**Nonresident Father Involvement and**

**Maternal and Child Well-Being: The Role of Extended Visitation**

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This research is supported by the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, and the NSAF Small Research Grants Program funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

ABSTRACT

Although nonresident fathers are becoming more involved in their children's lives, studies have not examined the effect of extended visitation on maternal and child well-being. *Extended visitation* in this study is defined as relatively long periods of visitation with the nonresident father and includes (a) visits lasting more than one week to several weeks or months, (b) shared custody, and/or (c) visitation that falls outside standard measures of contact (more than once a week, weekly, monthly, and yearly). Based on data from the 1997 National Survey of America's Families, a nationally representative sample of over 34,000 children and 40,000 families, this study examines the effect of extended visitation with the nonresident father on the well-being the child's resident mother (mental health and parental aggravation) and the child (school engagement and social and emotional adjustment). Results show that whereas standard day-to-day visitation with nonresident fathers did not have a significant effect on the well-being of resident mothers, extended visitation was associated with higher mental health scores and lower parental aggravation. The effect of extended visitation on children was more mixed, with only marginally significant effects that were not always in the expected direction. An implication of these results is that future studies should provide more detailed and comprehensive measures of visitation to capture nonresident fathers' greater involvement in their children's lives. A second implication is that studies should continue to incorporate resident mothers into studies of nonresident father involvement and child well-being.

As long as rates of divorce and union dissolution remain high, nonresident father involvement will be an important topic of study among family researchers. Because families are constantly evolving, researchers must always be on top of emerging trends. For example, while there are still large numbers of nonresident fathers who have no contact with their children and pay no child support, overall, nonresident father involvement has been increasing (Stewart, 2007). With respect to visitation, both the frequency and the *duration* of visits seem to be increasing. For example, the National Survey of Families and Households indicates that over one-third of nonresident fathers see their children weekly or more and 14% of nonresident fathers and have periods of visitation with their children lasting one month or longer (Stewart, 1999b). The 1997 cohort of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that more than one-quarter of children in mother-custody homes stay overnight with their nonresident fathers "frequently," defined as 50 or more times a year (Argys et al., 2003). Moroever, the number of parents who share physical custody of their children (referred to as shared or "joint" custody) has grown steadily over the past three decades, especially in the last five years (Cancian & Meyer, 1998; Juby, Marcil-Gratton, & Le Bourdais, 2004; Maccoby & Mnookin, 1992).

It is important to distinguish longer and/or extended periods of visitation from standard visitation schedules (i.e., more than once a week, weekly, monthly, yearly) because it may have a unique effect on child and family well-being. For example, standard visitation patterns (such as Wednesday nights and every other weekend) tend to have a "fun-and-games" quality which has been found to be less beneficial to children compared to more routine forms of involvement (Lamb, 2002; Stewart, 1999a,b; Stewart, 2003). Indeed, numerous studies have demonstrated that children benefit most from involvement that includes "authoritative" parenting typified by a high degree of monitoring, warmth, and communication (e.g., King & Sobolewski, 2006). These

types of high-quality interactions are more likely to occur during longer periods of contact. For example, a study of 60 divorced Australian parents and children found that children who stayed overnight with their nonresident parent reported greater closeness and better quality relationships with their nonresident parent than those with daytime-only contact (Cashmore, Parkinson, & Taylor, 2008).

Compared to children with two biological parents, children with nonresident fathers have significantly lower well-being in multiple realms, including academic achievement, social and emotional adjustment, unintended pregnancy and births, and juvenile delinquency and subsequent criminality. Thus, not surprisingly a main motivation for studying nonresident fathers has been to lessen the negative effects on children's well-being. Understanding the effect of nonresident father involvement on the child's resident mother is perhaps equally important, to the extent that the well-being of the child's nonresident mother is important to the well-being of the child. Indeed, attention to the mothers is vital given that the health of the entire family system can hinge on her health and well-being (Arendell, 2000). Yet, there has been relatively little research on mothers, especially in complex family systems (Sweeney, 2010). For example, nearly two decades ago, Amato and Rezac (1994) established that conflict between the child's resident mother and nonresident father reduced the positive effects of his involvement. More recent research shows that higher quality relationships between nonresident fathers and resident mothers is associated with more frequent visits and higher quality father-child relationships (Ryan, Kalil, & Guest, 2008; Sobolewksi & King, 2005).

## STUDY GOALS & HYPOTHESES

The goal of this study is to examine the effect of nonresident father involvement, specifically extended visitation, on the well-being of children and their resident mothers. As discussed above,

this is an important gap in the literature. One reason few studies have examined extended visitation is that most national data sets do not have a sufficient number of cases in categories of extended visitation for analysis. This study is based on the 1997 National Survey of America's Families (NSAF). The NSAF is probably the largest family survey conducted in recent years, containing information on over 34,000 children and 40,000 families, which includes a large number of children with nonresident fathers. The NSAF is also unique in that it provides more detailed information on nonstandard visitation arrangements than other national surveys. Although not the specific focus on this investigation, examining extended visitation can also lend some insight into the potential effects of joint custody on parents and children.

Hypotheses are guided by a life course perspective and the concept of "linked lives," which posits that individual experiences are interrelated through the linked fates of family members (Bengston & Allen, 1993). Indeed, the lives of couples who have children together are inextricably linked, especially given stringent child support laws as well as fathers' increasing desire to remain a part of their children's lives after union dissolution (Umberson, Pudrovaska, & Rezac, 2010). Yet, previous research has focused for the most part on how parents affect children, not each other. Although this is important to understand, the well-being of mothers and fathers should be studied for their own sake. Psychological distress among mothers is not uncommon. Women have higher rates of depression than men (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2001). Women with children are more distressed than childless women, and single, divorced, cohabiting, and remarried mothers are more distressed than first-married mothers (Amato, 2010; Brown, 2000; Bures, Koropeckyj-Cox, & Loree, 2009; Umberson et. al., 2010).

It is hypothesized that, compared to standard day-to-day visitation, children who have extended visitation with their nonresident fathers will have higher socioemotional well-being

among children. In this study, extended visitation conceptualized as longer periods of contact (lasting over one week), shared custody, and/or visitation that falls outside standard measures of contact (more than once a week, weekly, monthly, and yearly). Longer visits allow fathers greater opportunities to connect with their children in a natural, private setting (i.e., dining room table, backyard) as opposed to a superficial public environment (i.e. a restaurant, the mall, ball park) and increases the likelihood of their participation in everyday activities and topics of conversation. In this study, children's well-being is assessed in terms of school engagement and behavior and emotional problems. It should be noted that father involvement may have different effects depending on the outcome.

The effect of extended visitation on resident mothers is less clear. On the one hand, mothers whose children spend extended periods of time with their nonresident fathers may experience higher levels of socioemotional well-being than mothers whose children have less contact (and shorter stays) with their nonresident fathers. As discussed above, single mothers and mothers in married and cohabiting stepfamilies are more likely to be distressed than other mothers. Children's extended visits with their father may offer a temporary break in the routine and allow her time to rest, as well as pursue hobbies, interests, and exercise. In addition to taking on the physical responsibility of caring for children, nonresident fathers engaging in extended visitation with their children are also very likely to take on the psychological responsibilities of raising children, such as scheduling activities and play dates, meal planning, filling out permission slips, and overseeing homework. Nonresident fathers' involvement in psychic work of being a parent should also benefit mothers. Indeed, a recent study based on the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, which focuses on families with children under ten, found that father involvement was correlated with less depressive symptoms in resident mothers (Paulson, Dauber, & Leiferman,

201). Other work finds that family social support, negativity, and cohesion, partially explain differences in mental health between single-parent and mother-father families (Barrett & Turner, 2005).

On the other hand, nonresident father involvement also has the potential to be associated with worse socioemotional outcomes for resident mothers. Children's extended visits with their fathers means resident mothers have to be apart from their children for long periods of time. She may experience loneliness and a lack of social support. She also has to give up control over her child's activities, discipline, eating habits, and the like. Because nonresident fathers often remarry and/or cohabit, this may mean relinquishing control to the fathers' new wife or partner, which may increase her psychological distress. In this study, resident mothers' well-being is assessed in terms of her mental health and parental aggravation, which measure different dimensions of psychosocial well-being. Depending on the measure, then, father involvement may have different effects. Mothers whose children are away from home for long periods may experience less day-to-day aggravation. However, her mental health may suffer if these separations cause her to miss her children and/or worry about who they are with and what they are doing.

Finally, it is important to control for social and demographic characteristics of the children and their mothers. For instance, previous research has found that family structure differences in mothers' mental health were largely explained socioeconomic status (Barrett & Turner, 2005). Therefore, a range of variables measuring characteristics of the child, the child's mother, and the household are included in the analysis.

## BACKGROUND

## METHOD

## *Data*

This study is based on data from the 1997 National Survey of America's Families (NSAF), a nationally representative sample which provides a range of information on the economic, health, and social characteristics of children and their families (Abi-Habib, Safir, & Triplett, 2002). The NSAF is probably the largest family survey conducted in recent years and contains information on over 34,000 children and 40,000 families. This dataset is well suited for this investigation for several reasons. First, it provides detailed information on non-standard visitation schedules with children. Second, because the survey is so large, it contains a large number of children living apart from a biological (or adopted) father, which means that there are enough respondents in less common categories of visitation for analysis. Third, the survey includes a rich set of family environment and resident parent and child outcome measures that have been shown to have a high degree of validity and reliability (Ehrle & Moore, 1999).

The analysis utilizes the Focal Child File, which includes information on up to two randomly selected children per household (one under 6 and one age 6 to17). Information on mothers, fathers, and children was provided by the "most knowledgeable adult" (MKA), defined as the adult considered most knowledgeable about the focal child's health and education (typically the child's mother).

## *Analytic Sample*

The total analytic sample is based on 10,320 children between the ages of 0-17 living with a biological or adopted mother and who have a biological or adopted father absent from the home. Children whose nonresident fathers were reported as deceased (8%) were omitted, bringing the sample down to 10,522. The sample also excludes cases missing on key indicators of maternal

well-being (<2%) and cases in which the MKA is not the child's mother (<1%), producing a sample of 10,320 for the analysis of the well-being of the child's mother.

For the analysis of the well-being of the child, the sample is further limited to 7,083 children age 6 to 17 because key outcome measures do not pertain to young children. Information on the children and their families is provided by the "most knowledgeable adult" (MKA), defined as the adult considered most knowledgeable about the focal child's health and education. Typically this person is the child's biological mother. Cases missing on key variables were removed from the sample (2%). Separate analyses are conducted for younger (age 0-11) and older (age 12-17) children.

### *Variables*

*Dependent variables.* The well-being of the child's mother was measured in two ways. The first is the aggravation in parenting scale which measures how much time during the past month (1= *all of the time*, 2 = *most of the time*, 3 = *some of the time*, 4 = *none of the time*) the child's mother felt (a) the children were harder to care for than most, (b) the children do things that really bother him or her a lot, (c) felt he or she was giving up more of his or her life to meet the children's needs than he or she ever expected, and (d) angry with the child. Responses were reverse coded and were summed into a scale ranging from 0-16 with higher scores indicative of higher aggravation. A score greater than or equal to 9 is indicative of "high" aggravation (Ehrle & Moore, 1999). The parental mental health scale measures how much of the time (1= *all of the time*, 2 = *most of the time*, 3 = *some of the time*, 4 = *none of the time*) the child's mother had been (a) a very nervous person, (b) felt calm or peaceful, (c) felt downhearted and blue, (d) been a happy person, and (e) felt so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer him or her up. Responses to the questions about feeling calm or peaceful and being a happy person were reverse

coded. Answers to these items were summed into scale ranging from 5 to 20. Scores were then rescaled (by multiplying scores by five) so that they range between 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating higher mental health. A score of 67 or lower is indicative of "poor" mental health (Ehrle & Moore, 1999).

Child well-being is based on two measures, the child school engagement scale and the child behavioral and emotional problem scale, were used. These scales represent important domains of children's psychosocial adjustment (Bornstein, Davidson, Keyes, & Moore, 2003). The School Engagement Scale is the sum of the MKA's report of how much of the time (1 = *none of the time*, 2 = *some of the time*, 3 = *most of the time*, and 4 = *all of the time*) the child (a) cares about doing well in school, (b) only works on schoolwork when forced to, (c) does just enough schoolwork to get by, and (d) always does homework. This scale ranges from 4 (*none of the time* on all four items) to 16 (*all of the time* on all four items), with scores less than or equal to 10 indicating "low" school engagement (Ehrle & Moore, 1999). The Child Behavioral and Emotional Problem Scale is the sum of the MKA's report of the extent to which, in the past month, the child (a) doesn't get along with other kids, (b) can't concentrate or pay attention for long, (c) has been unhappy, sad, or depressed, (d) feels worthless or inferior, (e) has been nervous, high-strung, or tense, and (f) acts too young for his or her age. For children age 12-17, the last three items were replaced by "has trouble sleeping," "lies or cheats," and "does poorly at school" (1 = *never true*, 2 = *sometimes true*, and 3 = *often true*). This scale ranges from 6 (*never true* on all six items) to 18 (*often true* on all six items), with scores greater than or equal to 12 indicating a "high" level of problems (Ehrle & Moore, 1999).

*Independent variables*. The child's mother reported on two aspects of nonresident father involvement, in-person visitation and financial contributions. First, mothers were asked, "During

the last 12 months, how often has the child seen his or her father? Responses provided were (a) not at all, (b) one to 11 times a year, (c) one to three times a month, (d) about once a week, (e) more than once a week, and (f) other (specify). The NSAF categorized written responses to "other" in the following way: (g) more than one week but less than three months, (h) more than one week and three months or more, (i) unclassifiable, and (j) joint custody. The last four categories were collapsed into a single category (*extended* visitation), creating a variable ranging from 0 (no visits) to 5 (extended visits). Respondents missing information on visits were coded to "not at all" (N=381 or 3.7%). A second coding strategy was used to provide a comparison of extended visitation with standard visitation. In this case, visitation is coded in terms of three categories: no visitation, standard visitation (comprised of letters [b] through [e] above), and extended visitation (comprised of letters [g] through [j] above). Refer to Stewart (2010) for a similar coding strategy.

Financial involvement is measured in two ways. The MKA reported the amount of child support in dollars coming into the household for each family member. Unfortunately, it was not possible to create a child-level measure of child support because sometimes the MKA provided this information about the adult who received the child support on behalf of a child, and sometimes the respondent indicated the child on whose behalf the income was received (Adam Safir, Personal Communication, 1/08/04). I therefore used the average monthly amount of child support the family received in the last 12 months and then control for the number of children in the household. Amount of child support was also coded as a dichotomous variable with 1 indicating some child support was received and 0 indicating no child support. In another part of the survey, the child's mother reported whether or not the child's nonresident father made any financial contributions (yes/no) to support the focal child in the last 12 months (information on

the amount of child support received for the focal child was not collected). Additional analysis determined that the results did not differ depending on which dichotomous measure of child support was used (results not shown).

The analysis controls for characteristics of the child, the child's mother, and the child's household. The characteristics of the child include gender (1=female), age (in years), race and ethnicity (Hispanic, White, Black, Other), birth status (born within marriage, born outside of marriage, unknown), and physical health (1=fair or poor). The characteristics of the child's mother include age (in years), current marital status (no union, cohabiting, married), education (less than high school, high school, some college, college degree or more), employment (full-time, part-time, not employed), foreign born (1=yes), and physical health (1=fair or poor). The characteristics of the household include family income (in dollars, not including child support) and number of children in the household. Unfortunately, no information about the child's nonresident parent is available beyond whether or not the child was born within a union.

### *Analytic Strategy*

I first present descriptive information about the nonresident fathers' visitation with the child and the amount of child support received by the child's mother, as well as the distribution of child, maternal, and household characteristics. Next, I show the relationship between nonresident father involvement (visitation and child support) and the well-being of resident mothers in a multivariate context using OLS regression. First, I examine the effect of visitation coded continuously from no visits to extended visitation. Second, I assess compare the effect of standard and extended visitation using the three-category measure of visitation (none, standard, extended). The second part of the analysis is similar except that it assesses the effect of extended visitation with nonresident fathers on children. Separate analyses are conducted for younger (age

0-11) and older (age 12-17) children because the effect of father involvement on child well-being may vary by the child's age. All results were weighted to account for the complex cluster sampling design of the NSAF (Flores-Cervantes, Brick, & DiGaetano, 1997). Child weights were applied to account for the fact that for households with more than one child, two children (one age 0-5 and one age 6-17) may have been selected (Brick et al., 1999).

## RESULTS

### *Effect of Extended Visitation on Resident Mothers*

Table 1 presents descriptive information about nonresident fathers' visitation and child support in the total sample of children age 0 to 17. First, about one-third (34%) of children did not see their father in the past year. About 20% saw their father less than once a month, and another 15% saw there father monthly or several times a month. About 9% of children saw their nonresident father about once a week, and about 20% saw him more than once a week. These results show a somewhat higher level of contact compared to previous national studies (e.g., National Survey of Families and Households), suggesting that nonresident father involvement has indeed increased. The remaining categories of visitation are considered "extended" visits. Visits lasting "more than one week but less than three months, "more than one week and three or more months," visits that are "unclassifiable," and "joint custody" each represent 1% or less of children with nonresident fathers. As a whole, children with extended visitation with their fathers represent 1.7% of the sample. With respect to child support, over half of children received no child support from their nonresident father in the last year, whereas 43% did receive child support. The average monthly child support received was $136.

Table 2 provides a description of the sample characteristics. The children's mothers had an average parental aggravation score of 6.4 on a scale of ranging from 0 to 16 and an average score

of 76.2 on the mental health scale from 0 to 100. In terms of the characteristics of the child, they are roughly half boys and half girls with an average age of nine. About 18% of the children are Hispanic, 48% are White, 30% are Black, and 3% are some other race. Whereas 51% of the children were born in marriage, 48% were born outside of marriage, and 2% were missing this information. In only 7% of cases did the mother rate their child's health as "fair or poor." Turning to the characteristics of the child's mother, mothers had an average age of 34. About 72% were not in a married or cohabiting union, 7% were cohabiting, and 22% were married. Nearly a quarter of mothers (23%) had not completed high school, 31% were high school graduates, 34% had some college education, and 13% had a college degree. About 43% of mothers were not currently employed, 19% were employed part-time, and 38% were employed full-time. About 6% of mothers were foreign born and in 15% of cases the mothers' health was rated as "fair or poor." The average family income of the household (without child support) was $26,512 and the average number of children in the household was 2.5.

Table 3 presents the OLS regression coefficients showing the effect of visitation and child support on resident mothers' well-being, net of the sociodemographic characteristics described above. The first two columns show the results for mothers' parenting aggravation. Model 1 measures visitation in the standard way (yearly, monthly, weekly, and more than weekly), with an extra category for children with extended visits. "None" (no visits) served as the reference group. Results indicated that extended visitation with nonresident fathers was associated with significantly less parental aggravation among resident mothers. None of the other categories of visitation were statistically significant. Model 2 provides a comparison of extended visitation versus "standard" visitation (yearly, monthly, weekly, and more than weekly). Results indicate that, compared to standard visitation schedules, extended visitation was associated with

significantly lower parenting aggravation among resident mothers. With respect to sociodemographic variables, mothers with older children, more children, children not in "good" health, and mothers with less than a high school education and some college (compared to high school), mothers in fair or poor physical health (p .10), mothers whose children were in racial and ethnic categories other than White (p<.10) were significantly more aggravated. Child support was not associated with parenting aggravation.

The last two columns of Table 3 show the effect of father involvement on mothers' mental health, net of sociodemographic variables. The effect of visitation was similar to the effect on parenting aggravation. Extended visitation with nonresident fathers was associated with significantly greater mental health (p < .10) among resident mothers. However, regular day-to-day visitation was not associated with more positive mental health (the mental health scores of mothers whose children had no visits were not significantly different from the scores of mothers who had standard schedules of contact). Model 2 provides a comparison between children with standard and extended contact with their fathers. Similar to parenting aggravation, mothers whose children had extended stays with their fathers had significantly better mental health. Mothers with significantly lower mental health scores are those with older children (p < .10), Hispanic and Black mothers, mothers with children in poor physical health or who are in poor physical health themselves, mothers with less than a high school education or some college (compared to high school) and lower family incomes. Child support was not associated with mothers' mental health.

*Effect of Extended Visitation on Children*

Table 4 presents descriptive information about nonresident fathers' visitation and child support separately for younger versus older children (as reported by resident mothers). A similar

proportion of younger and older children did not see their father at all in the last year, at 36% and 32% respectively. A similar proportion of younger and older children had periods of extended visitation with their father, 2.4 and 2.9 respectively. Otherwise, older children appeared to have less day-to-day contact with their fathers than younger children. For example, 29% of older children saw their fathers less than monthly (as opposed to more often) compared to 18% of younger children. These results are consistent with prior studies showing declines in father involvement over time.

Table 3 provides the frequency distribution of the sample characteristics separately for younger versus older children. With respect to school engagement, the average score of the older and younger children was similar (12.9 versus 12.2) on a scale ranging from 4 to 16. With respect to behavior and emotional problems, similar to previous studies older children had slightly more problems than younger children, 8.3 compared to 8.8 on a scale ranging from 6 to 18. The distributions of the other sociodemographic variables are generally similar to the figures presented in Table 2 above. A higher proportion of the older children was female, white, and was born within marriage and had worse physical health. The older children, on average, tended to have older mothers, mothers employed full-time, mothers who were foreign born, and were in worse physical health. However, older children had higher family incomes.

Table 6 presents the OLS regression coefficients showing the effect of visitation and child support on children's well-being, net of the sociodemographic characteristics described above. The first two columns show the results for children age 6 to 11. For each outcome, Model 1 measures visitation in the standard way (yearly, monthly, weekly, and more than weekly), with an extra category for children with extended visits. Model 2 provides a comparison of extended and standard visitation. Results indicated that the relationship between extended visitation with

nonresident fathers and child well-being was not statistically significant. Monthly visitation with fathers (compared to none) was positively associated with school engagement. Correspondingly, children with no visitation had significantly lower school engagement than children with standard visitation. Among children age 12 to 17, compared to both no contact and standard contact, extended visitation was marginally significantly related to higher school engagement ($p < .10$). Interestingly, extended visitation was also associated with greater behavior problems ($p < .10$), compared to children with standard contact. On a side note, monthly visitation with fathers was associated with fewer emotional and behavior problems in older children, compared with those who had no contact.

## DISCUSSION

This study examined the effect of extended visitation between children and their nonresident fathers on the well-being of the child and the child's resident mother. Because fathers' involvement in their children's lives is increasing, it is becoming increasingly important to assess, for children with involved fathers, the differential effects of different types of father involvement on child and adult well-being. Indeed, this study indicates that the duration of children's visits with their fathers matters. However, it is the child's mother as opposed to the child who appears to receive the greatest benefit from extended visitation. Longer visits between children and their nonresident fathers were associated with significantly less parental aggravation and better mental health among resident mothers. The effect of extended visitation on children was less straightforward. Among younger children, distinguishing between extended visitation and standard visitation did not matter, although children with standard contact (specifically monthly) had significantly higher school engagement than children with no visitation. Among

older children, the effect of extended visitation on school engagement was only marginally significant, but the trend was in the anticipated direction (positive). On the other hand, extended visitation was also associated with greater emotional and behavior problems. The results for children are in line with previous research showing mixed effects of frequency of visitation on children's well-being (Stewart, 2007). Without information on the content and quality of the visits, these results should be interpreted cautiously.

Of course this study has some limitations. First, it is well-known that reports of involvement from resident mothers and nonresident fathers differ (Seltzer & Brandreth, 1994), with mothers tending to underreport involvement and fathers tending to overreport involvement. It is unclear how this might have affected the validity of the findings. Second, because the NSAF is cross-sectional, causality cannot be assessed. For example, two studies indicate that rather than nonresident father's involvement influencing children's outcomes, children's outcomes influence father involvement (Hofferth & Pinzon, 2011). The same could be true when it comes to resident mothers' outcomes (e.g., Paulson et al., 2011).

Nonetheless, this study reinforces research indicating that the nature of nonresident father involvement is changing and that these changes can have important implications for family life. Fathers are more involved with their children and are involved in different ways than in the past and this study adds to research indicating that their increasing involvement is positive. This study suggests that researchers continue to examine emerging patterns of father involvement and their effects on children, mothers, and the entire family system.

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Table 1. Nonresident Father Involvement Among Children Age 0-17 ($N$ = 10,320)

| | N | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| In-person visits in last year | | |
| None | 3,513 | 33.9 |
| 1-11 times a year | 2,167 | 20.4 |
| 1-3 times a month | 1,501 | 14.8 |
| About once a week | 912 | 8.5 |
| More than once a week | 2,045 | 19.7 |
| More than one week, < 3 months | 52 | 0.8 |
| More than one week, 3 + months | 65 | 1.1 |
| Unclassifiable | 48 | 0.6 |
| Joint custody | 17 | 0.2 |
| Any child support received in last year | | |
| Yes | 4,648 | 43.2 |
| No | 5,672 | 56.8 |
| Amount per month (mean) | | 136.2 |

Note: Weighted frequencies and unweighted $N$s.

Table 2. Description of the Sample of Children Age 0-17 ($N$ = 10,320)

| | Mean or Percentage |
|---|---|
| Well-Being of Child's Mother | |
| Parental Aggravation | 6.4 |
| Mental Health | 76.2 |
| Characteristics of child | |
| Gender | |
| Male | 49.7 |
| Female | 50.3 |
| Age | 9.2 |
| Race | |
| Hispanic | 18.4 |
| White | 48.4 |
| Black | 29.9 |
| Other | 3.3 |
| Birth status of child | |
| Born within marriage | 51.1 |
| Born outside of marriage | 47.9 |
| Missing on birth status | 2.0 |
| Physical health fair or poor | |
| Yes | 7.0 |
| No | 93.0 |
| Characteristics of MKA | |
| Age | 34.2 |
| Marital status | |
| No union | 71.5 |
| Cohabiting | 6.9 |
| Married | 21.6 |
| Education | |
| Less than high school | 23.0 |
| High school | 30.5 |
| Some college | 33.9 |
| College degree or more | 12.6 |
| Employment | |
| Full-time | 38.0 |
| Part-time | 19.4 |
| Not employed | 42.7 |
| Foreign born | |
| Yes | 6.1 |
| No | 93.9 |
| Physical health fair or poor | |
| Yes | 15.2 |
| No | 84.8 |
| Characteristics of household | |
| Family income (w/o child support) | 26512.0 |
| Number of children in household | 2.5 |

Note: Weighted frequencies and unweighted $N$s.

Table 3. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients of the Effect of Nonresident Parent Involvement on the Well-Being of the Resident Mother of Children Age 0-17 ($N$ = 10,320)

| | Parenting Aggravation | | Mental Health | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 1 | Model 2 |
| In-person visits in last year | | | | |
| *None* | | | | |
| 1-11 times a year | 0.106 | | -0.897 | |
| 1-3 times a month | -0.014 | | 0.723 | |
| About once a week | 0.051 | | -0.139 | |
| More than once a week | -0.191 | | -0.898 | |
| Extended visitation[a] | -0.862** | | 2.949# | |
| In-person visits in last year | | | | |
| None | | 0.017 | | 0.620 |
| *Standard*[b] | | | | |
| Extended[a] | | -0.841** | | 3.503* |
| Any child support received in last year | | | | |
| Yes | -0.075 | -0.072 | -0.120 | 0.003 |
| *No* | | | | |
| Characteristics of child | | | | |
| Gender | | | | |
| *Male* | | | | |
| Female | -0.145 | -0.144 | 0.482 | 0.481 |
| Age | 0.049** | 0.052*** | -0.191# | -0.193# |
| Race | | | | |
| Hispanic | 0.231# | 0.229# | 2.033* | 2.031* |
| *White* | | | | |
| Black | 0.351# | 0.349# | 3.936*** | 4.006*** |
| Other | 0.629* | 0.637* | 3.085 | 3.098 |
| Birth status of child | | | | |
| *Born within marriage* | | | | |
| Born outside of marriage | -0.084 | -0.068 | 0.434 | 0.438 |
| Missing on birth status | -0.053 | -0.045 | 0.132 | 0.048 |
| Physical health fair or poor | 0.798*** | 0.809*** | -4.008** | -3.972** |
| Characteristics of MKA | | | | |
| Age | | | | |
| Marital status | | | | |
| *No union* | | | | |
| Cohabiting | 0.044 | 0.061 | -1.739 | -1.692 |
| Married | -0.334* | -0.300# | 1.639 | 1.756 |
| Education | | | | |
| Less than high school | 0.440** | 0.432** | -3.451** | -3.486** |
| *High school* | | | | |
| Some college | 0.282* | 0.290* | -1.555* | -1.589* |
| College degree or more | -0.056 | -0.057 | 1.689 | |
| Employment | | | | |
| Full-time | -0.007 | -0.007 | 1.549# | 1.590# |
| Part-time | 0.084 | 0.096 | 0.881 | 0.900 |
| *Not employed* | | | | |
| Foreign born | -0.116 | -0.117 | -1.122 | -1.118 |
| Physical health fair or poor | 0.299# | 0.306# | -9.043*** | -9.039*** |
| Characteristics of household | | | | |
| Family income (w/o child support) | -0.007 | -0.011 | 0.843*** | 0.861*** |
| Number of children in household | 0.108* | 0.107* | 0.257 | 0.255 |
| $R^2$ | 0.075 | 0.073 | 0.137 | 0.136 |

[a]Extended visitation includes visits lasting more than one week and less than 3 months, more than one week and more than 3 months, visitation that is "unclassifiable," and joint custody.

[b]Standard visitation includes yearly, monthly, weekly, and more than once a week.

Note: Reference categories in italics.

#p < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 4. Nonresident Father Involvement by Children's Age (N = 6,936)

| | Age 6-11 | | Age 12-17 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | Percent | N | Percent |
| In-person visits in last year | | | | |
| None | 1,263 | 35.5 | 1,205 | 32.4 |
| 1-11 times a year | 695 | 17.7 | 856 | 26.1 |
| 1-3 times a month | 590 | 17.1 | 486 | 14.9 |
| About once a week | 343 | 9.6 | 282 | 8.4 |
| More than once a week | 611 | 17.3 | 472 | 15.4 |
| More than one week, < 3 months | 30 | 0.7 | 19 | 1.5 |
| More than one week, 3 + months | 21 | 0.7 | 20 | 0.8 |
| Unclassifiable | 15 | 0.5 | 15 | 0.4 |
| Joint custody | 7 | 0.5 | 6 | 0.2 |
| Any child support received in last year | | | | |
| Yes | 1,701 | 46.7 | 1,681 | 47.6 |
| No | 1,874 | 53.3 | 1,680 | 52.4 |
| Amount per month (mean) | | 155.4 | | 163.7 |
| Total | 3,575 | 100.0 | 3,361 | 100.0 |

Note: Weighted means and percentages and unweighted Ns.

Table 5. Description of the Sample by Child's Age (N = 6,936)

| | Age 6-11<br>Mean or % | Age 12-17<br>Mean or % |
|---|---|---|
| Well-Being of Child | | |
| School engagement | 12.9 | 12.2 |
| Behavior and emotional problems | 8.3 | 8.8 |
| Characteristics of child | | |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 49.2 | 47.2 |
| Female | 50.8 | 52.8 |
| Age | 8.5 | 14.4 |
| Race | | |
| Hispanic | 18.2 | 15.3 |
| White | 50.0 | 55.2 |
| Black | 28.9 | 25.8 |
| Other | 2.8 | 3.6 |
| Birth status of child | | |
| Born within marriage | 53.6 | 65.3 |
| Born outside of marriage | 43.9 | 32.8 |
| Missing on birth status | 2.5 | 2.0 |
| Physical health fair or poor | | |
| Yes | 6.0 | 8.0 |
| No | 94.0 | 92.0 |
| Characteristics of MKA | | |
| Age | 33.9 | 38.9 |
| Marital status | | |
| No union | 63.0 | 61.6 |
| Cohabiting | 8.1 | 6.7 |
| Married | 29.0 | 31.8 |
| Education | | |
| Less than high school | 20.0 | 20.3 |
| High school | 30.1 | 30.1 |
| Some college | 35.9 | 34.7 |
| College degree or more | 13.3 | 14.9 |
| Employment | | |
| Full-time | 41.1 | 44.3 |
| Part-time | 18.9 | 16.7 |
| Not employed | 39.9 | 39.0 |
| Foreign born | | |
| Yes | 6.0 | 7.2 |
| No | 94.0 | 92.8 |
| Parental Aggravation | 6.3 | 6.7 |
| Mental Health | 76.5 | 75.5 |
| Physical health fair or poor | | |
| Yes | 13.5 | 18.2 |
| No | 86.5 | 81.8 |
| Characteristics of household | | |
| Family income (w/o child support) | 26,593.0 | 31,035.49 |
| Number of children in household | 2.6 | 2.4 |
| N | 3,575 | 3,361 |

Note: Weighted means and frequenies and unweighted Ns.

Table 6. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients of the Effect of Nonresident Parent Involvement on the Well-Being of the Child ($N$ = 6,936)

| | Children Age 6-11 ($N$ = 3,575) | | | | Children Age 12-17 ($N$ = 3,361) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | School Engagement | | Beh. and Emot. Problems | | School Engagement | | Beh. and Emot. Problems | |
| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 1 | Model 2 |
| In-person visits in last year | | | | | | | | |
| *None* | | | | | | | | |
| 1-11 times a year | 0.356 | | -0.270 | | -0.390 | | -0.030 | |
| 1-3 times a month | 0.739* | | 0.070 | | 0.302 | | -0.590* | |
| About once a week | 0.116 | | -0.298 | | 0.128 | | -0.360 | |
| More than once a week | 0.254 | | -0.314 | | -0.036 | | -0.390 | |
| Extended visitation[a] | -0.161 | | 0.137 | | 0.914# | | 0.385 | |
| In-person visits in last year | | | | | | | | |
| None | | -0.383# | | 0.203 | | 0.096 | | 0.272 |
| *Standard*[b] | | | | | | | | |
| Extended[a] | | -0.553 | | 0.330 | | 0.984# | | 0.677# |
| Any child support received in last year | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | -0.195 | -0.161 | -0.163 | -0.134 | -0.028 | -0.028 | 0.082 | 0.081 |
| *No* | | | | | | | | |
| Characteristics of child | | | | | | | | |
| Gender | | | | | | | | |
| *Male* | | | | | | | | |
| Female | 0.872*** | 0.876*** | -0.628*** | -0.627*** | 1.684*** | 1.666*** | -0.681*** | -0.668*** |
| Age | -0.084** | -0.180** | 0.098** | 0.102** | -0.045 | -0.057 | -0.057 | -0.049 |
| Race | | | | | | | | |
| Hispanic | 0.121 | 0.109 | -0.431* | -0.443* | 0.051 | 0.020 | -0.563** | -0.547** |
| *White* | | | | | | | | |
| Black | -0.044 | -0.040 | -0.541** | -0.546** | -0.155 | -0.151 | -0.118 | -0.128 |
| Other | -0.209 | -0.271 | 0.222 | 0.182 | -0.276 | -0.269 | 1.023** | 1.020** |
| Birth status of child | | | | | | | | |
| *Born within marriage* | | | | | | | | |
| Born outside of marriage | -0.085 | -0.072 | -0.046 | -0.036 | 0.084 | 0.031 | -0.035 | 0.007 |
| Missing on birth status | -0.390 | -0.417 | 0.762 | 0.754 | 0.006 | -0.064 | -0.172 | -0.117 |
| Physical health fair or poor | -0.229 | -0.242 | 1.197** | 1.179** | -0.755 | -0.757 | 1.588** | 1.596** |
| Characteristics of MKA | | | | | | | | |
| Age | 0.031* | 0.029* | -0.003 | -0.004 | 0.008 | 0.011 | 0.011 | 0.009 |
| Marital status | | | | | | | | |
| *Married* | | | | | | | | |
| Cohabiting | 0.686* | 0.640# | -0.400 | -0.438 | -0.994** | -0.939** | 0.712* | 0.666* |
| No union | -0.560 | -0.573* | 0.039 | 0.029 | 0.227 | 0.295 | -0.042 | -0.010 |
| Education | | | | | | | | |
| Less than high school | -0.358 | -0.378 | 0.187 | 0.171 | -0.742* | -0.663# | 0.730** | 0.673** |
| *High school* | | | | | | | | |
| Some college | -0.001 | -0.012 | 0.015 | -0.003 | -0.191 | -0.174 | 0.302# | 0.293# |
| College degree or more | 0.192 | 0.186 | -0.004 | -0.009 | 0.671* | 0.659* | -0.255 | -0.240 |
| Employment | | | | | | | | |
| Full-time | 0.054 | 0.051 | -0.141 | -0.134 | -0.181 | -0.174 | -0.174 | -0.180 |
| Part-time | -0.291 | -0.282 | -0.125 | -0.117 | -0.163 | -0.177 | -0.263 | -0.248 |
| *Not employed* | | | | | | | | |
| Foreign born | -0.403 | -0.402 | -0.139 | -0.132 | 0.201 | 0.213 | -0.675* | -0.687* |
| Parental Aggravation | -0.285*** | -0.280*** | 0.300*** | 0.303*** | -0.223*** | -0.2193*** | 0.374*** | 0.372*** |
| Mental Health | 0.013 | 0.014 | -0.032*** | -0.031*** | 0.023* | 0.023* | -0.032*** | -0.032*** |
| Physical health fair or poor | -0.115 | -0.117 | -0.048 | -0.047 | 0.240 | 0.209 | -0.167 | -0.143 |
| Characteristics of household | | | | | | | | |
| Family income (w/o child support) | -0.127# | -0.119# | 0.009 | 0.014 | 0.060 | 0.079 | -0.034 | -0.050 |
| Number of children in household | -0.095 | -0.094 | -0.010 | -0.008 | 0.048 | 0.042 | -0.001 | 0.003 |
| $R^2$ | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0.260 | 0.256 | 0.179 | 0.174 | 0.331 | 0.326 |

[a]Extended visitation includes visits lasting more than one week and less than 3 months, more than one week and more than 3 months, visitation thatis "unclassifiable," and joint custody.[b]Standard visitation includes yearly, monthly, weekly, and more than once a week.

Note: Reference categories in italics.

#p < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.