfather who just moved in, etc.), and on children who currently reside with their mother without any adult male presence.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To date, evidence of the importance of contributions made by adult men to the healthy development of children is equivocal. Some research supports the importance of fathers and father-figures to children, while other research indicates that fathers and father-figures do not matter to children. Even though there is not a strong general consensus in the literature about the importance of adult males to child development, there does appear to be more evidence supporting than refuting male importance.

Pruett (1993) states, "A paternal presence in the life of a child is essential to the child emotionally and physically" (p. 46). More time spent with fathers was found to increase the probability of high academic performance and employment achievement of children at 18-22 years of ages (Remez, 1997). Amato (1994) likewise demonstrated that the importance of adult males to children extends beyond childhood and adolescence into young adulthood. He found that for young adults "closeness to fathers makes a unique contribution to offspring happiness, life satisfaction, and psychological distress" (p. 1031). Furthermore, Amato's research (1994) demonstrated that "closeness to stepfathers is also related to some dimensions of offspring well-being" (p. 1031). However, the importance of a paternal presence seems to differ by race (Mason et al., 1994) and by child gender (Demo & Acock, 1996; Dornbusch, et al., 1985; Garnefski & Diekstra, 1997; Pearson et al., 1994; Steinberg, 1987), with the impact of paternal presence being greatest in White homes and for male children (Thomas et al., 1996).

Summary of literature on family structure and adolescents

One of the most influential studies of family structure and adolescents was conducted in 1985 by Dornbusch, et al. The data came from the National Health Examination Survey, 1966-1970, Cycle III. Adolescent outcomes were reviewed and compared based on the family structure of the adolescent. The Dornbusch, et al. (1985) study was one of the first, and to this date one of the few, to examine mother-other adult families, in addition to two natural-parent families, single-mother families, and stepparent families.

Dornbusch, et al. (1985) found that adolescent deviance rates were lower among adolescents from mother-other adult families than for adolescents from mother-only families. Deviance rates for both males and females, black and white, were also found to be higher among adolescents from single-mother families than from two natural-parent families. There was, however, one notable exception to the general finding that an additional adult reduced rates of adolescent deviance. In stepparent families, males displayed higher rates of deviance than males from mother-other adult and two natural-parent families. This finding was not true of females.

Several later adolescent studies focused on the relationship between family structure and violent behavior. Salts et al. (1995) conducted a survey of 3,761 African American and Caucasian males, ranging in age from 12 - 19 years, to examine variables predictive of male adolescents' violent behavior. They found that factors that have previously been found to predict delinquency (e.g., the location of the school attended by the adolescents, family cohesion, time spent at home versus away from home, religious upbringing, etc.) also predict violent behavior, with the exception of family structure.

Though family structure is related to general delinquency, the results of the study by Salts et al. (1995) indicated that "neither family structure of African American males nor Caucasian males was significantly correlated with either theft or other delinquency" (p. 393).

In contrast, Paschall et al. (1996) conducted a study on 560 black and white middle school males in an attempt to assess the links between family characteristics and violent behavior. Their results suggest that "the absence of fathers is related to violent behavior, regardless of the relative closeness or harmony of the family" (p. 192). They also found that "family structure was a significant risk factor for violent behavior among black male youth" (p. 194), though the same did not hold true for white male youth. For adolescents from both groups "family stress and conflict was a risk factor for violent behavior" (p. 194).

Thomas et al. (1996) examined single-mother families to determine what role the nonresidential father played in substance abuse and delinquency in both Black and White, male and female, adolescents. Their data were drawn from a representative household sample consisting of over 600 adolescents along with their parents.

Several significant findings emerged from their study. Adolescents who lived with both biological parents demonstrated the lowest rates of delinquency, drinking, and illicit drug use while the highest rates of problem behaviors occurred among "White males in single-mother families with no [nonresidential] father involvement" (p. 891). The findings for Black adolescents were somewhat less straightforward. Problem behavior rates between those living with both biological parents compared to those living in a single-mother household, without nonresidential father involvement, were not significantly

different. However, for Black males living in a single-mother household, with nonresidential father involvement, the findings revealed that "involvement of a father has negative effects on behaviors" (p. 891). Thus, according to Thomas et al. (1996) Black male adolescents display the best outcomes when they live either with both biological parents or when they live in a single-mother family without involvement of the nonresidential father.

Thomas et al. (1996) were not the only ones to study the relationship between family structure and drug use. Hoffmann (1995) analyzed data from the National Youth Survey (1977-1979) to assess the relationship between family structure and marijuana use among adolescents. The most significant finding reported was that, rather than having a direct effect on marijuana use, family structure "affects marijuana use primarily through two sets of intervening variables" (p. 1222). First, attachments to parents and the family are adversely affected in family structures involving divorce and / or remarriage. Second, those who are less attached to parents and the family are more likely to associate with drug-using peers. Thus, "family breakup or reconstitution is a stressful life event that can lead to relations with drug-using peers and marijuana use if family bonds are weakened" (p. 1225). Hoffmann (1995) stressed the importance of studying diverse types of family structures rather than using the oversimplified categories of intact versus stepparent versus single-parent families.

Another family structure and adolescent drug use study was conducted by Suh et al. (1996). Using data from the 1991 and 1992 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, they attempted to ascertain the risk factors related to initiation of drug use in adolescents coming from different types of family structures. Specifically, they compared

families in which both biological parents were present with mother-alone, father-alone, mother/another relative, mother/stepfather, and no biological parent families. Adolescents living with both biological parents were least likely to initiate drug use. Otherwise, for boys the family structures most associated with drug use were mother-alone and no biological parent families. For girls, four family structures were associated with drug use: mother-alone, mother/another relative, father-alone, and no biological parent.

Other adolescent and family structure studies focus on adolescent well-being, in general, rather than on deviant behaviors such as delinquency or drug abuse. Demo and Acock (1996) used a subsample of data consisting of 850 adolescents from the larger data set collected by the National Survey of Families and Households to examine the link between adolescent well-being and family structure. Regarding socioemotional adjustment, adolescents from first-married families displayed the best adjustment, with adolescents from continuously single-parent families displaying the second best adjustment. Adolescents from divorced or stepparent families displayed the lowest levels of socioemotional adjustment. Regarding academic performance, adolescents from first-married families rated highest, with adolescents from continuously single-parent, divorced, and stepparent families all scoring similarly. Regarding global well-being, adolescents from divorced or stepparent families displayed lower well-being than did adolescents from first-married families. Gender differences were also found with boys from stepparent families showing less well-being than girls from stepparent families. Though differences between adolescent outcomes as a function of family structure were found, Demo and Acock (1996) conclude that because "differences in adolescent well-being *within* family types are greater than the differences *across* family types," family structure, per se, is less

important than family processes that occur within the different structures (pp. 481-482). They assert that it is the disruption and reorganization of family structures that account for the differences in adolescent well-being.

Another adolescent study examined both emotional problems and suicide attempts in varying types of family structures. Garnefski and Diekstra (1997) used data collected by the National Institute for Budget Information, Leiden University, and the University of Rotterdam on approximately 14,000 adolescents in the Netherlands to assess differences between males and females in terms of emotional problems as well as suicide attempts as a function of family structure. On the self-report measures, boys from single-parent families reported less emotional problems than boys in stepparent families, while girls from stepparent families reported less emotional problems than girls from single-parent families. Regarding suicide rates for boys, "those living in intact and in one parent families reported only half the rate of those living in a stepfamily" (p. 206). For girls, the "lifetime prevalence rate of suicide attempts for adolescents living in intact families was shown to be only one-third of the rate" of adolescent girls from single-parent or stepparent families (p. 206). The authors do note that factors other than family structure may play a role in their findings.

One final adolescent study worthy of mention is Steinberg's (1987) research exploring adolescents' susceptibility to peer pressure as a function of family structure. Steinberg sampled a total of 865 subjects from the fifth, sixth, eighth, and ninth grades of schools in a Wisconsin school district. The three family structures he examined were: (1) two biological parents present, (2) mother-only present, and (3) one biological parent and one stepparent present. Steinberg (1987) found that "family structure exerts an

impact on adolescents' susceptibility to peer pressure, even after controlling for other demographic factors" (p. 272). Further, susceptibility scores were lowest for adolescents from two biological-parent families, and highest for adolescents from stepparent families. Thus, rather than the additional adult (the stepparent) positively contributing to adolescent outcomes, Steinberg's (1987) study indicates that the presence of an additional adult, at least, when that adult is a stepparent, is detrimental to the adolescent. What Steinberg (1987) concludes, based on his results, is that there is "little support for the notion that adolescent misbehavior may be deterred by the presence of an additional adult in the home" (p. 274). Instead, he believes that "the deterrent effect of an additional *biological* parent is likely to be stronger than the deterrent effect of a stepparent" (p. 274).

To summarize, the literature on family structure as it relates to adolescent outcomes is mixed. An additional adult in a mother-only family may be beneficial, but only if that additional adult is not a stepparent. One problem with the existing body of literature is its tendency to view only three types of families: (1) two biological parent families, (2) single-parent (almost exclusively the mother) families, and (3) stepparent families. This study seeks to address that issue by including other family structures, such as mother-male partner and mother-other adult families.

Summary of literature on family structure and young children

To date, there have been far fewer studies focusing on the impact of family structure on young children as opposed to adolescents. With only a few exceptions in the child literature, the majority of the research focuses on divorce and how subsequent father absence affects children. There has been scant attention paid to potential contributions of father figures.

However, if there is one thing in the divorce literature on child outcomes that seems to be agreed upon, it is that family structure, specifically father absence, typically has a greater impact on male than female children. Male children are more defiant than female children to mothers, but are more compliant than female children to fathers (Pruett, 1993). Mott (1994) speculates that this difference arises because of stronger bonding between same gender parent-child dyads. Since fathers are more involved with sons than daughters (Harris & Morgan, 1991; Ishii-Kuntz, 1995) it seems reasonable to expect fathers to be more strongly bonded with their sons.

But what happens to *child* development when the father is not present? Family structure has been found to affect both social competence and behavioral outcomes significantly. Pettit, Harrist, Bates, and Dodge (1991) found that children's social competence was predicted by responsive family interactions. These types of interactions are more likely to be found in two natural parent families (Dornbusch et al., 1985) than in mother only-families.

Though most of the conclusions about father absence and child outcomes have come from divorce literature, there are some notable exceptions. Kellam et al. (1977) published one of the first studies that systematically examined family structure and its impact on children's psychological well-being. They went well beyond the conceptualization of family structure as consisting of either two biological parents, or a single parent, or a biological parent and a stepparent, and instead identified 86 different family types within their sample. The first wave of data was collected on 50% of the children in the first grade in Woodlawn, Chicago in 1964. The second wave of data was collected on all first-graders in Woodlawn in 1966.

Though 86 different family types were identified, the different types were grouped into only six major types to facilitate analysis. The resulting types were: "mother alone [n = 516], mother/father [n = 563], mother/grandmother [n = 76], mother/stepfather [n = 56], mother/other [n = 79], and mother absent families [n = 97]" (Kellam et al., 1977, p. 1015) . Kellam et al. (1977) found that children rated as maladapting in the first grade were significantly more likely to be from mother alone families than mother/father families. Additionally, children from mother/father families who were rated as maladapting in the first grade were more likely to improve their adapting by the third grade than were children from mother alone families. With regard to the other family types, children from mother/grandmother families function as well as children from mother/father families, and children from mother/stepfather families functioned only slightly better than children from mother alone families. Kellam et al. (1977) draw the conclusion that "family type does contribute to the mental health of children" (p. 1022).

A second noteworthy study specifically examines coresident adult males and child well-being. Hawkins and Eggebeen (1991) examined the importance of biological as well as social fathers to children. Data for their study came from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. They identified five family patterns: (1) No male pattern, (2) Reunited father pattern, in which the mother and father had separated for a time, ultimately getting back together, (3) Stepfather pattern, (4) Grandfather pattern, and (5) Chaotic pattern, characterized by multiple disruptions and a variety of coresident adult males.

The results presented by Hawkins and Eggebeen (1991) do not support the importance of either biological or social fathers. However, they do make note of the fact that the children in their study were only 4-6 years old, therefore the children "have

experienced father absence for a relatively brief period of time" (p. 968) as compared to the adolescent studies. Furthermore, the mean age of the mothers of the children being studied was 21 years, which might suggest that "*all* the children in this sample were at greater risk of developmental difficulties, not just children who experienced a marital disruption" (p. 968). Hawkins and Eggebeen (1991) conclude by cautioning readers not to draw the conclusion, based on their study, that fathers are unimportant.

Thomson et al. (1994) approached the significance of family structure to child outcomes from a slightly different perspective. They acknowledge family structure effects, and focus instead on explaining why those effects are found. Specifically, using data from the National Survey of Families and Households, they investigate whether economic resources or parental behaviors are more responsible for the family structure effects. Their results are much more supportive of an economic resources explanation for family structure effects. Regarding academic outcomes, Thomson et al. (1994) state, "low income and poverty account for a substantial portion of the effect of family structure on children's academic performance" (p. 231). Though there was more support for an economic resources explanation, the parental behaviors hypothesis also received some support. The authors note that "parental behaviors are weakly but consistently implicated in problems experienced by children living with their stepfathers or mother's cohabiting partner" (p. 237). Thus, parenting behaviors mediate between adult male presence and child outcomes.

The two final family structure and child outcome studies that deserve mention both focus on aggressive behavior in children. The same sample was used in both studies. Pearson et al. (1994) conducted a longitudinal study beginning with a set of 682 first-

grade students and ending their study when the subjects reached the fourth grade. Data came from both teacher and parent reports. Results indicated differential effects of family structure based on child gender. In general, boys were rated as more aggressive than girls. Interestingly, "girls in mother-alone families approximated the ratings [of aggression] for boys in mother-father families" (p. 545). When examining only the families with the lowest income, results for boys indicated that boys from mother-male partner families were significantly more likely than boys from mother-alone families "to be in the top one-third of teacher-rated aggressive behavior" (p. 545). Additionally, regardless of family income level, "children in mother-alone households were two to three times more likely to be in the top third of aggressive behavior ratings by teachers when compared with children in mother-father families" (p. 545).

Pearson et al. (1994) caution that assumptions of causality can not be drawn from their work. They note that family structure and child behavior can have reciprocal influences on each other. They also note that the aggressive behavior of children may depend not only on family structure, but on the number of changes and the rate of those changes in household composition.

Finally, Vaden-Kiernan et al. (1995) examined aggression and family structure longitudinally, using the same sample as Pearson et al. (1994), beginning with first-grader subjects and following them through the fourth and sixth grades. Data were drawn from both teacher and parent reports of aggressive behavior. Over the course of the study it was found that mother-father families were the most stable family type with 94% of them remaining intact. Of the mother-grandmother families, approximately two-thirds remained

unchanged. Finally, mother-male partner families were least likely to remain stable, with only half of them remaining unchanged.

As in the Pearson et al. (1994) study, Vaden-Kiernan et al. (1995) found that family structure was related to aggression. Specifically, "family type contributed to the prediction of sixth-grade teacher-rated aggression" (p. 562). When examining families across all economic levels, Vaden-Kiernan et al. found that "boys in mother-alone families in the fourth grade were over four times more likely to be in the top third of teacher-rated aggression 2 years later [in the sixth grade] than boys in mother-father and mother-male partner families" (p. 564).

However, when families from different economic levels are analyzed separately, aggression levels are highest for boys living in mother-male partner families, when that family is at the lowest economic level. This result is consistent with results reported by Pearson et al. (1994). In contrast, it must be noted that when comparisons include families at all economic levels, boys from mother-male partner families were less aggressive than boys from mother-alone families.

Finally, Vaden-Kiernan et al. (1995) found that children from mother-alone and mother-grandmother families were both rated similarly by teachers in terms of aggressive behaviors. This contradicts the early findings of Kellam et al. (1977) that children from mother/grandmother families function as well as children from mother/father families.

To summarize, as with the literature on family structure and adolescents, the literature on family structure and young children presents a mixed picture. Clearly, family structure is important to the development of children. What must not be overlooked in examining family structure, however, are the parenting behaviors utilized by adults within

that structure. Because parenting practices mediate between the effects of family structure and child outcomes, one must examine not only the overall family structure, but also the way a given structure relates to interaction patterns within the family. Thus, before concluding this literature review, a brief discussion of family interactions and parenting behaviors is warranted.

Summary of literature on family interaction and parenting

Research for this study was guided by the assumption that parenting behaviors serve as a mediator between male presence and child outcomes. It is not the belief of this author that the mere fact that an adult male is present is enough to account for differences in child outcomes as a function of family structure. Instead, it is believed that the actions of the adult male are the key; it is believed that the family interactions related to male presence and parenting behaviors employed by the adult male serve to mediate the effects of family structure.

Emery (1982) conducted an extensive review of the relationship between interparental conflict and child behavior problems. He presented evidence supporting the notion that "children from broken or intact homes characterized by interparental conflict are at a greater risk than are children from broken or intact homes that are relatively harmonious" (p. 313). Thus, it is interparental conflict, rather than separation from the biological parent, per se, that appears to be a greater risk factor for child behavior problems.

Related to family structure, then, one would expect less stable family structures to be characterized by higher rates of interparental conflict. Because of higher rates of interparental conflict, one would expect children from less stable family structures to

display more behavior problems. Hence, there is reason to suspect that parenting practices associated with family conflict (e.g., coercion, hostility, and power assertion) mediate in the relationship between adult male partner presence and child outcomes.

Emery (1982) also documented the significance of both the type of conflict and the amount of conflict to which the child was exposed. Child behavior problems were more strongly related to "unhappy marriages characterized by quarrelsomeness than . . . [to] unhappy marriages characterized by apathy" (p. 314). Furthermore, the effects of exposure to conflict diminished with time and "children who later resided in harmonious homes were at a decreased risk for emotional disturbance when compared with their earlier status" (p. 314).

In family structures characterized by an unstable male presence, one would expect to find high rates of marital discord, and associated high rates of child behavior problems. In contrast, if the family structure is characterized by a stable male presence, and interparental conflict rates are not high, one would expect more positive child behavior outcomes. In single-mother families, one would need to examine the relationship of the mother to the children's father or other significant adults, and the degree of conflict in that relationship.

In his review, Emery (1982) also demonstrated that "marital turmoil [was] related to some forms of undercontrolled behavior" (p. 316). Additionally, those effects were stronger for boys than for girls. Thus, children--particularly boys--from family structures characterized by marital turmoil are predicted to display higher rates of behavior problems than children from homes absent of marital turmoil.

Finally, Emery (1982) presented evidence demonstrating that discipline practices are significantly related to child outcomes. Marital turmoil was found to disrupt discipline practices of the parent and, in turn, aggression and conduct problems in children are associated with inconsistent discipline. One would expect less consistent discipline practices in unstable family structures, thus one would also expect higher rates of behavior problems from children living in unstable family structures.

Pettit, Bates, and Dodge (1993) conducted a longitudinal study to examine the relationship between interaction patterns within the family and child conduct problems. Low levels of externalizing behaviors were predicted from early positive parental involvement with the child. Additionally, the "absence of positive parenting may contribute to the onset of externalizing problems" (p. 414). Therefore, it is expected that warmth in parenting practices will mediate between adult male presence and child outcomes. Furthermore, the strongest relationship was found between "negative-coercive family interaction styles and later externalizing problems" (p. 414). Children from families characterized by coercive patterns of interaction displayed the highest rates of externalizing problems. Thus it is expected that parenting practices associated with coercive patterns of interactions (e.g., coercion, hostility, and power assertion) will mediate in the relationship between adult male partner presence and child outcomes.

For family structures in which adult male presence contributes to negative family interactions styles, one would predict increased child behavior problems. For family structures in which adult male presence does not cause, or contribute to, negative family interaction styles, one would not predict elevated rates of child behavior problems.

Finally, Bronstein, Clauson, Stoll, and Abrams (1993) conducted a study on the relationship between parenting behavior and child adjustment, across a variety of family structures. They defined traditional families as "households that included the child's two biological parents (or parents who adopted the child in infancy)" (p. 269) and non-traditional families as "all other family configurations as a group" (p. 269).

Parents and children filled out a 75-item self-report questionnaire of family functioning (Bronstein et al., 1993). The questionnaire was composed of 15 five-item subscales, "each describing a particular family style of attitudes and behaviors, such as Cohesion, Democratic, Authoritarian, and Conflict" (Bronstein et al., 1993, p. 270). Related subscales were then combined to yield measures of Effective Parenting (e.g. "Family members rarely criticize each other," "Family members make the rules together,") Ineffective Parenting (e.g. "It is hard to know what the rules are in our family because they always change," "Family members are severely punished for anything they do wrong,") and Family Conflict (Bronstein et al., 1993, p. 270).

Parents and children also filled out a 12-item instrument measuring Parent Involvement (Bronstein et al., 1993). Items included, "Celebrating holidays with child," "Participating in leisure or educational activities at home," and "Providing comfort, sympathy" (Bronstein et al., 1993, p. 270). In the two-adult households, each adult individually completed an 11-item questionnaire describing the coparenting relationship and how often they participated in given activities with their partner (e.g. "Making major decisions regarding the child's life") (Bronstein et al., 1993, p. 270).

Bronstein et al. (1993) found that, when compared to traditional families, "Ineffective Parenting was significantly greater in single-mother and father-surrogate

households" (p. 274). Family Conflict was also found to be higher in nontraditional family structures. Regarding parenting, Bronstein et al. found that mothers from traditional families displayed the highest rates of Involvement with their children, while single-mothers and mothers from nontraditional households displayed lower rates of Involvement. Further, Father's Involvement was more salient in traditional families than in nontraditional families. Finally, Bronstein et al. reported that parents in traditional families had "more cooperative coparenting relationships than did parents in father-surrogate households" (p. 273).

To summarize, the literature on family interaction and parenting implies a relationship between interactions within the family and subsequent parenting behaviors. In general, more positive family interactions are associated with more consistent and more positive parenting behaviors. The family interaction and parenting literature also indicates that family structure, at least to some degree, impacts family interactions, and hence parenting. What remains unclear in the literature, however, is just how much of an impact family structure has on parenting behaviors. The ambiguity in regards to the impact of family structure on parenting behaviors provides the impetus for examining parenting practices as a mediator between family structure and child outcomes in this study.

As was noted previously, the literature on family structure and child behavior outcomes presents a mixed picture. Family structure does appear to be important to child behavior outcomes, but what remains unclear is exactly what it is about family structures that leads to particular outcomes. One issue that warrants attention is the role of adult male presence in the household: What is it about adult male presence that impacts child behavior outcomes? That is the question that this study seeks to answer.

Theoretical rationale

Within the context of the family, my approach was informed by Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (Thomas, 1996). My research design arose out of a dissatisfaction with the level of specificity in Bronfenbrenner's contextual model. In particular, the microsystems level of Bronfenbrenner's model insufficiently differentiates marker variables such as gender from mechanisms such as parenting practices. Rutter (1990) emphasizes this distinction as crucial for understanding the impact of marker variables on child outcomes. For example, Rutter (1990) argues that child gender (marker variable) is important in understanding the greater negative impact of marital conflict on boys than girls. The greater negative impact of marital conflict on boys is due to the parents' tendency to fight more in front of sons than daughters (mechanism).

Because of this inadequacy, I am offering a more detailed examination of the microsystems level. This research focuses on two levels within the microsystem. The first level examines adult male presence within the home, and whether that presence, alone, is sufficient to impact child outcomes. The second level provides an even more microscopic examination of the family microsystem and explores how interactions between the adult male and the child, or the mother and the child, impact child outcomes.

Research questions

In the following questions, "partner presence" refers to whether or not the *mother* has an adult male residing in the home with her and the target child. For this study, male partner presence is conceptualized as stable presence, unstable presence, and absence. Additionally, within both questions, outcome differences based on child gender will be explored.

Question 1. The first question that will be addressed in this study is whether male partner presence affects social competence and behavioral outcomes of the child. This question includes all categories of male presence (e.g., stable presence, unstable presence, and absence), regardless of whether the male is the child's biological father, the mother's current boyfriend, or just a male relative or family friend. In short, this question asks: Are there differences in child outcomes among families in which an adult male is consistently present, inconsistently present, or consistently absent? This question will be answered by reports of child outcomes from three separate sources: mothers, teachers, and children.

Question 2. The second question that will be addressed in this study is whether parenting practices mediate between male partner presence and child outcomes. Specifically, if differences in child outcomes are found, are the differences solely attributable to the presence of the male adult, or to the parenting practices of the mother or her partner? Again, this question will be answered by reports of child outcomes from three separate sources: mothers, teachers, and children.

In order to test the hypothesis that parenting practices mediate the relationship between stability of male presence and child social and behavioral outcomes, Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure for testing mediating hypotheses will be followed. Testing for mediation requires two significant regressions. With regard to this data set: (1) there must be a significant R^2 between stability of male presence and child outcomes, and (2) there must be a significant R^2 between stability of male presence and parenting practices.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Subjects

Data for this study were drawn from a larger bank of data collected longitudinally on 167 primary caregivers and their four-year-old children. Child participants were selected based on their enrollment in one of eight rural Head Start programs in 1995-1996 or 1996-1997. Participants were then tracked longitudinally through Head Start, kindergarten, first and second grades. Data for this study focus on children during their kindergarten year. If either of the child's biological parents' ethnicity was of color, then the child was deemed to belong to an ethnicity of color. Children's ethnicity was as follows: 56% Caucasian; 29% Native American; 7% African American; 5% Hispanic; 3% triethnic.

Of the 167 primary caregivers, 162 were mothers, 3 were grandmothers, and 2 were stepmothers to the target child. Primary caregivers ranged in age from 19 to 54 years ($\underline{M} = 29.4$). Educationally, 20% did not have a high school diploma, 36% were high school graduates, 11% were vocational-technical graduates, 28% had some college, and 5% were college graduates. Thirteen percent received welfare (AFDC or TANF), 68% received other forms of public assistance (e.g., food stamps, WIC), and 18% received no assistance. The median household income (before taxes) per month fell in the $1000 - $1499 range.

For this study, 113 subjects were drawn from the original set of 167 primary caregivers and their target children. The smaller sample size was due in part to subject

attrition between the child's Head Start and kindergarten years. Additionally, subjects with incomplete data during their kindergarten year were also dropped from the sample.

Procedure

Data for the larger research project were funded by grants from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF).

Primary caregivers completed demographic questionnaires and information packets on their child in the fall as their child entered Head Start, and then again the following fall as their child entered kindergarten. A researcher met with each primary caregiver at the caregiver's convenience, and the caregiver completed the questionnaire packets during a session with the researcher. Each caregiver was paid $5.00 for the packet she completed. Teachers were asked to complete questionnaire packets pertaining to the child in the spring of the child's kindergarten year. The teacher was paid $5.00 for every packet completed.

Measures

Demographic Questionnaire. In the fall of the year in which their child was enrolled in kindergarten, primary caregivers completed a demographic questionnaire, which allows for the determination of whether or not an adult male is present within the child's household. Because demographic information was also collected from the caregiver when the child was in Head Start, a determination can be made as to the stability of the male's presence (if an adult male has been present). Caregivers were asked to provide information concerning the relation between themselves and all other persons living with them at the time of the questionnaire. Caregivers were also asked the

questions, "Is your current spouse/partner the father of the child you have enrolled in Head Start?" and "How often does your child see his/her biological father?" For both questions, the Head Start child's primary caregiver was to place a check mark in the blank beside the answer option most applicable to them. Additionally, marital status information was obtained from the primary caregiver.

Child Behavior Checklist. Caregivers also responded to the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach, 1991), which is designed to tap both social competence and behavior problems. The social competence portion of the CBCL consists of 25 items ($\alpha = .29$). Because the internal reliability of the social competence items was so low, these items were not used in the data analyses. The behavior problems portion of the CBCL consists of 122 items, divided into Internalizing ($\alpha = .82$) and Externalizing ($\alpha = .89$) subscales. All items were used.

Harter's Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance for Young Children. During the time when the caregiver was responding to the CPPD, the child was separated from the caregiver and completed Harter's Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance for Young Children (Pictorial PCS, Harter & Pike, 1984). This scale is composed of two social acceptance subscales: Peers and Mothers (combined $\alpha = .86$).

Preschool Behavior Questionnaire. The Preschool Behavior Questionnaire (PBQ; Behar, 1977) is a teacher-rating scale for behavior problems in young children. The PBQ is composed of three subscales, all of which have been shown to be internally consistent: Hostile/Aggressive ($\alpha = .95$), Hyperactive/Distractible ($\alpha = .89$), and Anxious/Withdrawn ($\alpha = .65$).

Howes' Rating Scale for Social Competence with Peers. Howes' (1988) Rating Scale for Social Competence with Peers (HSCP) is an 18-item, teacher-rating scale designed to measure peer social functioning. Howes' scale includes two behavior problem subscales and one social competence subscale: Hesitant ($\alpha = .78$), Difficult ($\alpha = .84$), and Sociable ($\alpha = .75$).

Teacher's Checklist of Peer Relationships. The Teacher's Checklist of Peer Relationships (TCPR; Dodge & Somberg, 1987; Pettit et al., 1991) is a 12-item teacher-rating scale of children's social competence with peers or aggression against peers. It consists of two subscales: social competence ($\alpha = .90$) and aggression ($\alpha = .94$). Previous research has demonstrated the internal consistency of teacher ratings on the TCPR (Pettit et al., 1991).

Computer-Presented Parenting Dilemmas. In the spring of the child's Head Start year, primary caregivers completed the Computer-Presented Parenting Dilemmas (CPPD), an interactive computer assessment modified from Holden's Computer Presented Social Situations (Holden & Ritchie, 1991). Included as named family members in the CPPD vignettes are the child and the primary caregiver. Included as an unnamed participant in three of the vignettes is "your child's friend." There are 15 CPPD vignettes, total: three of the vignettes assess family conflict and violence; three assess parental reactions to noncompliance; three assess parental reactions to child distress; three assess parental reactions to a child's play with peers; and three assess the child's reaction to parental separation and reunion.

In one vignette that assesses family conflict and violence, the kindergarten child has fallen down outside, and the caregiver's partner is with the child. Questions for the

caregiver ask how her partner would respond to the child's distress and include responses such as "yell at child," "get mad at me," "prevent me from comforting child." In a second vignette assessing family conflict and violence, the caregiver's partner cannot find the car keys and shouts at her that she lost them. Questions ask the caregiver how she responds (e.g., get mad, yell). In the third vignette, the argument over the lost keys continues between the caregiver and her partner, with the partner finally hitting the mother and the child becoming very upset. Questions for the caregiver ask her how frequently this happens and how she responds (e.g., yell, hit, comfort child, take the child and leave).

Factor and reliability analyses of responses to the distress vignettes suggested a six-factor solution. The first two factors will be used in this study: Hostile/Punitive ($\alpha = .86$) and Warmth ($\alpha = .68$).

Factor and reliability analyses of responses to the noncompliance vignettes suggested a six-factor solution. Only the first factor will be used: Power Assertion ($\alpha = .76$).

Factor and reliability analyses of responses to the peer monitoring vignettes suggested a seven-factor solution. Three of these factors will be used: Power Assertive Response to Hitting ($\alpha = .80$), Permissive Neglectful ($\alpha = .89$), and Unobtrusive Monitoring ($\alpha = .69$).

Factor and reliability analyses of responses to the family violence vignettes suggested a five-factor solution. Only one of these factors will be used: Partner Coercive Control ($\alpha = .92$).

Together, these seven factors (Hostile/Punitive, Warmth, Power Assertion, Power Assertive Response to Hitting, Permissive Neglectful, Unobtrusive Monitoring, and Partner Coercive Control) will be used as parenting predictors.

Data Reduction

Principal components analysis was used to identify the structure underlying the three social competence measures (PBQ, HSCP, and TCPR) completed by teachers. This analysis revealed a two-factor solution that explained 75% of the variance: Externalizing ($\alpha = .97$) and Internalizing ($\alpha = .85$). All subscales with factor-item correlations $\geq .60$ were considered to constitute the same factor. Table 1 shows the two factors, the factor loading, and alphas.

Operationalization

Male presence addressed in question 1 was conceptualized as consisting of two components: presence (present versus absent) and traditionality (traditional versus nontraditional). This two-component operationalization of male presence resulted in four groups: traditional present, nontraditional present, absent, and unstable (see Table 2 and Table 3 for descriptor frequencies, and Appendix A for further elaborations).

Traditional present. The traditional present group was comprised of households in which both the biological mother and the biological father of the child were legally married and residing in the house with the child throughout the duration of the study. If the mother indicated that the father had moved out for any period of time during the study, or if the mother reported that she and the child's biological father had divorced, but then remarried, during the interval between the child's Head Start and kindergarten years, then the family was categorized in the unstable group.

Nontraditional present. The nontraditional present group was comprised of households in which both biological parents were not present, but where the same adult male was residing in the house with the mother and the child throughout the duration of the study. A common example of this type of family structure would be the households in which a stepfather was present across both time periods. Another example would be the households in which the grandfather was living in the house with the mother and target child across both time periods. Finally, stable live-in arrangements were included as nontraditional present. For example, if the mother indicated that she was not married, but that she lived with the man who was the biological father of the child throughout the study, then they were categorized in the nontraditional present group.

Absent. The absent group was comprised of households in which there was no indication of an adult male residing in the home at any point during the course of the study, regardless of the amount of contact the child had with his or her biological father.

Unstable. The unstable group was comprised of households in which the same adult male was not present throughout both years. For example, if the biological mother and biological father were married and residing in the house with the child during the child's Head Start year, but divorced and the father moved out of the house by the child's kindergarten year, then the family was categorized as unstable. Another example is the household in which the mother indicated that the male partner with whom she was living during the child's kindergarten year was not the same male partner with whom she had been living during the child's Head Start year. One family that would have been categorized in the unstable group was omitted from the data set, with the omission occurring prior to the start of data analysis, because the child's biological father was in jail

during the child's Head Start year, but was released and moved back into the home with the mother and the child during the child's kindergarten year. The reason for the instability of male presence in this case (father in jail) was deemed by the researcher to be potentially confounded with child social competence.

Child outcomes. Child behavior outcomes as reported by mothers were operationalized as externalizing and internalizing scores on the CBCL. Child behavior outcomes as reported by teachers consisted of the aggregrate factors previously described (see Data Reduction and Table 1) for externalizing and internalizing problems. Child social outcomes as self-reported by the children were operationalized as the child's ratings of maternal acceptance and peer acceptance, measured on the Pictorial PCS.

Parenting practice predictors. Predictors of parenting practices were operationalized as the seven factors (Hostile/Punitive, Warmth, Power Assertion, Power Assertive Response to Hitting, Permissive Neglectful, Unobtrusive Monitoring, and Partner Coercive Control) obtained from the CPPD.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Research question 1

The first research question asked if child outcomes would differ among families in which an adult male was consistently present, inconsistently present, or consistently absent. To answer research question 1, male presence versus absence and traditional versus nontraditional family structure status were converted to dummy variables. Presence was coded as '1', and absence was coded as '0'. Traditional family structure was coded as '1', and nontraditional family structure was coded as '0'.

One set of regressions was then run for each of the five outcomes: (1) teacher ratings of externalizing behavior problems (as shown in Table 4, Teacher Externalizing), (2) teacher ratings of internalizing behavior problems (as shown in Table 4, Teacher Internalizing), (3) mother ratings of externalizing behavior problems (as shown in Table 5, CBCL Externalizing), (4) mother ratings of internalizing behavior problems (as shown in Table 5, CBCL Internalizing), and (5) child ratings of social acceptance (as shown in Table 5, Social Acceptance). In each regression, the predictors were adult male presence versus absence, family structure as traditional or nontraditional, and the interaction between the two categories. Child gender and family income during the child's kindergarten year were controlled for prior to the entry of the predictors into the regression equation.

The results of the regressions for teacher ratings are presented in Table 4. Although the control variables explained significant variance, the predictors did not. Results of regressions for ratings of children's behavior problems by their mothers, as well

as children's own ratings of their social acceptance are presented in Table 5. Again, control variables explained significance variance. Additionally, as noted in the table, predictor variables explained significant variance in child outcomes in certain instances.

Specifically, male presence was significantly negatively related to both child externalizing and internalizing behavior problem scores on the CBCL. That is, children living in a home in which an adult male was present were rated by their mothers as lower on both externalizing and internalizing behavior problems on the CBCL. Additionally, there was a significant interaction between male presence and traditional family structure in the regression for internalizing behavior problems on the CBCL. Adult male presence along with a traditional family structure predicted lower internalizing scores on the CBCL.

To further explore the differences between the four groups on CBCL internalizing behavior problems, ANOVAs were conducted. The means for each group after adjusting for income and child gender were as follows: traditional present ($\underline{M} = 4.13$), nontraditional present ($\underline{M} = 2.81$), absent ($\underline{M} = 4.53$), and unstable ($\underline{M} = 7.30$). Main effects of the groupings were significant [$\underline{F}(3, 105) = 3.96$, $\underline{p} < .05$]. Additionally, significant differences were found between the traditional present versus unstable groups [$\underline{F}(1, 78) = 6.29$, $\underline{p} < .05$] and between the nontraditional present versus unstable groups [$\underline{F}(1, 35) = 4.63$, $\underline{p} < .05$].

The child's report of social acceptance by mothers and peers was also related to predictor variables. Specifically, children living in a traditional family structure rated themselves as less socially accepted by their own mother and by their peers than did children living in a nontraditional family structure. To examine this counterintuitive finding in greater depth, a Pearson-product moment correlation was calculated between

the mother's report of the frequency of contact between the target child and his/her biological father and the child's social acceptance rating. Contact with the biological father and the child's rating of social acceptance by mother and peers were inversely correlated ($r = -.20$, $p < .05$).

The seemingly low, though still significant, r-value ($r = -.20$) could be interpreted as an artifact of contact with the biological father in the traditional present group. All children categorized in the traditional present group ($N = 60$) see their biological father daily. Because the traditional present group comprises almost one-half of the total sample ($N = 113$), the variability is low. When the traditional present group is removed from the sample, the correlation between contact with the biological father and the child's rating of social acceptance by mother and peers remains negative. Specifically, the correlation increases in magnitude but decreases slightly in significance ($r = -.25$, $p < .10$).

Research question 2

The second research question addressed the issue of parenting practices mediating between male partner presence and child outcomes. As was noted previously, testing for mediation requires two significant regressions. With regard to this data set: (1) there must be a significant R^2 between stability of male presence and child outcomes, and (2) there must be a significant R^2 between stability of male presence and parenting practices. Because the R^2 between stability of male presence and child outcomes based on teacher report was not significant (see Table 4), the mediation hypothesis could not be tested on child outcomes as measured by teacher report.

However, significant relationships between stability of male presence and child outcomes based on mother report and child report (see Table 5) allowed for some testing

of the mediation hypothesis. Based on the significant findings as presented in Table 5, the hypothesis of parenting practices as mediators between adult male presence and child outcomes was tested. The following parenting practices as mediators were used: (1) Hostile/Punitive, (2) Warmth, (3) Power Assertion, (4) Power Assertive Response to Hitting, (5) Permissive Neglectful Response, (6) Unobtrusive Monitoring, and (7) Partner Coercive Control.

The relationships between adult male presence/absence and each parenting practice were as follows: (1) Hostile/Punitive ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $p = .69$); (2) Warmth ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $p = .30$); (3) Power Assertion ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $p = .50$); (4) Power Assertive Response to Hitting ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $p = .82$); (5) Permissive Neglectful Response ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $p = .75$); (6) Unobtrusive Monitoring ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $p = .61$); and (7) Partner Coercive Control ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $p = .55$).

The relationships between traditional/nontraditional family structure and each parenting practice were similar to those given above. Finally, the interaction term for male presence/absence with traditional/nontraditional family structure was not related to any of the parenting practices. In sum, these data do not support the notion of parenting practices mediating between male partner presence and child outcomes.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Research question 1

The results of this study indicate that there are, indeed, differences in child behavior outcomes as indicated by mother and child reports, based on family structure. Children who live in a home with an adult male consistently present are less likely to exhibit externalizing and internalizing behavior problems, as measured by the CBCL. Furthermore, when the adult male with whom the child resides is the child's biological father and the family structure is traditional (Beaver Cleaver's family [i.e., married as opposed to cohabiting]), the child is significantly less likely to display internalizing behavior problems as reported by the mother on the CBCL.

Family structure was also found to affect child ratings of social competence as measured by the Pictorial PCS. However, this result must be interpreted with extreme caution due to the limitations of the measure. It has been argued (Fantuzzo, McDermott, Manz, Hampton, & Burdick, 1996) that the Pictorial PCS supplies "no valid information about children's perceptions of their . . . social acceptance" (p. 1080). Because the Pictorial PCS was developed using only 90 preschool children, all of whom were white, middle-class, and from the same geographic region (Harter & Pike, 1984), it may not be a valid instrument for assessing the lower-class, racially mixed subjects that comprised the subjects in this study.

Though there are strong arguments to be made against the Pictorial PCS, its use was accepted by the agencies funding this research study. Having elucidated some of the weaknesses of the Pictorial PCS, I will now offer an interpretation of the findings from

this study. The data from this study indicate that children living in a traditional family structure rate themselves lower on social acceptance as measured by the Pictorial PCS than do children living in a nontraditional family structure.

This seemingly low social acceptance score associated with children from a traditional family structure may be an artifact of the questions asked by the Pictorial PCS, rather than a true difference in social acceptance between children from traditional versus nontraditional family structures. For example, Item 4 on the Pictorial PCS states, "This girl's mom usually doesn't let her eat dinner at friend's houses. Does your mom: Hardly ever let you eat over OR Sometimes? This girl's mom usually lets her eat dinner at friend's houses. Does your mom: Usually OR Always let you eat over?" Children from a traditional family structure may answer the first part of this question as "Hardly ever let you eat over" more often than children from a nontraditional family structure, thereby earning a lower social acceptance scale. In reality, it may not be that the child from the traditional family structure is less socially accepted by peers (i.e., asked over for dinner by friends less often), but instead the child may eat over at friend's houses less often because traditional families may place more of an emphasis on the family being together at mealtimes.

The same argument can be made for the inverse relationship between contact with the child's biological father and the child's rating of their social acceptance. Regardless of family structure, more time spent with the biological father means less time available for the child to spend with peers. Less time with peers may then translate to a lower Pictorial PCS score.

An alternative explanation exists, as well. Regarding the child's perceived acceptance by the mother, in cases where the child does not reside with the biological father, visitation between the child and the father may cause conflict between the child and the mother. Unfortunately, the reality of broken relationships is that one parent may put down the other parent in the presence of the child. Even worse, in some instances the custodial parent (typically the mother) will attempt to make the child feel guilty or unloved if the child expresses a desire to visit the noncustodial parent (typically the father). When this occurs, the child is bound to feel less acceptance from the mother.

Regarding the child's perceived acceptance by peers, visiting a nonresidential biological father may preclude the child from engaging in certain activities in which peers are involved. If, for example, the child is away from 'home' every other weekend visiting the biological father, the child may be unable to participate in sporting activities (e.g., Little League, soccer) that require weekend game attendance. Additionally, weekends with the biological father may prevent the child from attending certain peer social functions such as birthday parties or sleepovers. This in turn may lead the child to feel less socially accepted. Indeed, the child may not be as socially accepted because of his or her inability to participate in certain activities.

Research question 2

The results of this study did not offer significant support for the idea of parenting practices mediating between adult male presence and child outcomes. It is important to note, however, that information about parenting practices came solely from mother report. It is possible that additional support for the mediation hypothesis would have been gained if both mother report and male partner report of parenting practices had been available.

The absence of a relationship between parenting practices and child outcomes was unexpected. One possible reason for this finding would be if the relationship between parenting practices and control variables (child gender and household income during the child's kindergarten year) were significant. However, an examination of the relationship between parenting practices and the control variables revealed no significant association. Specifically, ΔR^2 values for the relationship between each of the seven different parenting practices and the control variables ranged from .00 to .03.

Conclusion

This study adds to the body of literature that recognizes the importance of the stable presence of an adult male to the healthy development of children (for example, Pearson et al., 1994, and Vaden-Kiernan et al., 1995). Contrary to the findings of Hawkins and Eggebeen (1991), who assert that neither biological nor social fathers are important to child outcomes, the results of this study indicate that a stable male presence is significantly related to certain child outcomes. Specifically, children living in a home in which an adult male was consistently present were rated by their mothers as lower on both externalizing and internalizing behavior problems on the CBCL.

The lack of evidence to support the hypothesis of the mediation of parenting practices between male presence and child outcomes is inconsistent with Thomson et al.'s (1994) findings that "parental behaviors are weakly but consistently implicated in problems experienced by children" (p. 237). However, it should be noted that the majority of the literature concerning family structure and young children makes no mention of parenting practices. This leaves open the possibility that other researchers have examined parenting

practices from a mediation standpoint, but have not found significant results and thus have chosen not to discuss the issue of parenting practices in relation to family structure.

Though parenting practices were not found to mediate between male presence and child outcomes in this study, it must be noted that a significant limitation of the current study is the lack of first-hand information from the adult males regarding their parenting practices. Only mother-report of the male partner's parenting practices was available, which limits the conclusions that can be drawn from the data. It is possible that evidence to support the mediation hypothesis would have been found had it been possible to collect parenting practices data from both the mother and her partner. Future research should strive to include direct reports from the males, rather than relying solely on mother reports.

Research of this nature is important for multiple reasons. First, it has the potential to inform policy on the family. For example, current welfare laws inadvertently penalize mothers who have a married partner living with them in the home. Economically, with the current structure of the welfare system, women and their children are better off if the father is not married to the mother and is not residing in the home. The results of this study suggest that policy should be reformed to *encourage* rather than *discourage* the father to marry the mother and live in the home with the mother and the children.

Research of this type can also benefit families if it is used to help guide curricula in parenting classes. There seems to be no question that women are important to the healthy development of children; this study argues that men are important, too. If it can be demonstrated to men that they are significant contributors to the healthy development of children, then perhaps men will take more responsibility for maintaining a stable presence

in their children's lives. Additionally, mothers need to be made aware of the possible damaging effects an unstable family structure (i.e., routinely having different boyfriends moving into and out of the house) can have on their children.

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Table 1

Factors, Items, and Loadings from Rotated Factor Matrix for Teacher-Ratings Scales

Factors and Items	**Alpha**	**Factor Loadings**
Factor 1: Teacher Externalizing	**(.97)**	
TCPR Social Competence		-.72
TCPR Aggression		.93
PBQ Hostile/Aggressive		.93
PBQ Hyperactive/Distractible		.72
HSCP Difficult		.92
Factor 2: Teacher Internalizing	**(.85)**	
TCPR Withdrawn		.73
PBQ Anxious		.76
HSCP Hesitant		.87
HSCP Sociable		-.74

Note. Teacher Externalizing refers to externalizing behaviors of children as rated by teachers. Teacher Internalizing refers to internalizing behaviors of children as rated by teachers.

Table 2

Descriptor Frequencies

	Child Gender HS/K	Mom Educ HS	Mom Educ K	Mom Occ HS	Mom Occ K	P Ed HS	P Ed K	Fam Inc HS	Fam Inc K	Biol Dad HS	Biol Dad K
Trad. Pres.	M=34	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn
(N=60)	F=26	=13	=14	=3	=3	=13	=14	=5	=4	=7	=7
Nontr. Pres.	M=7	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn
(N=16)	F=9	=14	=14	=2	=2	=13	=12	=4	=4.5	=3.5	=3.5
Absent	M=7	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn
(N=13)	F=6	=14	=15	=3	=5	=N/A	=N/A	=4	=4	=0	=3
Unstable	M=13	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn	Mdn
(N=24)	F=11	= 12	=12	=2	=3	=12	=11.5	=3	=3	=5	=5

Note. Trad Pres refers to traditional present, Nontr Pres to nontraditional present, HS to Head Start, K to kindergarten, M to male, F to female, Educ to education, Occ to occupation, P Ed to partner education, Fam Inc to family income, Biol Dad to child contact with the biological father.

An explanation of median values is included on the following page.

Explanation of Median Values

Value codes for mother and partner education

11 = 11th grade; 12 = 12th grade; 13 = some vo-tech; 14 = some college courses; 15 = vo-tech graduate

Value codes for occupation

2 = unskilled worker (e.g., busboy); 3 = machine operators and semiskilled workers (e.g., file clerk); 4 = skilled manual worker (e.g., dry wall installer); 5 = clerical and sales (e.g., bank teller)

Value codes for family income [per month, before taxes]

3 = $500 - $999; 4 = $1000 - $1499; 5 = $1500 - $1999

Value codes for contact with biological father

0 = no contact; 1 = once a year; 2 = twice a year; 3 = 3 to 5 times per year; 4 = 6 to 11 times per year; 5 = monthly; 6 = weekly; 7 = daily

Table 3

Frequency Distribution of Household Income Per Month Before Taxes During the Child's Kindergarten Year

Income Category	Traditional Present	Nontraditional Present	Absent	Unstable	**TOTAL**
$0 – 100	01	00	00	02	03
$100 – 499	03	03	01	05	12
$500 – 999	14	01	05	07	22
$1000 – 1499	15	05	03	07	30
$1500 – 1999	11	04	02	00	17
$2000 – 2499	08	01	00	02	11
$2500 – 2999	05	01	01	01	08
$3000 – 3499	03	00	01	00	04
$3500 – 3999	00	00	00	00	00
$4000 plus	00	01	00	00	01
TOTAL	60	16	13	24	113

Table 4

Regressions Predicting Child Kindergarten Externalizing and Internalizing Problems, Based on Teacher Report

Kindergarten Outcomes	Block	Predictors	ΔR^2	F	df	beta
Teacher Externalizing						
	1.		.168	10.89***	2, 108	
		Child Gender				-.40***
		K. Income				-.11
	2.		.018	1.15	2, 106	
		Present				-.11
		Traditional				-.05
	3		000	.00	1, 105	
		Present x Traditional				.00
Teacher Internalizing						
	1.		.051	2.90+	2, 107	
		Child Gender				-.21*
		K. Income				-.10
	2.		.012	.68	2, 105	
		Present				-.02
		Traditional				-.10
	3.		.008	.94	1, 104	
		Present x Traditional				.21

Note. ΔR^2 refers to the change in R^2 explained by the particular block of predictors. K. Income refers to the household income level during the child's kindergarten year.

+$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 5

Regressions Predicting Child Kindergarten Behavioral and Social Outcomes, Based on Mother Report and Child Report

Kindergarten Outcomes	Block	Predictors	ΔR^2	F	df	beta
CBCL Externalizing						
	1.		.030	1.67	2, 109	
		Child Gender				.06
		K. Income				-.16
	2.		.073	4.38*	2, 107	
		Present				-.21*
		Traditional				-.11
	3.		.000	.00	1, 106	
		Present x Traditional				.00
CBCL Internalizing						
	1.		.067	3.85*	2, 108	
		Child Gender				.09
		K. Income				-.24*
	2.		.058	3.52*	2, 106	
		Present				-.24*
		Traditional				-.02
	3		037	4.60*	1, 105	
		Present x Traditional				.45*
Social Acceptance						
	1		.001	.06	2, 101	
		Child Gender				-.03
		K. Income				.02
	2.		.066	3.48*	2, 99	
		Present				.18
		Traditional				-.28*
	3.		.005	.51	1, 98	
		Present x Traditional				-.17

Note. ΔR^2 refers to the change in R^2 explained by the particular block of predictors. K. Income refers to the household income level during the child's kindergarten year.
+p < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

APPENDIX A

Traditional Present

Mother's education. During the children's Head Start year, the median amount of education completed by the mothers in the traditional present group was "some vo-tech," while during the children's kindergarten year, the median amount of education completed by the mothers was "some college courses." During the children's kindergarten year, mothers reported their highest school grade completed as follows: one mother reported her highest school grade completed as "6th grade;" two reported "8th grade;" one reported "9th grade;" four reported "10th grade;" one reported "11th grade;" sixteen reported "12th grade;" four reported "some vo-tech;" fifteen reported "some college courses;" ten reported "vo-tech graduate;" and six reported "college graduate."

Family income. The median household income reported during the children's kindergarten year by the traditional present group was between $1000 - $1499 per month before taxes. The following monthly incomes before taxes in each family were reported: one family reported earning $0 - $100 per month; three reported earning $100 - $499; fourteen reported earning $500 - $999; fifteen reported earning $1000 - $1499; eleven reported earning $1500 - $1999; eight reported earning $2000 - $ 2499; five reported earning $2500 - $2999; and three reported earning $3000 - $3499.

Contact with biological father. During the children's kindergarten year, all children in the traditional present group were reported to see their biological father daily.

Nontraditional Present

Mother's education. During the children's Head Start year and kindergarten year, the median amount of education completed by the mothers in the nontraditional present group was "some college courses." During the children's kindergarten year, mothers reported their highest school grade completed as follows: one mother reported her highest school grade completed as "8th grade;" one reported "11th grade;" three reported "12th grade;" one reported "some vo-tech;" six reported "some college courses;" two reported "vo-tech graduate;" and two reported "college graduate."

Family income. The median household income reported during the children's kindergarten year by the nontraditional present group was between $1000 - $1499 and $1500 to $1999 per month before taxes. The following monthly incomes before taxes in each family were reported: three families reported earning $100 - $499 per month; one reported earning $500 - $999; five reported earning $1000 - $1499; four reported earning $1500 - $1999; one reported earning $2000 - $ 2499; one reported earning $2500 - $2999; and one reported earning $4000 plus.

Contact with biological father. During the children's kindergarten year, the median amount of contact the children in the nontraditional present group had with their biological father was between "3 to 5 times per year" and "6 to 11 times per year." The amount of contact between the target child and his / her biological father, as reported by the mother, was given as follows: seven reported that the target child had "no contact" with the biological father; one reported that the target child saw the biological father "once a year;" four reported that the target child saw the biological father "weekly;" and four reported that the target child saw the biological father "daily."

Absent

Mother's education. During the children's Head Start year, the median amount of education completed by the mothers in the absent group was "some college courses," while during the children's kindergarten year, the median amount of education completed by the mothers was "vo-tech graduate." During the children's kindergarten year, mothers reported their highest school grade completed as follows: one mother reported her highest school grade completed as "10th grade;" one reported "11th grade;" one reported "12th grade;" three reported "some college courses;" four reported "vo-tech graduate;" and three reported "college graduate."

Family income. The median household income reported during the children's kindergarten year by the traditional absent group was $1000 - $1499 per month before taxes. The following monthly incomes before taxes in each family were reported: one family reported earning $100 - $499; five reported earning $500 - $999; three reported earning $1000 - $1499; two reported earning $1500 - $1999; one reported earning $2500 - $2999; and one reported earning $3000 - $3499.

Contact with biological father. Because the median amount of contact between the target child and his / her biological father changed dramatically for children in the traditional absent group, information will be reported for both years. During the children's Head Start year, the median amount of contact between the children and their biological fathers, as reported by mothers, was "no contact." For the children's kindergarten year, mothers reported median contact as "3 to 5 times per year." The amount of contact between the target child and his / her biological father, as reported by the mother, for the Head Start year was given as follows: seven reported that the target

child had "no contact" with the biological father; one reported that the target child saw the biological father "twice a year;" one reported that the target child saw the biological father "3 to 5 times per year;" two reported that the target child saw the biological father "6 to 11 times per year;" one reported that the target child saw the biological father "monthly;" and one reported that the target child saw the biological father "weekly." The amount of contact between the target child and his / her biological father, as reported by the mother, for the kindergarten year was given as follows: five reported that the target child had "no contact" with the biological father; four reported that the target child saw the biological father "3 to 5 times per year;" one reported that the target child saw the biological father "monthly;" and two reported that the target child saw the biological father "weekly." One mother failed to fill out that particular question on her child for the child's kindergarten year.

Unstable

Mother's education. During the children's Head Start year and kindergarten year, the median amount of education completed by the mothers in the unstable group was "12th grade." During the children's kindergarten year, mothers reported their highest school grade completed as follows: one mother reported her highest school grade completed as "9th grade;" one reported "10th grade;" three reported "11th grade;" eight reported "12th grade;" three reported "some vo-tech;" six reported "some college courses;" one reported "vo-tech graduate;" and one reported "college graduate."

Family income. The median household income reported during the children's kindergarten year by the nontraditional absent group was $500 - $999 per month before taxes. The following monthly incomes before taxes in each family were reported: two

families reported earning $0 - $100 per month; five reported earning $100 - $499; seven reported earning $500 - $999; seven reported earning $1000 - $1499; two reported earning $2000 - $ 2499; and one reported earning $2500 - $2999.

Contact with biological father. During the children's kindergarten year, the median amount of contact the children in the nontraditional absent group had with their biological father was "monthly." The amount of contact between the target child and his / her biological father, as reported by the mother, was given as follows: seven reported that the target child had "no contact" with the biological father; one reported that the target child saw the biological father "once a year;" two reported that the target child saw the biological father "twice a year;" one reported that the target child saw the biological father "6 to 11 times per year;" three reported that the target child saw the biological father "monthly;" six reported that the target child saw the biological father "weekly;" and four reported that the target child saw the biological father "daily."

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: 02-15-99 **IRB #: HE-99-067**

Proposal Title: THE INFLUENCE OF ADULT MALE PRESENCE ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Principal Investigator(s): Laura Hubbs-Tait, Sandra K. Stiles

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Signature: Carol Olson

Date: February 15, 1999

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance
cc: Sandra K. Stiles

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

2

VITA

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Master of Science

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