

FAMILY STRUCTURE AND THE TRANSITION TO EARLY PARENTHOOD

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Family Structure and the Transition to Early Parenthood

Abstract

With the rise in out-of-wedlock childbearing and divorce in the last quarter of the 20th century, an increasing proportion of children have been exposed to a variety of new family forms. Little research has focused on the consequences of childhood family structure for men's transition to fatherhood, or on the factors in the childhood home, particularly family processes, that account for the effects of family structure on the likelihood young women and men become first-time unmarried parents, what we now call "fragile families." The data come from the linked Child-Mother and Young Adult Samples of the NLSY79, which provide information on the children of the women of the NLSY79 from birth until they enter young adulthood. The results suggest that both females and males growing up with a single parent or in an unstable family transition to parenthood early, particularly nonresidential fatherhood for males. For both males and females the effects are strongly mediated by parenting processes and adolescent behaviors, and shaped by economic circumstances. Having experienced multiple transitions as a child is associated with a reduced likelihood that males father their first child within marriage and an increased likelihood that it occurs within cohabitation, demonstrating how changes in family structure alter family structure patterns over time and generations.

INTRODUCTION

With the loosening of ties between childrearing and marriage in the last quarter of the 20th century due to the rise in out-of-wedlock childbearing and divorce, more children are being exposed to a variety of new family forms and experiences. It has been suggested that they reproduce these patterns as they form their own families (McLanahan and Bumpass 1988). Such connections have been shown for women, but little is known about the effects of unstable family structures on men's transitions to early fatherhood, including the transition into nonresidential as well as residential fatherhood. Understanding the pathways that connect childhood family structure across two generations is especially important. To what extent is the intergenerational association between parental and child family structures shaped by family economic context and mediated through parent-child relationships, the ability of parents to work cooperatively, and young men's behaviors in adolescence and young adulthood?

This paper focuses on how family structure and family processes shape the transition to early motherhood and fatherhood among the children of a cohort of young women. The data come from the linked Child-Mother and Young Adult samples of the NLSY79, which together provide information from birth through young adulthood on the children born early to the women of the NLSY79. We distinguish factors that predict residential status for fathers and partner status for residential fathers and mothers—married, cohabiting, and single.

BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Until the last few years, little was known about men's transition to fatherhood, in part because their reports were incomplete and often inaccurate (Shryock, Siegel and Stockwell 1976; Rendall et al. 1999). However, there has been a dramatic expansion in research on this issue,

showing increased recognition that the social aspects of fertility and parenthood for women cannot be understood without understanding men's motivations and behavior (Goldscheider and Kaufman 1996). Despite the rapid growth in nonresidential fatherhood, however, most research has focused simply on becoming a father (Pears et al. 2005; Parke 1996; Xie, Cairns and Cairns 2001); only a few studies have distinguished between residential and nonresidential fatherhood (Forste and Jarvis 2007; Mott 1990) or examined any of the pathways linking family structure and processes in childhood to these outcomes. Although the separation of marriage and parenthood is proceeding for men as it has for women (Eggebeen 2002), differences due to gendered custody patterns mean that men's parenthood experiences necessarily differ from women's.

Women's transition to early motherhood has been widely studied. Some of the earliest research focused upon documenting negative consequences of teen parenthood for the young woman, her child, and her family (Hofferth and Hayes 1987). Researchers argued that early childbearing was linked to less desirable social and economic conditions in the home, including family instability, low resources, and low social control. Under such conditions, early sexual activity was common and young women could anticipate few positive benefits of delaying family formation; hence, pregnancy, childbearing and rearing a family at an early age were the consequences (Haveman and Wolfe 1994; Hofferth and Hayes 1987).

Most of these early pregnancies were premarital, even if births occurred within marriage. However, because pregnancy was less and less often linked to marriage, even at older ages (Wu and Wolfe 2001), the focus shifted to out-of-wedlock childbearing. Then, as it became clear that many of these nonmarital births occurred within cohabiting relationships, research began to distinguish partnered from nonpartnered childbearing. Thus the focus became not just whether a

birth occurred, but what the context of the birth was: within a stable residential relationship such as marriage or cohabitation or with the variable involvement of a nonresidential father.

Like early motherhood, early fatherhood, even if residential, often leads to problems for young parents, as such unions are likely to be unstable (Manning, Smock and Majumdar 2004). Fatherhood requires long-term financial commitment, reducing young men's financial security and ability to invest in their own human capital (Manning and Smock 2000), although, for some young men, residential fatherhood might increase their future adult success if having a child and a partner motivates settling down (Sampson and Laub 1993). This paper develops hypotheses about how family structure and family processes might influence men's and women's early transitions to first parenthood, including, for men, whether they become residential or nonresidential fathers. For both men and women, this paper examines whether these early transitions occur within marriage, cohabitation, or without a coresidential partner. Thus it sheds light on the formation of fragile families, a group of contemporary policy concern (McLanahan and Garfinkel 2000).

Childhood Family Structure and Family Processes

Family structure experiences in childhood influence young women's choices regarding childbearing and partnering when they become adults and create the family structures their children will experience. The negative consequences of such exposure for women include higher rates of premarital intercourse and nonmarital childbearing and cohabitation (Albrecht and Teachman 2003; Wu 1996; Wu and Martinson 1993). This may also be true for men. One study found that young white men who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s without their biological fathers were more likely to become young fathers in the 1980s, and were also more likely to become nonresidential fathers than residential fathers (Barber 2001).

For the most part, studies of young men and young women assume similar processes leading to an early birth (Michael and Tuma 1985). That is, a less attractive personal home situation and less motivation to continue in school, to postpone early sexual activity, and to use adequate contraception will lead to having a child at a younger age. Because most mothers live with their children, this creates a long-term impact for women. However, men have an additional option not available to most women. Men may choose not to live with the mother and their child, i.e., they can opt out of childrearing. This complicates our models; we must consider different processes leading to having a child in a relationship versus outside of a relationship. Therefore, our male-female distinctions occur in the context of the birth rather than in the factors leading to an early birth per se. Further, the degree of maturity of boys and girls differs; at a given age a young woman will be more likely to be in a relationship than a young man. First births to very young men are highly likely to be out-of-wedlock and nonresidential. Hence, we ask: do the processes leading to parenthood work in the same way for young men and young women in terms of the relationship with the child's other parent?

The broader literature on various consequences of childhood family structure has identified three pathways of impact: 1) social learning, 2) social control, and 3) instability (Albrecht and Teachman 2003; Amato 2000; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Teachman 2004; Wu and Martinson 1993; Wu 1996). We consider each in turn as they might apply to the context of early parenthood for young men and young women.

Social learning. Social learning theory suggests that the family type while growing up may shape family roles in young adulthood (Caspi and Elder 1988; Sroufe and Fleeson 1988). Children in traditional two-parent families learn both about the various roles of mothers and fathers in the family as well as about parental interaction. Learning about responsible

involvement of fathers with children and about the ways fathers and mothers interact are important products of two-parent families. It is likely that children growing up with a single mother, whether or not she eventually finds a new partner, learn relationship habits, skills, and expectations that make forming such families themselves more likely. Boys may not learn partnering skills in this situation and hence may become a nonresidential father. Girls may not learn partner skills and may be likely to become a single parent at first birth, mirroring their childhood experiences as well. Girls may also have learned that women are capable of managing a family alone. Because the role of the male is transmitted from fathers to sons, being reared by a single mother has been posited to be more detrimental for boys' than for girls' family formation. Further, mothers' relationships with boyfriends may provide less positive role models for children to emulate as well as fewer incentives for children to remain close and attached to their mothers. These children have seen and learned less about two-parent family life and may have been exposed to less functional alternative family forms (Amato 2000).

Exposure to nontraditional family patterns may have other effects as well. In the case of potential fatherhood, the arrival of a new half-sibling in adolescence as a result of their mother's repartnering might reinforce parental role modeling and lead to a greater interest in fatherhood, especially if this experience is accompanied by the additional responsibilities of caring for a new baby. Similarly, an older sibling who leaves the household may serve as a role model for precocious behaviors leading to early parenthood. It is likely that these nontraditional patterns would be more linked to nontraditional fatherhood for young men than young women, who normally have more exposure to infants through babysitting.

Hypothesis 1. Social learning. Children model parenting behavior they experience. Compared with those growing up with two biological parents, young men growing up in families with

only the mother are likely to experience an earlier transition to parenthood, particularly to nonresidential fatherhood. Young women are more likely to transition to single motherhood. Changes in number of siblings may be more important for young men's transition to parenthood because they are not as involved in rearing them as young women, leading to their exit to early parenthood.

Hypothesis 2.

Social control. The child development literature emphasizes two key dimensions of parenting for adolescent development: control and closeness (Maccoby and Martin 1983). Control is defined as parents' attention to, monitoring, and tracking of their children's whereabouts and activities (Dishion and McMahon 1998) and setting rules for their behavior (Steinberg, Elmen and Mounts 1989). Greater parental monitoring has been found to be associated with a delayed transition to fatherhood (Pears et al. 2005).

Two-parent families monitor and control their children more than do single-parent families (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Pears et al. 2005; Forste and Jarvis 2007). Besides providing role models, these families' normally positive parenting practices provide children incentives to attend to family norms and follow parental preferences. Nontraditional families ordinarily provide less parental input than stable two-parent families because most children experience living with a single parent at least for a while during a transition. Even if mothers remarry, the new stepparents normally provide less positive parenting during the early years, as the development of consistent, supportive parental patterns may take time. Stepfathers have been shown to engage in less monitoring than residential biological fathers (Hetherington, Bridges and Insabella 1998; Hofferth and Anderson 2003).

Control strategies are even more important as children enter adolescence and a third dimension of parenting, autonomy-granting, becomes salient (Steinberg, Elmen and Mounts 1989; Steinberg and Darling 1994). Autonomy-granting encourages the development of children's decision-making skills, opinions, and beliefs (Galambos and Ehrenberg 1997; Steinberg 2001). The combination of high parental monitoring and high autonomy granting (shared rules) should result in the most favorable adolescent development, and, we expect, a slower transition to fatherhood, particularly nonresidential fatherhood, than in other parenting types. High monitoring with imposed rules, in contrast, should lead to a faster transition to fatherhood than in a comparable shared-rules family, increasing fatherhood either as a form of acting out or just to get out of the home.

Boys and girls may benefit differentially from fathers' and mothers' supervision. Because boys are given more autonomy than girls, particularly in families with a nonresidential father (Buchanan, Maccoby and Dornbusch 1996; Furstenberg et al. 1999) and because girls report parental knowledge about their actions to be greater (Kerr and Stattin 2000), control strategies will be more important for boys than for girls. Early research has also shown the negative impact of authoritarian childrearing to be stronger for boys than girls (Maccoby and Martin 1983).

Control is not as effective, however, without a positive emotional connection to parents. Closeness, defined as feelings of warmth, acceptance, connectedness, affection, responsiveness, supportiveness, and attachment, measures emotional involvement in a child's life. Because closeness to parents declines as children enter adolescence (Hofferth and Anderson 2003), the monitoring and autonomy dimensions of authoritative parenting are expected to be important influences on children's transitions into adulthood. Nevertheless, closeness to parents continues

to reduce adolescent behavior problems for both boys and girls. One study suggests that boys benefit more than girls from close relationships King 2006; King and Sobolewski 2006). For boys, emotional withdrawal from the mother was linked to antisocial behavior, low grades, and weak school effort (Buchanan, Maccoby and Dornbusch 1996). However, that same study suggested that the mother-adolescent relationship was important for reducing problems among girls as well.

Although research has focused primarily upon the mother's parenting, recent research that has examined the effect on children's behavior of parenting of both mothers and fathers has found that having one close and involved parent is sufficient (Fletcher, Steinberg and Sellers 1999; King 2006; Simons and Conger 2007). However, cooperation between partners or former partners in parenting their children also affects father-child relationship quality and responsive fathering (Sobolewski and King 2005). Recent research has shown that cooperative parenting reduces the behavior problems of adolescents even if they are not living with their father (King 2006; King and Sobolewski 2006). Therefore, it should also reduce early transitions to parenthood, and, among men, nonresidential fatherhood

Hypothesis 3. Social control. Young men and women who grow up with rules are less likely to transition to parenthood early. However, young men growing up with little say in the rules are likely to make an earlier transition to parenthood than those with more say in the rules. Young men and women who experience low maternal warmth are particularly likely to transition to parenthood early.

Instability. Separation and divorce are major disruptions in children's lives that can be deeply unsettling, altering their day-to-day routines and undermining their sense of security for years thereafter. Thus it may not be the *type of family* that matters to children's lives but the

number of disruptions. Research that has examined both the types of family structure changes and their number concludes that the number of transitions causes more child problems than specific types of transitions (Wu and Martinson 1993). Multiple transitions (of any type) are likely to be more destabilizing than only a few (Wu 1996).

Mechanisms cited to explain the effects of instability include stress, increased exposure to sexual activity, and reduced social and financial capital. Besides the stresses occasioned by parental conflict, family members change; children lose/add parents, stepparents, and step- and half-siblings. Most changes in family structure involve more disruptions than just changes in parents (both additions and subtractions), as it is often necessary to move (Astone and McLanahan 1994). Families may change neighborhoods and school systems, losing relationships with neighbors, peers, and school communities. Family resources may also decline. Children who experienced living with a stepparent might transition to partnership and parenthood early either because of exposure to sexual activity at home or because of conflicts within the family brought about by the presence of men who are not biological parents of the children (Amato 2000). Girls may wish to escape from unstable families and be willing to establish whatever relationships they can to regain a sense of stability, including cohabitation and early marriage. For boys, that may mean fathering a child before having the resources to sustain a long-term relationship with the mother.

Hypothesis 4. Instability. More parental family structure transitions over the entire childhood are likely to be associated with a greater chance of early parenthood. For young women, growing up in a household with many transitions, with partners of the mother moving in and out, will be associated with experiencing the transition to parenthood earlier,

particularly to living with a partner. Instability for young men will be associated with nonmarital relationships.

In addition to our major hypotheses about the effects of family structure and parenting styles on the timing and contexts of the transitions to parenthood of young men and women, we also consider factors likely to mediate or condition those relationships and variables focusing on socioeconomic context that might also affect the transition to parenthood. These include measures of adolescent behavior, young adult behavior, and family background.

Indicators of Adolescent Behavior

Early family structure experiences are likely to influence adolescent behaviors by altering their risk of fathering or bearing a child and, therefore, the risk of early parenthood. The most important indicator is whether or not the adolescent reports being sexually active at a young age. Sexually active youth have an elevated chance of fathering a child or becoming pregnant because of both increased pregnancy risk and inadequate contraception (Barber 2001; Albrecht and Teachman 2003; Pears et al. 2005).

Early childbearing is the outcome of a set of activities that indicate an early transition to adulthood. Youth who engage in adult-like and less normative behaviors for teens and who are oriented more outside of school than towards school pursuits are likely to be precocious in sexual activity (Pears et al. 2005). Jaffee and colleagues (Jaffee et al. 2001) found that having a “conduct disorder” increased young men’s likelihood of becoming a father in the United Kingdom. Hence, such behaviors as drinking, staying out past curfew, skipping school, lying, and fighting should increase the chance of having a child, particularly a nonresidential child (Dearden, Hale and Blankson 1994; Thornberry, Smith and Howard 1997; Pears et al. 2005). Negative attitudes towards school should also be associated with early sexual activity. Although

attendance at religious services has been found in other studies to be associated with less risk of early childbearing (Hofferth and Hayes 1987), it was never found so linked in our data and was not included in the final analyses.

Young Adult Behavior

Finally, we examine the time-varying contexts within which young men and women are making the decisions that may lead to early parenthood. These include employment and schooling behavior. The ability to sustain a relationship depends upon financial as well as personal stability. We expect that those men and women who are employed will be more likely to transition to residential parenthood and those in school will delay parenthood (Forste and Jarvis 2007; Ku, Sonenstein and Pleck 1993). We also initially examined the potential effects of these young adults' living arrangements as they make the transition to adulthood. Men and women living with both parents should be less likely to transition to early parenthood (Forste and Jarvis 2007) because of additional monitoring by parents. However, because these measures did not add to the models and causal direction was unclear, they are not included here.

Other Family Background and Control Variables

Of substantial concern in the research literature is that, even controlling for many of the pathways linking family disruption to various outcomes, the 'consequences' observed may reflect differences between parents who take the traditional path and other parents. They may also reflect parental responses to child temperament. We control for a rich set of measured family resources from early childhood through adolescence, reducing the extent of unobserved differences and potential for reciprocal child influence. Urban residence may be linked to an early transition to problematic adulthood because of access to city "distractions," the greater difficulty of monitoring their activities, and exposure to the sexual norms and values of urban

underclass youth (Thornberry, Smith and Howard 1997). In contrast, southern norms and values may delay childbearing, given that young adults living in the south follow more traditional family pathways (Goldscheider and Waite 1991).

Young men and women who were children of women who began childbearing as teenagers are also likely to be disadvantaged. As a result they are expected to be more likely to become young parents and, among males, to become nonresidential fathers, again because of lack of role models or because of pressure on family resources (Hardy et al. 1998; Barber 2001; Albrecht and Teachman 2003). Both sons and daughters of mothers who bore a child at an early age experience an early first birth, although Barber (2001) suggests that this effect only characterizes births that were premaritally conceived. Based on previous research, African American youth are expected to be more likely to bear a child out of wedlock than White youth (Hofferth and Hayes 1987).

Parental resources may reduce the effects of family structure in other ways, as well. Family type may shape the extent to which youth benefit from remaining close to their family of origin, if only because two-parent families tend to have greater resources, and resources provide parents leverage over their children's behavior (McLanahan and Bumpass 1988). Young people who were reared in economically disadvantaged households will have less cause to remain at home and, as a consequence, will be more likely to have children at a young age; males will be more likely to be nonresidential fathers. Hence, including controls for parental income and education should reduce the apparent effects of family structure on the transition to parenthood.

DATA, MEASURES AND METHODS

Data

The data come from the 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79), collected annually through 1994 and biannually thereafter; we used data through 2006. Beginning in 1986, the NLSY79 obtained detailed information on children from the mothers, performed standardized assessments every two years on the children themselves (the Child-Mother study), and in 1988 began interviewing children directly as they entered their teen years (ages 10-14). Starting in 1994, children 15 and older were interviewed using questionnaires similar to those given their mothers, and beginning in 2000, these young adults were interviewed as a separate research project, the Young Adult Study (Mott 2002). These data provide information on two generations: 1) the women who were 14 to 21 in 1979 and the subjects of the original study, whom we call the “mothers,” and 2) those women’s sons and daughters, whom we observe in their late teens and early twenties, now called “young adults.” We could not include those older than age 28; they were born prior to 1978, the earliest year for which complete data on their mothers were collected in the first, 1979, survey.

The oldest young adults were necessarily the children of early childbearers; therefore, this cohort of young adults is disproportionately drawn from more disadvantaged families. We have a sample of 2,949 young adult men and 2,853 young adult women, born in 1978 or later, who were ever 14 to 28 in one of the years from 1988 to 2006. All data are weighted in our analyses to represent the national population of young men and women of the appropriate ages. Robust standard errors were calculated to adjust for clustering within families.

Measures

The Outcome Variables. Our outcome measures focus on the timing of first childbearing and on residence at first birth. The 2006 Young Adult fertility and relationship data were used to obtain young adults’ ages at birth of the first biological child. Annual files were checked to

obtain information on whether young adults resided with their children at the time of birth and whether they were married or cohabiting at the time. Because births occurred between survey waves, the residence was determined as of the first wave following childbirth. We include as residential fathers all young men living with their children around the time of birth, whether or not the mother of those children was there. Only a few mothers did not live with their children and they were not included in this analysis. Eighty-two percent of young men had not yet fathered a child by the last wave, 9% were fathers not living with their first child at birth (nonresidential), 6% were residential fathers living with a cohabiting partner and their first child, 2% were residential fathers living with their wife and first child, and about 1% were single residential fathers not living with a partner shortly after their first child was born. Among young women, 71% had not yet had a child, 19% were single at the time of their first birth, 7% were living with a cohabiting partner, and 3% were married.

Family Structure. The number of parental transitions tests the instability hypothesis and the presence/absence of the biological father for those with no transitions tests the social learning hypothesis. Because of the importance of family changes between 10 and 14 on whether young people become parents, we included two additional family structure variables — whether the number of siblings in the household increased (nearly all of whom are babies) and whether the number of siblings in the household declined, also to test the social learning hypothesis. The omitted category is no observed change in number of siblings.

Using household records in each wave we distinguished cases in which the biological father was in the household for all years when the young adult was 0-14 (father always there) and those in which the biological father was never in the household over the 0-14 period and no stepfather was ever in the household (father never there). Those who had some transitions were

divided based upon whether they experienced 1 to 3 transitions or 4 or more transitions.

Because some individuals were missing several years of data and because a transition was only counted using stated data, we created family structure indicators only if we had a minimum of three years of stated data. Twenty young men had missing data due to this criterion. Young women's data were complete. Alternative specifications testing the effects of transitions earlier in childhood versus those later in childhood found no differences.

Childhood Background. In order to determine whether family structure effects were independent of background factors in childhood, we computed average values for family income, the education of the residential father, the mother's work hours, the proportions of years in the south, and the proportion of years in urban areas over child observations between birth and age 14, providing a more stable summary of early experiences. We also included indicators for Hispanic and nonHispanic black race/ethnicity (versus nonHispanic white and other).

The education of the spouse/partner of the mother was averaged over all the years in which the young adult was 0-14. If no spouse or partner was present, the mother's education was substituted. Similarly, the average income of the spouse or partner was obtained across all years in which the child was 0-14. These are, admittedly, rough summary measures of average resource levels over childhood; early exploratory work found no evidence that using separate measures for periods would substantially improve the models. Five percent of fathers were never present and, for them, an average across all fathers' incomes was substituted and an indicator for missing father's income included.

Employment hours, together with education, provide a reasonable control for mothers' labor supply behavior and potential earnings. We used the average weekly work hours of the mother to indicate her contribution to the family's economic well-being across all ages 0-14.

Average annual maternal work hours for all years in which the young adult was 0-14 years of age were divided by 50 in order to estimate average weekly hours. Given a high correlation between mothers' and fathers' educational levels, it was redundant to include the mother's education. Early tests found that the results did not differ if the mother's education were used. The age of the young adult's mother when she had her first child was directly reported by that mother and recorded in the NLSY data.

Family Process Variables. Family process data were used to test the social control hypothesis. Information was collected from children aged 10-14 in a self-administered questionnaire. If information was available for more than one year from these biannual surveys, we took the more recent one. We examined whether the family had rules, whether the child had a say in the rules, whether parents coparented, and how close the child was to his/her parents.

The NLSY asked children whether parents had rules about doing homework, telling parents where they are, watching television, and attending parties with members of the opposite sex. If parents had rules, the child was asked how much say he or she had in making the rule (1=no say to 4=a lot of say). Because few children had rules for attending parties (they were too young) or rules about television watching, we only included the rules about homework and informing parents about their whereabouts (2=both, 1=either, 0=none). Those children who had rules about both of these behaviors and who had more than the median amount of say in the rules (5 or more) were said to be in a family in which they had *shared rules* (the reference category). If children had rules but little or no say in them (<5), they were in *imposed rule* families. *No rules* children were in families with 0 or 1 rule.

Closeness to parents between ages 10 and 14 was measured by three items for each parent: How close do you feel to your parent (separately for mother/biological

father/stepfather)? (1 = not very, 2 = fairly, 3 = quite, 4 = extremely); how well do you share ideas and talk about important things with that parent? (1 = not very well to 4 = extremely well); and how often does the parent miss important events and activities? (1 = a lot to 3 = almost never). The residential father was used if the respondent reported on multiple fathers. The score for father involvement was calculated as the difference between the mother's and the father's. Those with missing data for father closeness were assigned the lowest score (across all respondents) indicating that there was not enough of a relationship for the youth to have answered the questions; "father never present" was strongly associated with missing information related to the father.

The literature defines parenting style using the three dimensions of monitoring, autonomy, and closeness. In initial analyses we found there were interactions that would not be evident were we to include them separately. Therefore, we created a set of dummy variables that describe parenting in terms of the three dimensions. We split maternal closeness at the median into two categories, high and low. We then cross classified closeness by the rules categories (1= no rules, 2=imposed rules, and 3= shared rules) into 6 categories of parenting style: 1) high closeness, shared rules, 2) low closeness, shared rules, 3) high closeness, imposed rules, 4) low closeness, imposed rules, 5) high closeness, no rules, and 6) low closeness, no rules. Types 1 and 2 both have rules and autonomy, but in type 1 parents are warm and in type 2 they are not. Type 1 is the original "authoritative" classification based upon Maccoby and Martin (1983), and is our omitted category. Type 2 could be included in authoritative except that the level of warmth is low, so it is kept as a separate category. Both 3 and 4 have rules but no say in them. They represent the authoritarian style, differing only on the extent of warmth. Categories 5 and 6 have no rules, but one is neglectful (low warmth) and the other permissive (high warmth).

Coparenting was based on two variables: 1) How well do your mother and (bio/step) father agree on rules for you? (1=never, 2=once in a while, 3=fairly often, 4=very often) and 2) Do your mother and (bio/step) father get along well together? (1=never, 2=once in a while, 3=fairly often to 4=very often). We used the mother and father in the household if there was a father present; if not, we used the report on the mother and nonresidential biological father. The two items were summed to obtain the coparenting scale.

Adolescent and Young Adult Behaviors. In order to determine some of the pathways through which childhood family structure might operate, we examined a set of behaviors in adolescence and young adulthood. For adolescent behaviors, we examined sexual experience, school attitudes, and delinquent behavior. Data come both from the self-administered questionnaires completed when they were 10-14 and from their interviews as young adults. Young adults were asked the age when they first had sex. If the response indicated that they first had sex under age 15, a fixed time dummy variable (1, 0) was included in this set of variables; if older at first sex, a time-varying measure in later adolescence and young adulthood was included. The delinquent acts scale is based on the sum of nine items asked of 10-14 year olds in the self-administered questionnaire, including such items as: “stayed out later than parents said,” “hurt someone bad enough to need doctor,” “lied to parents about something important,” and “took something without paying.” Item responses ranged from 0=never to 3=more than twice. Children 10-14 also answered 8 items asking about their attitudes towards school, such as “it’s easy to make friends,” “teachers help with personal problems,” and “my school work requires me to think.” Answers were coded 0-3, with 0 indicating a positive attitude and 3 a negative one, for a possible range from 0 to 24. For both scales, because the child was 10-14, we selected the latest year in which the youth participated.

For young adult behaviors, in addition to the time-varying variable indicating whether they had sex for the first time that year, we created a set of variables for whether they were enrolled in school or employed each year. Young adults often combine school and work, so we created four mutually exclusive categories: working full-time (35+ hours per week), not working full-time but enrolled in school, not enrolled but working 20-34 hours/week, and not enrolled and working less than 20 hours/week (omitted).

Methods

The analysis uses both life table methods and multivariate discrete-time event history analysis. The life table analysis is based upon the fertility experience of individual young men and women and used the actuarial approach. This life table was calculated for each gender and then was stratified by childhood family structure within gender.

Our event history analysis file consists of a separate observation for each year a young man or woman was present in the NLSY young adult study and had not yet fathered/borne a first child, beginning at age 14. (The few cases that had a child before age 14 were deleted.) Once the young person reported having fathered/borne a child, the dependent variable (had a child) became one and later years of data were censored. Thus young men/women have as many observations as the number of years present and not having had a child at the beginning of the year, 14,716 person years for men and 14,104 for women. Robust standard errors were obtained in the statistical software package, Stata, to adjust for clustering within families and across years.

Analysis Plan. After examining the life-table pattern of transition to fatherhood by family structure and number of transitions, we move to a multivariate analysis of the determinants of this transition. We first analyze the entry into parenthood for men and for

women and, second, using multinomial logistic regression, examine whether the young man was living with that child at the time of birth. A third competing risk analysis focused on whether residential mothers and residential fathers were single parents, married parents, or cohabiting parents. Too few women were living apart from their children to analyze separately.

In each of the analyses we present five models. Model I includes only the family structure variables, Model II adds family background controls and socioeconomic status, Model III adds the family process measures, Model IV adds adolescent behavior, and Model V adds young adult behavior in the prior year. In our analyses, we tested for gender interactions and report significant differences where appropriate.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

Weighted means and standard deviations of the independent variables based on the person-year file are presented in Table 1. The average age over the person-year file was 17.6 for men and 17.4 for women, indicating that of the total of more than 14,000 actual person-year observations, a majority of person years occurred in adolescence. Over the total number of person years, in 97.5% of years there were no births (not shown). Among men, 36% of person years were of youth who experienced 1-3 transitions, 12% were of youth who experienced 4+ transitions, and 5% were of youth whose father was never there, with similar results for females. In the remaining 47-48% of person years, the young men/women had lived continuously with two biological parents.

(Table 1 about here)

Background characteristics are consistent with what would be expected among the families of young mothers (who averaged age 21 at first birth), and young adult behavior is typical for age and cohort. About half of young men's and women's person years were in families with imposed rules; 38-39% grew up with shared rules, and 11-16% grew up with few rules. More than 80% of both young men and women reported close relationships with their mothers.

Transitioning to parenthood

A substantial proportion of young men made the transition to parenthood during the period we could observe (Table 2). For those men observed at age 18, 3% had fathered a child and by age 21, 14% had fathered a child. Nearly 31% had fathered a child by age 25 and 39% had fathered one by age 27. Nine percent of young women had become a mother by age 18, 28% by age 21, 46% by age 25 and 55% by age 27. Young women transition to motherhood earlier than young men most likely because young women are 2.5 years younger than their husbands and partners, on average (Kreider and Fields 2002). Although young men are generally not as good reporters of their childbearing as young women (Rendall et al. 1999), the fertility data from this study are better than most because they are collected prospectively and their quality has been scrutinized (Mott 1990). The levels of transition to fatherhood found here are similar to those observed in other datasets (Hynes et al. 2008).

(Insert Table 2 about here)

There are large differences in the probability of parenthood by family structure (Figure 1). Few young men who reached the age of 16 had become fathers, but by age 18 there was a clear divergence by family structure that widened through age 21 and then stabilized. Young

men who grew up with a continuous, residential father were much less likely to have become fathers at any age than those who did not, with nearly 77% still not parents at age 25. In contrast, at the opposite extreme, both young men who grew up with the father never there and those who experienced four or more transitions were far more likely to have become fathers at an early age, with very little difference between these two groups. About 26% of those who never lived with a father were fathers themselves by age 21 and 48% had become fathers by age 25. About 25% of those who experienced 4 or more transitions were fathers by age 21 and 40% had become a father by age 25. Those who had experienced 3 or fewer transitions in family structure were between those with a continuously residential father and those in the other two groups.

(Figure 1 about here)

Family structure differences are even greater for young women and the divergence is clear even at age 16. The difference between those who never lived with a father and those who lived with a father present at least some of the time widened continuously until age 22. Twenty-five percent of young women who grew up with a single mother were mothers by age 18, 50% by age 21, and 85% by age 27. As with males, growing up in a family with 4 or more transitions was associated with the next most rapid transition to motherhood, but there was little difference between those with 1-3 transitions and those with 4 or more. For women, those who never lived with their father had the most rapid transition to parenthood.

Becoming a Father

We present the results of our first analysis of the transition to parenthood for young men and women, with no distinction between residential and nonresidential status, in a series of five models (Table 3). For each gender, the first model shows just the family structure differences,

essentially testing the differences previously shown in Figure 1, but adding the two measures of change in the numbers of siblings. Focusing first on men, each of the nontraditional family structures is significantly associated with an early transition to fatherhood, relative to having a continuously resident biological father (the reference group). Again, those who experienced 3 or fewer transitions were more likely than the reference group but less likely than the two groups of those who experienced 4 or more transitions and those who grew up in a stable, single mother family to have an early transition to fatherhood. Compared to those who always lived with the father, those who never lived with a father were 2.8 times as likely to become a father, those who experienced 4 or more transitions were about 2.3 times as likely to become fathers, and those experiencing 1-3 transitions were 1.8 times as likely to become fathers.

(Insert Table 3 about here)

Those who gained a new sibling between age 10 and age 14 were also considerably more likely to become fathers than those who did not, whereas a sibling leaving home had no effect. The effect of gaining a sibling was not as large as the effect of change in numbers of parents and stepparents (a 50% increase in transitioning to parenthood compared with a doubling or even tripling), but was substantial and significant. As nearly all of these new siblings were new babies, it is possible that the experience of sharing in the care of a new baby makes men more interested and/or willing to have their own.

Model II adds the family background variables, and suggests that much of the significant effect of family structure on the transition to fatherhood for young men in this cohort is due to other aspects of family background. All of the coefficients for family structure dropped substantially in size and became insignificant, although “gain sibling” still showed significant positive effects. We were concerned that by controlling for mothers’ spouse/partners’

characteristics, we were confounding the effects of family structure, despite our care in imputing missing values for cases with no father information. However, we found exactly the same result if we included mother's education instead of the two father measures (results not shown).

The effects of the background variables are as expected. Those with more socioeconomic resources were less likely to become young fathers. Young men who spent their entire childhoods in the south were about 30 percent less likely to become a young father. Each year older their mothers were when they first gave birth reduced young men's likelihood of becoming a young father by about 18 percent. Black men were 55 percent more likely than white men to become fathers early, and of course, older men were more likely to become fathers than younger men. For this specification of the dependent variable (simply becoming a father), the effects of growing up in an urban area, being Hispanic rather than non-Hispanic white, and variation in mothers' numbers of work hours had no significant effects.

Although adding our measures of family processes (Model III) did not further reduce the mostly insignificant coefficients linking family structure and early fatherhood, family processes themselves have significant effects. Growing up in a household with imposed rules was associated with a faster transition to fatherhood. This was statistically significant in all models for young men who were low on closeness to their mother and marginally significant in models IV and V for those who were high on closeness to their mother. This finding did not weaken with the addition of adolescent and young adult behavior.

The addition of adolescent and young adult behavior (Model IV) further reduces the size of the family structure coefficients, providing additional evidence of mediation by such behaviors. Early sexual activity is a necessary condition for becoming a young father, with those who began their sexual careers early (before age 15) almost twice as likely to become young

fathers as those who waited until age 15 or later. Those who engaged in delinquent behaviors in adolescence were also more likely to become young fathers. Few had engaged in delinquent activities but each additional unit score increased the likelihood of early fatherhood by nearly 4 percent. Attitude towards school was not associated with fatherhood.

The only dimensions of young adults' time-varying behaviors in this model that affected the transition to fatherhood were having had first sex in the previous year among those who had not had sex before age 15, and working full time. Surprisingly, there was no separate effect of school enrollment.

Becoming a Mother

The effects of childhood family structure are similar for women and men before adding controls. Once controls are added, the results differ. Unlike the effects for men, growing up without a father is associated with an increased transition to motherhood across *all* models, although its effects are reduced as controls are added. The effect of growing up without a father is marginally ($p=.07$) different for women and men in model IV. For women, the effects of instability decline dramatically but marginally significant when social class controls are added, but the inclusion of family process variables reduces them to nonsignificance for 4+ transitions (although 1-3 remains positive and significant). The coefficient for 1-3 transitions remains marginally significant when adolescent behavioral differences are introduced. Only after introducing the effect of variation in behavior as young adults is the effect of number of transitions reduced to nonsignificance. The full model is needed to mediate the effects of childhood family structure for women, whereas, for men, family background alone mediates nearly all the effects of childhood family structure.

Family background. As for young men, young women growing up in a household in which the mother's spouse has more education and income are significantly less likely to become mothers at an early age. Those growing up with a mother who was older at first birth are also less likely to transition to early motherhood. In contrast to males, women who grew up in the south did not differ in their odds of transitioning to motherhood from those who grew up in other areas, and black women were not more likely than white women to become young mothers.

Family processes. In contrast to the result for young men, for whom shared rules mattered, the family process variable that matters for young women is closeness to mother. Young women living in a family with rules who were less close to their mother were more likely to become a mother early themselves, regardless of whether they had a say in the rules. Surprisingly, lacking rules was not associated with a faster transition to motherhood; however, few girls (11 percent) and boys (16 percent) grew up in a family without rules. The coefficients declined and become less significant as adolescent and young adult behaviors were added to the models, indicating that these other variables explained some of the effect of family processes.

Finally, as for boys, initiating sex before age 15 (or in the previous year) and engaging in delinquent activities were associated with a greater chance of becoming a young parent. As with boys, being employed either full-time or part-time was associated with becoming a mother.

Becoming a Residential or Nonresidential Father

Fatherhood is a more diverse experience for men than women; almost all mothers live with their children, whereas this is not the case for men. When we distinguish between factors leading young men to become residential vs. nonresidential fathers, some patterns are general, affecting both father types, and others have a much clearer impact on one type of young

fatherhood than the other. Table 4 shows the results, following the same sequence of models as in the previous tables. Here we show only the family structure and the family process results; the other results show few differences by residential type (results available on request).

(Table 4 about here)

The effects of family structure on residential fatherhood are significant for model I but there are no significant effects of family structure by Model II, similar to the pattern shown for the overall transition to fatherhood. The effects of family structure on nonresidential fatherhood are stronger, however, and not all of the effects attenuate with the addition of sociodemographic controls. Most dramatically, before introducing controls, young men who grew up without a residential father were more than six times as likely to become nonresidential fathers themselves as are those growing up with both their biological parents, and they were twice as likely to become a nonresidential father after controlling for background factors (Model II). The effect of never living with a father on nonresidential fatherhood remained significant after demographic controls were added in Model II, but was reduced to nonsignificance in Model III with the inclusion of family process measures. The effects of unstable family structures on nonresidential parenthood were more persistent. Although the coefficients were not significant in models II through IV, there was an increase in influence in Model V. Having had four or more transitions was associated with a small but significant chance of nonresidential fatherhood that had been masked but reappeared after controlling young adult behavior.

In contrast to family structure effects, the association of a “new baby sister/brother” with residential parenthood was somewhat stronger in model I than its association with nonresidential parenthood. It remained positive for both fatherhood forms after the first model, but was no longer significant. Interestingly, having a sibling *leave* the household doubled the likelihood of

nonresidential fatherhood. It is possible that this effect reflects an intensification of the other disruption effects, if losing a (step)parent also means losing a close sibling, or perhaps the now-absent sibling was doing some parental-like monitoring while still in the household.

The family process measures also differentiated transitions to residential and nonresidential fatherhood. If coupled with high maternal closeness, growing up in a household with imposed rules was associated with a faster transition to residential fatherhood. In contrast, if coupled with low maternal closeness, growing up in a household with imposed rules was associated with a faster transition to nonresidential fatherhood. None of the other family process measures was associated with young men's transition to fatherhood.

Becoming a Residential Married, Cohabiting or Single Parent

Residential parenthood is clearly a "better" choice than nonresidential parenthood, but the status of the coparental relationship, whether a committed partner is present, is also likely to have consequences. In Table 5, we show for men and women the association between family structure measures and the transition to married residential parenthood, cohabiting residential parenthood, and single residential parenthood, showing only Models I, II, and V. The general pattern of nonstandard family structures accelerating the transition to parenthood that we saw in earlier analyses does not hold for all partner statuses. We see that the different directions of associations between specific childhood family structure types and partner status at transition explain the weak association across all residential statuses. For men, having experienced more transitions in childhood was associated with a reduced speed of transition to married fatherhood and an increased speed of transition to cohabiting fatherhood, relative to remaining childless. The difference between these two coefficients for men was statistically significant. There was also a significant increased speed of transition to single fatherhood in model I. There was no

association between never having lived with a father and parenthood transitions for young men. For women, never having lived with the father was associated with an accelerated transition to both married and single parenthood (but had no effect on cohabiting parenthood). In contrast to men, for women having had more transitions was not significantly associated with motherhood once other variables were controlled. Gaining a sibling was associated with married motherhood whereas losing a sibling was associated with cohabiting or single parenthood for women. For men, gaining a sibling was associated with transitioning to cohabiting parenthood whereas losing a sibling was not associated with type of residential transition.

(Insert Table 5 about here)

Another unusual aspect of the effect of nontraditional family structure on the transition to married fatherhood is that, unlike the situation in which adding controls weakened its effects on transitions to fatherhood, adding controls actually *strengthened* the association between experiencing 4 or more transitions and a reduced transition to married fatherhood. The association was suppressed by income and educational influences on both whether young men father a child and whether they marry. Of course, the number of married fathers is small, so these results are only suggestive.

Sample sizes were also too small to distinguish effects of different parenting styles on partner status. However, in a process that was not previously significant, the relationship between the young man's parents was associated with whether or not he became a single father. Young men growing up in families in which parents got along and agreed in childrearing were more likely to become a single father (not shown).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of this analysis suggest that we have identified factors linked to early parenthood for both young men and young women. We paid particular attention to pathways linking family structure and parenthood that run through socioeconomic circumstances, family processes, and problematic adolescent behaviors.

Support for our hypotheses was strong. Boys who grew up with a single parent or who experienced instability due to multiple transitions are likely to reproduce this pattern when they become parents themselves. They have a substantially higher likelihood of entering fatherhood early, but are less likely to marry, and are particularly likely to become nonresidential fathers. Girls who never lived with a father or who lived with several father figures are more likely to transition to motherhood early, both to single and to married (but not cohabiting) motherhood.

Which theoretical explanations of family structure effects were supported? For boys, *instability* was supported as an important process in childhood affecting parenthood. *Instability* was more consistent in its effects on whether the young man fathered a child and the type of residential/nonresidential context than was *social learning*. Having grown up with a single parent (social learning) or having experienced many transitions (instability) predicted faster transitions to residential or nonresidential fatherhood for young men in the first model without controls. Including family background measures in the model reduced the effects of both nontraditional family structure experiences on transitions to fatherhood, suggesting support for the resources-in-the-home explanation of family structure effects, that early parenthood occurs because of low resources at home that are associated with single mother and unstable family structures.

However, the effect of high instability, experiencing four or more transitions, remained associated with becoming a nonresidential father in the final models. In addition, examining

differences among residential fathers, we found that having experienced a high number of transitions was associated with a significantly lower risk of becoming a married father and a higher risk of becoming a cohabiting father. Instability appears to be especially troublesome for the ability of boys to enter into stable parenting relationships. The effects of growing up with a single mother were in the same direction but weaker. Support for the *social learning* or role modeling explanation was provided for boys by the fact that the entry of a sibling was associated with a faster transition to fatherhood, particularly within cohabitation. The experience of sharing in the care of a new baby may make men more interested and/or willing to have their own.

Social control theory was also supported for boys. For them, the most important family process associated with reducing the early transition to fatherhood was whether the child had a say in the rules. Parental warmth only distinguished the type of transition, not its timing. Having rules imposed was associated with a faster transition to residential fatherhood if the relationship with the mother was warm and a faster transition to nonresidential fatherhood if the relationship was not warm. Better parenting practices, such as letting adolescent boys have some say in setting rules, reduces the likelihood of the young adult becoming an early father. Because of their greater mobility, boys may simply reject rules that they have not participated in setting, and limiting their activities is difficult.

The process differed for girls. The strongest associations with early parenthood were those of living with a single mother and never with the father throughout childhood, which remained significant in all models. The results provide more support for the *social learning* hypothesis than for the *instability* hypothesis. The number of transitions (instability) was significantly related to parenthood in model 1 but not after adding socioeconomic status variables in model 2. Examining transitions to married, cohabiting, and single parenthood, we

see that having always lived with the mother and never lived with the father was associated with a faster transition to both residential married motherhood and to single motherhood. In contrast, a high number of transitions was not linked to greater marital or single motherhood. This fits with the idea that young women are socialized into single parenthood; such young women are more likely to become single mothers. Surprisingly, they were also likely to marry, though the proportion who married was small. Some support for the effect of socialization was provided by the significance of gaining a sibling, which was associated with a higher rate of transition to married motherhood.

The *social control* hypothesis was not salient for girls. Compared with families in which closeness was high and their child had a say in the rules, having no say or having no rules made no difference to childbearing. What mattered was whether the child and mother were close. Children who reported that they were not close to the mother were more likely to become mothers early, regardless of the type of rule-setting in their family.

Finally, as other studies have found, children's sexual and delinquent behavior were excellent predictors of early transition to parenthood for both boys and girls, and positive social control efforts would likely reduce these behaviors. Working in young adulthood provides the resources for supporting a family, and this study found employment associated with parenthood for both men and women.

The strengths of the study are data collected prospectively from multiple informants over the entire lifetime on the young adult, the availability of measures of family process and adolescent behavior, and the focus on a recent and policy-relevant group of young adults. Nevertheless, there are several weaknesses. First, these young adults are still relatively young;

we can see whether these results hold up as more enter parenthood. Second, the measures of parenting are limited to mothering because this was a study of the children of mothers.

Based on these results, we draw the following conclusions. First, growing up without two parents has intergenerational consequences. Young men who experienced substantial instability growing up are themselves more likely to experience disrupted fathering and go on to become absent fathers. Girls apparently do not learn appropriate relationship skills if they grow up in families without their fathers, even if they are stable, and this leads them to rear children in such families themselves. Second, many but not all of the intergenerational effects operate through the correlates—perhaps causes and perhaps consequences—of disrupted family structures: socioeconomic disadvantage, weakened parenting, and problematic adolescent behaviors. Breaking the cycle, then, could occur at any of these points, but most powerfully by breaking the connection between family structure and poverty. Lower income and education of the mother's partner, the father figure to the child, remain significantly associated with their son's fathering a child that he does not subsequently live with. This suggests that continued failure to address economic disadvantage will result in reproducing patterns that are disadvantageous for all concerned. Third, parenting patterns make a difference. Programs to help improve parenting skills may help alleviate some of the avoidable negative consequences of family transitions and instability.

This paper is the first to elaborate how family structures during childhood are associated with young men's nonresidential as well as residential parenthood and, among the latter, with marriage, cohabitation, and single parenting for both men and women. It contributes by showing how parenting processes and adolescent behaviors explain some of the effects of family

structures on the transition to parenthood. Finally, it points to the continued influence of socioeconomic disadvantage on the early transition of young men and women to parenthood.

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Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of the Independent Variables by Gender
(weighted person years)

| Measure | Men | | Women | |
|---|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Mean | Std | Mean | Std |
| Family structure measures | | | | |
| Gain siblings, 10-14 | 0.13 | 0.34 | 0.13 | 0.33 |
| Lose siblings, 10-14 | 0.12 | 0.32 | 0.10 | 0.30 |
| Father always there | 0.48 | 0.50 | 0.47 | 0.50 |
| Father never there | 0.05 | 0.21 | 0.04 | 0.21 |
| One to three transitions | 0.36 | 0.48 | 0.38 | 0.48 |
| Four or more transitions | 0.12 | 0.32 | 0.11 | 0.32 |
| Family background measures | | | | |
| Mother's spouse education | 12.57 | 2.19 | 12.56 | 2.16 |
| Mother's spouse income (\$10,000s) | 3.47 | 2.55 | 3.48 | 2.47 |
| South | 0.37 | 0.46 | 0.36 | 0.46 |
| Urban | 0.74 | 0.37 | 0.73 | 0.38 |
| Mother's age at first birth | 21.04 | 3.43 | 21.14 | 3.47 |
| Mother's work hours (annual hours/50) | 20.81 | 13.56 | 21.42 | 13.55 |
| Nonhispanic white | 0.77 | 0.42 | 0.77 | 0.42 |
| Hispanic | 0.08 | 0.27 | 0.08 | 0.27 |
| Black | 0.15 | 0.36 | 0.16 | 0.36 |
| Age of the young adult | 17.65 | 3.01 | 17.41 | 2.89 |
| Family process measures | | | | |
| Coparenting | 5.99 | 1.99 | 6.03 | 1.94 |
| Shared rules, maternal closeness high | 0.27 | 0.44 | 0.28 | 0.45 |
| Shared rules, maternal closeness low | 0.11 | 0.31 | 0.11 | 0.32 |
| Imposed rules, maternal closeness high | 0.33 | 0.47 | 0.35 | 0.48 |
| Imposed rules, maternal closeness high | 0.13 | 0.33 | 0.15 | 0.36 |
| No rules, maternal closeness high | 0.09 | 0.44 | 0.07 | 0.25 |
| No rules, maternal closeness low | 0.07 | 0.26 | 0.04 | 0.19 |
| Difference between parents in closeness | 1.76 | 2.78 | 2.21 | 2.79 |
| Adolescent behavior | | | | |
| First sex < age 15 | 0.17 | 0.37 | 0.15 | 0.35 |
| Delinquent activities | 4.19 | 4.19 | 2.94 | 3.66 |
| Bad school attitude | 1.98 | 0.45 | 1.91 | 0.46 |
| Young adult behavior | | | | |
| Had sex in previous year | 0.55 | 0.50 | 0.53 | 0.50 |
| Working fulltime or parttime | 0.29 | 0.45 | 0.25 | 0.43 |
| Working fulltime | 0.27 | 0.45 | 0.24 | 0.42 |
| Working parttime | 0.02 | 0.13 | 0.02 | 0.13 |
| Enrolled in school or college | 0.39 | 0.49 | 0.44 | 0.50 |
| N | 14,716 | | 14,104 | |

**Table 2. Probability of Not Being a Parent
by Age and Gender of Young Adult**

| Age | Men | Women |
|------------|-------------|--------------|
| 14 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| 15 | 0.999 | 0.996 |
| 16 | 0.995 | 0.982 |
| 17 | 0.989 | 0.961 |
| 18 | 0.969 | 0.908 |
| 19 | 0.941 | 0.856 |
| 20 | 0.908 | 0.782 |
| 21 | 0.863 | 0.724 |
| 22 | 0.819 | 0.672 |
| 23 | 0.773 | 0.618 |
| 24 | 0.729 | 0.569 |
| 25 | 0.694 | 0.539 |
| 26 | 0.633 | 0.496 |
| 27 | 0.609 | 0.452 |
| 28 | 0.564 | 0.403 |
| N | 2949 | 2953 |

Table 3. Factors Predicting the Transition to Parenthood, by Gender (Odds ratios)

| | Men (N=14,716) | | | | | Women (N=14,104) | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|-----------|----------|---------|------------------|----------|-----------|----------|---------|
| | Model I | Model II | Model III | Model IV | Model V | Model I | Model II | Model III | Model IV | Model V |
| Family structure measures | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gain siblings, 10-14 | 1.57 ** | 1.44 * | 1.42 * | 1.41 | 1.43 * | 1.31 * | 1.18 | 1.15 | 1.11 | 1.10 |
| Lose siblings, 10-14 | 1.32 | 0.93 | 0.98 | 0.92 | 0.93 | 1.56 ** | 1.44 * | 1.47 ** | 1.37 * | 1.36 * |
| Father always there | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted |
| Father never there | 2.78 ** | 1.27 | 1.27 | 1.20 | 1.20 | 3.62 ** | 2.35 ** | 2.25 ** | 2.03 ** | 1.76 ** |
| One to three transitions | 1.81 ** | 1.17 | 1.14 | 1.05 | 1.01 | 2.03 ** | 1.44 * | 1.35 * | 1.26 | 1.14 |
| Four or more transitions | 2.29 ** | 1.21 | 1.22 | 1.10 | 1.10 | 2.35 ** | 1.39 | 1.28 | 1.19 | 1.06 |
| Family background measures | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mother's spouse education | | 0.87 ** | 0.88 ** | 0.89 ** | 0.89 ** | | 0.88 ** | 0.88 ** | 0.89 ** | 0.88 ** |
| Mother's spouse income | | 0.80 ** | 0.80 ** | 0.79 ** | 0.79 ** | | 0.85 ** | 0.86 ** | 0.86 ** | 0.87 ** |
| South | | 0.70 * | 0.68 * | 0.71 * | 0.71 * | | 0.91 | 0.91 | 0.88 | 0.90 |
| Urban | | 0.80 | 0.80 | 0.75 | 0.75 | | 1.15 | 1.15 | 1.03 | 0.97 |
| Mother's age at first birth | | 0.82 ** | 0.83 ** | 0.84 ** | 0.85 ** | | 0.87 ** | 0.88 ** | 0.89 ** | 0.89 ** |
| Mother's work hours | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | | 0.99 | 0.99 | 0.99 | 0.99 * |
| Nonhispanic white | | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted |
| Hispanic | | 0.96 | 0.95 | 0.96 | 1.00 | | 0.89 | 0.90 | 0.95 | 1.07 |
| Black | | 1.55 * | 1.57 * | 1.39 ^ | 1.44 * | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.09 | 1.13 |
| Age of the young adult | | 1.25 ** | 1.26 ** | 1.26 ** | 1.21 ** | | 1.17 ** | 1.17 ** | 1.18 ** | 1.09 ** |
| Family process measures | | | | | | | | | | |
| Coparenting | | | 1.06 | 1.09 | 1.08 | | | 0.97 | 0.98 | 0.97 |
| Maternal closeness high - say in rules | | | omitted | omitted | omitted | | | omitted | omitted | omitted |
| Maternal closeness low - say in rules | | | 1.46 | 1.32 | 1.35 | | | 1.68 ** | 1.43 * | 1.36 |
| Maternal closeness high - no say in rules | | | 1.32 | 1.36 | 1.37 | | | 1.26 | 1.20 | 1.18 |
| Maternal closeness low - no say in rules | | | 1.71 * | 1.77 * | 1.75 * | | | 1.49 * | 1.32 | 1.30 |
| Maternal closeness high - no rules | | | 1.12 | 1.03 | 1.04 | | | 1.33 | 1.25 | 1.25 |
| Maternal closeness low - no rules | | | 1.00 | 0.85 | 0.84 | | | 1.19 | 0.97 | 1.08 |
| Difference between parents in closeness | | | 1.03 | 1.02 | 1.02 | | | 1.03 | 1.02 | 1.02 |
| Adolescent behavior | | | | | | | | | | |
| First sex < age 15 | | | | 1.91 ** | 1.73 ** | | | | 1.83 ** | 1.30 * |
| Delinquent activities | | | | 1.04 * | 1.04 * | | | | 1.03 * | 1.03 |
| Bad school attitude | | | | 1.01 | 0.93 | | | | 0.98 | 1.20 |
| Young adult behavior | | | | | | | | | | |
| Had sex in previous year | | | | | 1.54 * | | | | | 3.43 ** |
| Working fulltime | | | | | 1.43 * | | | | | 1.51 * |
| Working parttime | | | | | 0.96 | | | | | 1.11 |
| Enrolled in school or college | | | | | 0.93 | | | | | |

** p<.01, *p<.05, 2-tailed test

Table 4. Factors Predicting Young Men's Transition to Residential and Nonresidential Fatherhood (odds ratios)

| | Residential Fatherhood | | | | | Nonresidential Fatherhood | | | | |
|---|------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|---------|---------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|---------|
| | Model I | Model II | Model III | Model IV | Model V | Model I | Model II | Model III | Model IV | Model V |
| Family structure measures | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gain siblings, 10-14 | 1.67 * | 1.46 | 1.42 | 1.41 | 1.40 | 1.47 | 1.47 | 1.42 | 1.42 | 1.46 |
| Lose siblings, 10-14 | 0.79 | 0.56 | 0.60 | 0.54 | 0.54 | 2.06 ** | 1.39 | 1.49 | 1.43 | 1.46 |
| Father always there | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted |
| Father never there | 0.94 | 0.61 | 0.65 | 0.63 | 0.66 | 6.24 ** | 2.06 * | 1.83 | 1.67 | 1.64 |
| One to three transitions | 1.51 * | 1.13 | 1.22 | 1.15 | 1.12 | 2.41 ** | 1.36 | 1.15 | 1.02 | 0.96 |
| Four or more transitions | 2.03 ** | 1.20 | 1.28 | 1.16 | 1.17 | 2.80 ** | 1.38 | 1.28 | 1.14 | 1.13 * |
| Family process measures | | | | | | | | | | |
| Coparenting | | | 1.09 | 1.11 | 1.10 | | | 1.04 | 1.07 | 1.07 |
| Maternal closeness high - say in rules | | | omitted | omitted | omitted | | | omitted | omitted | omitted |
| Maternal closeness low - say in rules | | | 1.37 | 1.29 | 1.34 | | | 1.51 | 1.35 | 1.33 |
| Maternal closeness high - no say in rules | | | 1.74 * | 1.79 * | 1.85 * | | | 0.88 | 0.92 | 0.89 |
| Maternal closeness low - no say in rules | | | 1.23 | 1.33 | 1.32 | | | 2.48 ** | 2.47 ** | 2.41 ** |
| Maternal closeness high - no rules | | | 0.96 | 0.93 | 0.95 | | | 1.21 | 1.08 | 1.06 |
| Maternal closeness low - no rules | | | 1.10 | 1.02 | 1.02 | | | 0.85 | 0.69 | 0.67 |
| Difference between parents in closeness | | | 0.99 | 0.98 | 0.97 | | | 1.09 | 1.09 | 1.08 |

N=14,716

Note: Controls included in each model are the same as in table 3

OR = Odds Ratio

** p<.01, *p<.05, 2-tailed test

Table 5: Family Structure and the Transition to Parenthood, by Partner Status and Gender, Odds Ratios

| | Men | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|---------|----------------------------------|---------|---------|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| | Residential fatherhood - married | | | Residential fatherhood - partner | | | Residential fatherhood - no partner | | |
| | I | II | V | I | II | V | I | II | V |
| | OR | OR | OR | OR | OR | OR | OR | OR | OR |
| Family structure measures | | | | | | | | | |
| Gain siblings, 10-14 | 1.30 | 0.94 | 1.17 | 1.98 ** | 1.80 | 1.64 | 0.17 | 0.14 | 0.11 |
| Lose siblings, 10-14 | 0.45 | 0.34 | 0.36 | 0.78 | 0.55 | 0.49 | 1.76 | 1.12 | 0.96 |
| Father always there | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted |
| Father never there | 0.29 | 0.14 | 0.12 | 1.11 | 0.81 | 0.98 | 1.79 | 0.85 | 0.63 |
| One to three transitions | 0.92 | 0.74 | 0.70 | 1.68 * | 1.30 | 1.32 | 2.08 | 0.95 | 0.99 |
| Four or more transitions | 0.41 | 0.24 * | 0.19 * | 2.41 ** | 1.50 | 1.57 | 4.81 * | 1.55 | 1.23 |

N=14,716

| | Women | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|---------|----------------------------------|---------|---------|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| | Residential motherhood - married | | | Residential motherhood - partner | | | Residential motherhood - no partner | | |
| | I | II | V | I | II | V | I | II | V |
| | OR | OR | OR | OR | OR | OR | OR | OR | OR |
| Family structure measures | | | | | | | | | |
| Constant | | | | | | | | | |
| Gain siblings, 10-14 | 2.18 * | 2.05 | 2.09 * | 0.96 | 0.85 | 0.85 | 1.35 | 1.20 | 1.07 |
| Lose siblings, 10-14 | 1.05 | 0.96 | 0.88 | 1.90 * | 1.87 * | 1.84 * | 1.52 * | 1.39 | 1.34 |
| Father always there | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted | omitted |
| Father never there | 2.00 | 3.89 * | 5.24 * | 0.84 | 0.79 | 0.62 | 7.03 ** | 3.00 * | 2.18 ** |
| One to three transitions | 2.39 * | 2.06 * | 2.20 * | 1.23 | 0.99 | 0.75 | 2.79 ** | 1.74 * | 1.32 |
| Four or more transitions | 2.46 * | 1.63 | 1.83 | 1.40 | 0.92 | 0.70 | 3.19 ** | 1.74 * | 1.23 |

N=14,092

OR = Odds Ratio

** p<.01, * p<.05, 2-tailed test

Figure 1. Proportion of Young Men and Women who are Childless, by Age and Family Structure

