

Children of Divorce & Separation — Statistics

Consequences of father absence

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It's Official: The Experiment Has Failed

For the best part of thirty years we have been conducting a vast experiment with the family, and now the results are in: the decline of the two-parent, married-couple family has resulted in poverty, ill-health, educational failure, unhappiness, anti-social behaviour, isolation and social exclusion for thousands of women, men and children.

From [Experiments in Living: The Fatherless Family](#)
By Rebecca O'Neill; Sept. 2002, CIVITAS

The following is from the newsletter [Common Sense & Domestic Violence](#), 1998 01 30

Allegations of family violence are the weapon-of-choice in divorce strategies. Lawyers, and paralegals in women's shelters, call them "The Silver Bullet". False abuse allegations work effectively in removing men from their families. The impact that the removal of fathers has on our children is horrific. The following lists some of the consequences of the removal of fathers from the lives of their children.

The Impact on our Children

Inter-spousal violence perpetrated by men is only a small aspect of family violence. False abuse allegations are only a small tile in the mosaic of vilifying the men in our society. They serve well in successful attempts to remove fathers from the lives of our children. Here are some statistics resulting from that which show more of the whole picture.

- 79.6% of custodial mothers receive a support award
- 29.9% of custodial fathers receive a support award.
- 46.9% of non-custodial mothers totally default on support.
- 26.9% of non-custodial fathers totally default on support.
- 20.0% of non-custodial mothers pay support at some level
- 61.0% of non-custodial fathers pay support at some level
- 66.2% of single custodial mothers work less than full time.
- 10.2% of single custodial fathers work less than full time.
- 7.0% of single custodial mothers work more than 44 hours weekly.
- 24.5% of single custodial fathers work more that 44 hours weekly.
- 46.2% of single custodial mothers receive public assistance.
- 20.8% of single custodial fathers receive public assistance.

[*Technical Analysis Paper No. 42 - U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services - Office of Income Security Policy*]

- 40% of mothers reported that they had interfered with the fathers visitation to punish their ex-spouse.

[*"Frequency of Visitation" by Sanford Braver, American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*]

- 50% of mothers see no value in the fathers continued contact with his children.

[*"Surviving the Breakup" by Joan Berlin Kelly*]

- 90.2% of fathers with joint custody pay the support due.
- 79.1% of fathers with visitation privileges pay the support due.
- 44.5% of fathers with no visitation pay the support due.
- 37.9% of fathers are denied any visitation.
- 66% of all support not paid by non-custodial fathers is due to the inability to pay.

[1988 Census "Child Support and Alimony: 1989 Series" P-60, No. 173 p.6-7, and "U.S. General Accounting Office Report" GAO/HRD-92-39FS January 1992]

- 63% of [youth suicides](#) are from fatherless homes.

[U. S. D.H.H.S. Bureau of the Census]

- 90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes.
- 85% of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes.

[Center for Disease Control]

- 80% of rapists motivated with displaced anger come from fatherless homes.

[*Criminal Justice and Behavior*, Vol. 14 p. 403-26]

- 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes.

[National Principals Association *Report on the State of High Schools*]

- 70% of juveniles in state operated institutions come from fatherless homes

[U.S. Dept. of Justice, Special Report, Sept., 1988]

- 85% of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in a fatherless home.

[Fulton County Georgia Jail Populations and Texas Dept. of Corrections, 1992]

- Nearly 2 of every 5 children in America do not live with their fathers.

[US News and World Report, February 27, 1995, p.39]

There are:

- 11,268,000 total custodial mothers
- 2,907,000 total custodial fathers

[*Current Populations Reports*, US Bureau of the Census, Series P-20, No. 458, 1991]

What does this mean? Children from fatherless homes are:

- 4.6 times more likely to commit [suicide](#),
- 6.6 times to become teenaged mothers (if they are girls, of course),
- 24.3 times more likely to run away,
- 15.3 times more likely to have behavioral disorders,
- 6.3 times more likely to be in a state-operated institutions,
- 10.8 times more likely to commit rape,
- 6.6 times more likely to drop out of school,
- 15.3 times more likely to end up in prison while a teenager.

(The calculation of the relative risks shown in the preceding list is based on 27% of children being in the care of single mothers.)

and — compared to children who are in the care of two biological, married parents — children who are in the care of single mothers are:

- 33 times more likely to be seriously abused (so that they will require medical attention), and
- 73 times more likely to be killed.

[["Marriage: The Safest Place for Women and Children"](#), by Patrick F. Fagan and Kirk A. Johnson, Ph.D. Backgrounder #1535.]

The following is from an article in the (Canadian) **Report** Newsmagazine, **Daddy's girl matures later — Stepfathers are shown to produce 'precocious puberty' in young females**, by Candis McLean, 2001 04 16, p. 46

ONE in six girls in Britain now enters puberty by eight years of age, according to recent research. This compares with one in 100 a generation ago. "Girls are now having sex before their great-great-grandmothers had their first period. Half of all girls in Britain will have entered puberty by the age of 10," announced Professor Jane Golding, director of the study at Bristol University's Institute of Child Health last June after tracking the development of 14,000 children from birth. In North America, one in seven Caucasian girls and half of African-American girls enter puberty (develop breasts or pubic hair) by the age of eight. The parade of suggested triggers has included obesity, pollution and food additives (see this magazine, Nov. 16, 1998). New research, however, suggests a radical new theory--that the father-daughter relationship is also a very important factor in when girls mature.

One of the leaders in this research, American Bruce Ellis, is a psychology professor at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. ...

According to Prof. Ellis' research,

"The clearest finding to emerge from this research was that it was the absence of warm, positive family relationships, rather than the presence of negative, coercive family relationships, that forecast earlier pubertal development in girls." But, while warm relations with both parents predicted later puberty, the more relevant was "father-daughter affectionate-positivity"; in fact, the more time spent by the father in childcare when the daughters were four to five years old, the less pubertal development by Grade 7. ...

Prof. Ellis does not think that pheremone exposure within the home is the only factor at work. He continues, "It is also likely that girls who have high-investing fathers in the home tend to begin sex and dating at a later age and thus have less pheromonal exposure to male dating partners in early adolescence." He concludes his article (to be published in a book [whose title is] *Just living together: Implications of cohabitation for children, families, and social policy*) with the statement that the inherent instability of cohabiting unions--an average duration of about two years--means any children will be **three times as likely to live with a biologically unrelated parent** which could result in **earlier onset of puberty**. In girls, **this is associated with negative health** and psychosocial outcomes: **greater risk of breast cancer in later life, unhealthy weight gain, higher rates of teenage pregnancy, low birthweight babies, emotional problems such as depression and anxiety, and problem behaviours such as alcohol consumption and sexual promiscuity**. [My emphasis —WHS]

The **Report** article recommends to parents that to be successful in,

Preserving childhood

- Stay married
- Keep stress levels down; do not overbook children's activities
- Prevent obesity
- Provide a high-fibre diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables
- Cut out fast food
- Keep your daughter active; get her interested in a sport or out playing with other kids
- Throw out the TV
- Send early-developing girls to same-sex or age-segregated schools to reduce exposure to older boys

The following is from the newsletter **Common Sense & Domestic Violence**, 1997 12 24

Children and Single Moms

Whether it is caused by violence or not, children living with single moms don't do well in our society. It used to be the exception. Now it is becoming the rule and progressively worse. Is that not child abuse too?

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT CHILDREN FROM SINGLE-MOTHER FAMILIES

| Problem | Single-Mother Family | | Two Parent Family | | Relative Odds ¹ |
|---|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| | % | (n) ² | % | (n) ² | |
| Hyperactivity | 15.6 | (69,480) | 9.6 | (221,573) | 1.74 |
| Conduct disorder | 17.2 | (73,659) | 8.1 | (180,786) | 2.36 |
| Emotional disorder | 15.0 | (67,205) | 7.5 | (173,714) | 2.18 |
| One or more behaviour problems | 31.7 | (137,460) | 18.7 | (418,894) | 2.02 |
| Repeated a grade ³ | 11.2 | (36,288) | 4.7 | (78,026) | 2.56 |
| Current school problems ³ | 5.8 | (18,862) | 2.7 | (46,120) | 2.22 |
| Social impairment | 6.1 | (25,105) | 2.5 | (51,344) | 2.53 |
| One or more total problems ³ | 40.6 | (128,895) | 23.6 | (381,715) | 2.21 |

1. Children from single-mother families are 2.21 times (221%) as likely to have one or more total problems than those from two-parent families, twice as likely to have an emotional disorder, etc. (The probability of this being due to chance is smaller than 1 in 1,000)
2. Weighted projections to reflect national population of children.
3. Data for items so annotated apply for 6- to 11-year-olds only. All other data in the table apply to 4- to 11-year olds.

[Source: **GROWING UP IN CANADA**, National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (Human Resources Development Canada, Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 89-550-MPE, no.1, November 1996, p. 91) Available from StatCan. It is only available in hard copy. \$25 +GST)]

See also:

- The study report: [\[US\] Taxpayer Costs of Divorce and Unwed Childbearing: at least \\$112 billion a year](#) (2008, Institute for American Values; Georgia Family Council; Institute for Marriage and Public Policy, and Families Northwest)
- [Video on violent women](#)

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Posted 2001 04 11

Updates:

2002 03 05 (added link to [Table of Contents](#))