Effects on children of removing a father from the life of a child.
http://www.childrensjustice.org/fatherlessness1.htm

"Based on our clinical experience with a number of latency aged and adolescent girls whose parents divorced during their oedipal years, we postulate that particular coping patterns emerge in response to the absence of the father, which may complicate the consolidation of positive feminine identification in many female children, and is observable during the latency years. We illustrate both the existence of these phenomena and implications for treatment:

- intensified separation anxiety
- denial and avoidance of feelings associated with loss of father
- identification with the lost object
- object hunger for males."

"In an earlier study by Kalter and Rembar at [Children's Psychiatric Hospital, University of Michigan], a sample of 144 child and adolescent patients, whose parents had divorced, presented [for evaluation and treatment] with three most commonly occurring problems:

- 63% Subjective psychological problem (defined as anxiety, sadness, pronounced moodiness, phobias, and depression)
- 56% Poor grades or grades substantially below ability and/or recent past performance
- 43% Aggression toward parents

Important features of the subgroup of 32 latency aged girls were in the same order:

- 69% indicating subjective psychological distress
- 47% academic problems
- 41% aggression toward parents.


"In summary, 30% of the children in the present study experienced a marked decrease in their academic performance following parental separation, and this was evident three years later. Access to both parents seemed to be the most protective factor, in that it was associated with better academic adjustment...Moreover, data revealed that noncustodial parents (mostly fathers) were very influential in their children's development...These data also support the interpretation that the more time a child spends with the noncustodial noncustodial parent the better the overall adjustment of the child."

Factors Associated with Academic Achievement in Children Following Parental Separation, L. Bisnaire, PhD; P. Firestone, PhD; D. Rynard, MA Sc American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 60(1), January, 1990
"While in most instances adolescents from recently disrupted household were more negatively affected by their parents' divorce, some findings did identify long-term effects of earlier disruption. Adolescent girls who had experienced parental divorce when they were younger than six or between six and nine years old reported becoming involved with alcohol or drugs in proportions higher than did girls from intact families. Adolescent girls whose experience of divorce occurred before they were six more frequently reported skipping school than did girls from intact families or girls whose parents divorced when they were between the ages of six and nine."

"These findings underscore the vulnerability of adolescents whose parents have divorced within the last five years. The impact of the marital disruption was most pronounced among girls, who skipped school more frequently, reported more depressive behavior, and described social support in more negative terms than did boys from recently disrupted homes."

The Effects of Marital Disruption on Adolescents: Time as a Dynamic A. Frost, PhD; B. Pakiz, EdM, American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 60(4), October, 1990

"Among teenage and adult populations of females, parental divorce has been associated with lower self-esteem, precocious sexual activity, greater delinquent-like behavior, and more difficulty establishing gratifying, lasting adult heterosexual relationships. It is especially intriguing to note that, in these studies, the parental divorce typically occurred years before any difficulties were observed..

"At the time of the marital separation, when (as is typical) father leaves the family home and becomes progressively less involved with his children over the ensuing years, it appears that young girls experience the emotional loss of father egocentrically as a rejection of them. While more common among preschool and early elementary school girls, we have observed this phenomenon clinically in later elementary school and young adolescent children. Here the continued lack of involvement is experienced as an ongoing rejection by him. Many girls attribute this rejection to their not being pretty enough, affectionate enough, athletic enough, or smart enough to please father and engage him in regular, frequent contacts".

"Finally, girls whose parents divorce may grow up without the day to day experience of interacting with a man who is attentive, caring and loving. The continuous sense of being valued and loved as a female seems an especially key element in the development of the conviction that one is indeed femininely lovable. Without this regular source of nourishment, a girl's sense of being valued as a female does not seem to thrive."

Long-Term Effects of Divorce on Children: A Developmental Vulnerability Model Neil Kalter, Ph.D., University of Michigan, American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 57(4), October, 1987

"....when the non-custodial parent is perceived as "lost," the young adult is more depressed. When a divorce occurs, the perception of the non-custodial father has
been shown to change in a negative direction, while the perception of the mother (whether custodial) remains relatively stable."

"Because divorce is a process, not an isolated event, the effects of the divorce may be cumulative and early intervention would therefore be beneficial.

The continued involvement of the non-custodial parent in the child's life appears crucial in preventing an intense sense of loss in the child.... The importance of the relationship with the non-custodial parent may also have implications for the legal issues of custodial arrangements and visitation. The results of this study indicate that arrangements where both parents are equally involved with the child are optimal. When this type of arrangement is not possible, the child's continued relationship with the non-custodial parent remains essential."

Young Adult Children of Divorced Parents: Depression and the Perception of Loss, Rebecca L. Drill, Ph.D., Harvard University. Journal of Divorce, V. 10, #1/2, Fall/Winter 1986

"The impact of parental divorce and subsequent father absence in the wake of this event has long been thought to affect children quite negatively. For instance, parental divorce and father loss has been associated with difficulties in school adjustment (e.g. Felner, Ginter, Boike, & Cowen), Social Adjustment (e.g. Fry & Grover) and personal adjustment (e.g. Covell & Turnbull)"

"The results of the present study suggest that father loss through divorce is associated with diminished self-concepts in children...at least for this sample of children from the midwestern United States."

Children's Self Concepts: Are They Affected by Parental Divorce and Remarriage Thomas S. Parish, Journal of Social Behavior and Personality, 1987, V 2, #4, 559-562

"It is ironic, and of some interest, that we have subjected joint custody to a level and intensity of scrutiny that was never directed to the traditional post-divorce arrangement (sole legal and physical custody to the mother and two weekends each month of visiting to the father.) Developmental and relationship theory should have alerted the mental health field to the potential immediate and long range consequences for the child of only seeing a parent four days each month. And yet until recently, there was no particular challenge to this traditional post-divorce parenting arrangement, despite growing evidence that such post-divorce relationships were not sufficiently nurturing or stabilizing for many children and parents."

"There is some evidence that in our well-meaning efforts to save children in the immediate post-separation period from anxiety, confusion, and the normative divorce-engendered conflict, we have set the stage in the longer run for the more ominous symptoms of anger, depression, and a deep sense of loss by depriving the child of the opportunity to maintain a full relationship with each parent."

**Effects of Fatherlessness (US Data)**

http://fathersforlife.org/fatherhood/fatherlessness_table_contents.htm

1) **BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS/ RUNAWAYS/ HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS/CHEMICAL ABUSERS/ SUICIDES**

- 85% of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes (Source: Center for Disease Control)
- 90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes (Source: U.S. D.H.H.S., Bureau of the Census)
- 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes (Source: National Principals Association Report on the State of High Schools.)
- 75% of all adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers come from fatherless homes (Source: Rainbows for all God's Children.)
- 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes (Source: U.S. D.H.H.S., Bureau of the Census)

2) **JUVENILE DELINQUENCY/ CRIME/ GANGS**

- 80% of rapists motivated with displaced anger come from fatherless homes (Source: Criminal Justice & Behavior, Vol 14, p. 403-26, 1978)
- 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes (Source: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Special Report, Sept 1988)
- 85% of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in a fatherless home (Source: Fulton Co. Georgia jail populations, Texas Dept. of Corrections 1992)

California has the nation's highest juvenile incarceration rate and the nation's highest juvenile unemployment rate. Vincent Schiraldi, Executive Director, Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, "What Hallinan's Victory Means," San Francisco Chronicle (12/28/95).

These statistics translate to mean that children from a fatherless home are:

- 5 times more likely to commit suicide.
- 32 times more likely to run away.
- 20 times more likely to have behavioral disorders.
- 14 times more likely to commit rape
- 9 times more likely to drop out of high school.
- 10 times more likely to abuse chemical substances.
- 9 times more likely to end up in a state-operated institution.
- 20 times more likely to end up in prison.

Juveniles have become the driving force behind the nation's alarming increases in violent crime, with juvenile arrests for murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault growing sharply in the past decade as pistols and drugs became more available, and expected to continue at the same alarming rate during the next decade. "Justice Dept. Issues Scary Report on Juvenile Crime," San Francisco Chronicle (9/8/95). "Crime Wave Forecast With Teenager Boom," San Francisco Chronicle (2/15/95).
Criminal behavior experts and social scientists are finding intriguing evidence that the epidemic of youth violence and gangs is related to the breakdown of the two-parent family. "New Evidence That Quayle Was Right: Young Offenders Tell What Went Wrong at Home," San Francisco Chronicle (12/9/94).

3) TEENAGE PREGNANCY
"Daughters of single parents are 53% more likely to marry as teenagers, 164% more likely to have a premarital birth, and 92% more likely to dissolve their own marriages. All these intergenerational consequences of single motherhood increase the likelihood of chronic welfare dependency." Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, Atlantic Monthly (April 1993).
Daughters of single parents are 2.1 times more likely to have children during their teenage years than are daughters from intact families. The Good Family Man, David Blankenhorn.
71% of teenage pregnancies are to children of single parents. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.

4) CHILD ABUSE
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that there were more than 1,000,000 documented child abuse cases in 1990. In 1983, it found that 60% of perpetrators were women with sole custody. Shared parenting can significantly reduce the stress associated with sole custody, and reduce the isolation of children in abusive situations by allowing both parents' to monitor the children's health and welfare and to protect them.

5) POVERTY
"The feminization of poverty is linked to the feminization of custody, as well as linked to lower earnings for women. Greater opportunity for education and jobs through shared parenting can help break the cycle." David Levy, Ed., The Best Parent is Both Parents (1993).

6) KIDNAPPING
Family abductions were 163,200 compared to non-family abductions of 200-300. The parental abductions were attributed to the parents' disenchantment with the legal system. David Levy, Ed., The Best Parent is Both Parents (1993), citing a report from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice (May 1990).
THE FACTS ON FATHERLESSNESS

Fatherlessness brings poverty

a.. In America, among families with dependent children, only 8.3 per cent of married couples were living below the poverty line, compared to 47.1 percent of female-headed households.

b.. In Australia, a recent study of 500 divorcees with children five to eight years after the separation found that four in five divorced mothers were dependent on social security after their marriages dissolved.

c.. Figures from Monash University's Centre for Population and Urban Research show that family break-up, rather than unemployment, is the main cause of the rise in poverty levels in Australia.

Fatherlessness lowers educational performance

a.. American children from intact families have a 21 per cent chance of dropping out of high school whereas children from broken families have a 46 per cent chance.

b.. American school children who became father-absent early in life generally scored significantly lower on measures of IQ and achievement tests.

c.. A study of Australian primary school children from three family types (married heterosexual couples, cohabiting heterosexual couples and homosexual couples) found that in every area of educational endeavour (language; mathematics; social studies; sport; class work, sociability and popularity; and attitudes to learning), children from married heterosexual couples performed better than the other two groups. The study concludes with these words: "Married couples seem to offer the best environment for a child's social and educational development".

Fatherlessness increases crime

a.. A British study found a direct statistical link between single parenthood and virtually every major type of crime, including mugging, violence against strangers, car theft and burglary.

b.. One American study even arrived at this startling conclusion: the proportion of single-parent households in a community predicts its rates of violent crime and burglary, but the community's poverty level does not. Neither poverty nor race seem to account very much for the crime rate, compared to the proportion of single parent families.

c.. In Australia, a recent book noted the connection between broken families and crime. In a discussion of rising crime rates in Western Australia, the book reported that "family breakdown in the form of divorce and separation is the main cause of the crime wave".
Fatherlessness increases drug abuse

a.. A UCLA study pointed out that inadequate family structure makes children more susceptible to drug use "as a coping mechanism to relieve depression and anxiety."

b.. Another US study found that among the homes with strict fathers, only 18 per cent had children used alcohol or drugs at all. In contrast, among mother-dominated homes, 35 per cent had children who used drugs frequently.

c.. A New Zealand study of nearly 1000 children observed over a period of 15 years found that children who have watched their parents separate are more likely to use illegal drugs than those whose parents stay together.

Fatherlessness increase mental health problems

a.. From nations as diverse as Finland and South Africa, a number of studies have reported that anywhere from 50 to 80 per cent of psychiatric patients come from broken homes.

b.. A Canadian study of teenagers discharged from psychiatric hospitals found that only 16 per cent were living with both parents when they were admitted.

c.. A study of nearly 14,000 Dutch adolescents between the ages of 12 to 19 found that, "In general, children from one parent and stepparent families reported lower self-esteem, more symptoms of anxiety and loneliness, more depressed mood and more suicidal thoughts than children from intact families."

Fatherlessness and family breakdown cost Australia 3.5 billion dollars per year

a.. In Australia it has been estimated that marriage breakdown costs $2.5 billion annually. Each separation is estimated to cost society some $12,000.

b.. Also, Australian industry is reported to lose production of more than $1 billion a year due to problems of family breakdown.

c.. Homelessness is also closely linked with family breakdown. A recent Australian study conducted at two Melbourne universities has found that children whose biological parents stay together are about three times less likely to become homeless than those from other family types.
Fatherlessness increases child abuse

a.. A 1994 study of 52,000 children found that those who are most at risk of being abused are those who are not living with both parents.

b.. A Finnish study of nearly 4,000 ninth-grade girls found that "stepfather-daughter incest was about 15 times as common as father-daughter incest".

c.. In Australia, former Human Rights Commissioner Mr Brian Burdekin has reported a 500 to 600 per cent increase in sexual abuse of girls in families where the adult male was not the natural father.

Fatherlessness and Family Breakdown are the major social problems of our society

With the rise of fatherlessness Australia and the Western world has also experienced a marked rise in social problems. And the brunt of these problems have been borne by children. We owe it to our children to do better. We urgently need to address the twin problems of fatherlessness and family breakdown. Public policy must begin to address these crucial areas. Until we tackle these problems, our children and our societies will continue to suffer.

Children's hearts will keep fracturing until more mothers, especially privileged mothers, recognize that giving their baby everything he needs includes giving him a loving father.

Married parents are best, admits Blairite think tank

Children do best when brought up in married families, Tony Blair's favourite think-tank admitted yesterday.

A stable background means they are less likely to be out of work, live off the state, become single parents, or even smoke in later life, according to the Institute for Public Policy Research.

It said it also accepted that children are better off with married parents than with parents who cohabit.

The report from the country's most prominent and influential Left-leaning policy group contradicts eight years of Government rhetoric saying that all families are equally good.

Billions of pounds have been targeted at single parents while ministers have undermined the legal and social status of marriage, according to critics.

But yesterday the policy institute acknowledged that research clearly showed that 'children who grow up with both biological parents do better on a wide range of outcomes than children who grow up in a single-parent family'. It added: 'While this research may be instinctively difficult for those on the Left to accept, the British evidence seems to support it.'
The climbdown came in the think-tank's report on youngsters. This revealed that our teenagers drink more, take more drugs, have sex at a younger age and are involved in more fights than those elsewhere in Europe.

And yesterday - when the institute made its full report available - it said the breakdown of the traditional married family was at the root of this disturbed teenage behaviour. It said: 'Changes to families, such as more parents working, and rising rates of divorce and single parenthood, have undermined the ability of families to effectively socialise young people.'

Noting that 'changes to family structures are significant', it referred to unpublished research that compared the lives of 30-year-olds who were in single-parent families at the age of 16 with those whose parents stayed together.

It said they were five per cent more likely to be unmarried, 1 per cent more likely to be a single parent and 2 per cent more likely to be in social housing. They were also more likely to rely on benefits and live in a home where no one worked.

The report said: 'Single parents, it has been shown, can be less emotionally supportive, have fewer rules, dispense harsher discipline, are often more inconsistent in dispensing discipline, provide less supervision, and engage in more conflict with their children.'

The institute cited the Millennium Cohort Study, a survey by the Institute of Education in London of nearly 20,000 children born in 2000.

This, it said, 'has shown that children of cohabiting couples do worse than those of married couples.'

The IPPR report drew praise from research groups that have been reporting on the fallout from the decline of marriage in Britain.

Robert Whelan of the Civitas thinktank said: 'I am pleased they have come round to what we have been saying for 20 years.

'It is difficult to find any evidence that supports any other view. But to say there is nothing we can do about it is a counsel of despair.

'The Left believes state intervention is morally right and can change people's behaviour in areas like smoking and environmental pollution.

'Why won't it work if you change the benefit system so that it stops penalising couples and encouraging single parenthood?'

Jill Kirby, of the Right-leaning think-tank Centre for Policy Studies, said: 'The IPPR has been forced to acknowledge what has happened by the weight of evidence. But they are wrong to conclude there is nothing we can do. This is a Government that sees nothing morally wrong in giving instructions over every aspect of how to raise children.'
Ministers have encouraged mothers of young children to take jobs and described those who do not as a 'problem'. They have laid down instructions on how nurseries should train children almost from birth.

And Mr Blair has proposed state intervention into the lives of children from troublemaking families even before they are born.

**Even stepfathers do not foster improvement much better than outright father-absence.**

There seems to be little substitute for the presence of a caring biological father. "Receipt of child support does not appear to make a significant difference" and "the presence of a step-parent does not significantly improve a child’s situation, either."22 Children living with a mother and stepfather fared poorly on most indicators. 23 Child abuse occurs most frequently within stepfamilies, and, in fact, most sexual abuse occurs in stepfamilies.24 Sexual abuse of girls by their stepfathers can be at a minimum six or seven times higher, 25 and may be up to 40 times 26 that of sexual abuse by biological fathers in intact families. When it comes to the risk of abuse with unrelated males, Barbara Dafoe Whitehead explains:

"Stepfathers also pose a sexual risk to children, especially stepdaughters. They are more likely than biological fathers to commit acts of sexual abuse, and are less likely to protect daughters from other male predators. According to a Canadian study, children in stepfamilies are forty times as likely to suffer physical or sexual abuse as children in intact families." 27

It is worth noting that stepfathers cannot make up for the lack of a biological father. In fact, Maggie Gallagher notes:

"Children in stepfamilies do no better on average than children in single-parent homes…Failing to understand the erotic relations that are at the heart of family life, they [sociologists] failed to predict what, sadly and surprisingly, later research strongly suggested: Remarriage is not only not necessarily a cure; it is often one of the risks children of divorce face" 28

"In reality … throughout most of North American history wives have filed for divorce twice as often as husbands…"
Sexual activity. In a study of 700 adolescents, researchers found that "compared to families with two natural parents living in the home, adolescents from single-parent families have been found to engage in greater and earlier sexual activity." **Source:** Carol W. Metzler, et al. "The Social Context for Risky Sexual Behavior Among Adolescents," *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 17 (1994).


Drug Use: "...the absence of the father in the home affects significantly the behavior of adolescents and results in the greater use of alcohol and marijuana." **Source:** Deane Scott Berman, "Risk Factors Leading to Adolescent Substance Abuse," *Adolescence* 30 (1995)

Sexual abuse. A study of 156 victims of child sexual abuse found that the majority of the children came from disrupted or single-parent homes; only 31 percent of the children lived with both biological parents. Although stepfamilies make up only about 10 percent of all families, 27 percent of the abused children lived with either a stepfather or the mother's boyfriend. **Source:** Beverly Gomes-Schwartz, Jonathan Horowitz, and Albert P. Cardarelli, "Child Sexual Abuse Victims and Their Treatment," U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.


Deadly predictions. A family structure index -- a composite index based on the annual rate of children involved in divorce and the percentage of families with children present that are female-headed -- is a strong predictor of suicide among young adult and adolescent white males. **Source:** Patricia L. McCall and Kenneth C. Land, "Trends in White Male Adolescent, Young-Adult and Elderly Suicide: Are There Common Underlying Structural Factors?" *Social Science Research* 23, 1994.
High risk. Fatherless children are at dramatically greater risk of suicide.

Suicidal Tendencies. In a study of 146 adolescent friends of 26 adolescent suicide victims, teens living in single-parent families are not only more likely to commit suicide but also more likely to suffer from psychological disorders, when compared to teens living in intact families.

Confused identities. Boys who grow up in father-absent homes are more likely that those in father-present homes to have trouble establishing appropriate sex roles and gender identity.

Psychiatric Problems. In 1988, a study of preschool children admitted to New Orleans hospitals as psychiatric patients over a 34-month period found that nearly 80 percent came from fatherless homes.

Emotional distress. Children living with a never-married mother are more likely to have been treated for emotional problems.

Uncooperative kids. Children reared by a divorced or never-married mother are less cooperative and score lower on tests of intelligence than children reared in intact families. Statistical analysis of the behavior and intelligence of these children revealed "significant detrimental effects" of living in a female-headed household. Growing up in a female-headed household remained a statistical predictor of behavior problems even after adjusting for differences in family income.

Unstable families, unstable lives. Compared to peers in two-parent homes, black children in single-parent households are more likely to engage in troublesome behavior, and perform poorly in school.
**Beyond class lines.** Even controlling for variations across groups in parent education, race and other child and family factors, 18- to 22-year-olds from disrupted families were twice as likely to have poor relationships with their mothers and fathers, to show high levels of emotional distress or problem behavior, [and] to have received psychological help.

**Source:** Nicholas Zill, Donna Morrison, and Mary Jo Coiro, "Long Term Effects of Parental Divorce on Parent-Child Relationships, Adjustment and Achievement in Young Adulthood." *Journal of Family Psychology* 7 (1993).

**Fatherly influence.** Children with fathers at home tend to do better in school, are less prone to depression and are more successful in relationships. Children from one-parent families achieve less and get into trouble more than children from two parent families.


**Divorce disorders.** Children whose parents separate are significantly more likely to engage in early sexual activity, abuse drugs, and experience conduct and mood disorders. This effect is especially strong for children whose parents separated when they were five years old or younger.


**Troubled marriages, troubled kids.** Compared to peers living with both biological parents, sons and daughters of divorced or separated parents exhibited significantly more conduct problems. Daughters of divorced or separated mothers evidenced significantly higher rates of internalizing problems, such as anxiety or depression.

**Source:** Denise B. Kandel, Emily Rosenbaum and Kevin Chen, "Impact of Maternal Drug Use and Life Experiences on Preadolescent Children Born to Teenage Mothers," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 56 (1994).

**Hungry for love.** "Father hunger" often afflicts boys age one and two whose fathers are suddenly and permanently absent. Sleep disturbances, such as trouble falling asleep, nightmares, and night terrors frequently begin within one to three months after the father leaves home.


**Disturbing news:** Children of never-married mothers are more than twice as likely to have been treated for an emotional or behavioral problem.

Poor and in trouble: A 1988 Department of Health and Human Services study found that at every income level except the very highest (over $50,000 a year), children living with never-married mothers were more likely than their counterparts in two-parent families to have been expelled or suspended from school, to display emotional problems, and to engage in antisocial behavior.


Fatherless aggression: In a longitudinal study of 1,197 fourth-grade students, researchers observed "greater levels of aggression in boys from mother-only households than from boys in mother-father households."


Act now, pay later: "Children from mother-only families have less of an ability to delay gratification and poorer impulse control (that is, control over anger and sexual gratification.) These children also have a weaker sense of conscience or sense of right and wrong."


Crazy victims: Eighty percent of adolescents in psychiatric hospitals come from broken homes.


Duh to dead: "The economic consequences of a [father's] absence are often accompanied by psychological consequences, which include higher-than-average levels of youth suicide, low intellectual and education performance, and higher-than-average rates of mental illness, violence and drug use."


Expelled: Nationally, 15.3 percent of children living with a never-married mother and 10.7 percent of children living with a divorced mother have been expelled or suspended from school, compared to only 4.4 percent of children living with both biological parents.


Violent rejection: Kids who exhibited violent behavior at school were 11 times as likely not to live with their fathers and six times as likely to have parents who were not married. Boys from families with absent fathers are at higher risk for violent behavior than boys from intact families.


That crowd: Children without fathers or with stepfathers were less likely to have friends who think it's important to behave properly in school. They also exhibit more problems with behavior and in achieving goals.

**Likeliest to succeed:** Kids who live with both biological parents at age 14 are significantly more likely to graduate from high school than those kids who live with a single parent, a parent and step-parent, or neither parent.


**Worse to bad:** Children in single-parent families tend to score lower on standardized tests and to receive lower grades in school. Children in single-parent families are nearly twice as likely to drop out of school as children from two-parent families.


**College odds:** Children from disrupted families are 20 percent more unlikely to attend college than kids from intact, two-parent families.

**Source:** J. Wallerstein, Family Law Quarterly, 20. (Summer 1986)

**On their own:** Kids living in single-parent homes or in step-families report lower educational expectations on the part of their parents, less parental monitoring of school work, and less overall social supervision than children from intact families.


**Double-risk:** Fatherless children -- kids living in homes without a stepfather or without contact with their biological father -- are twice as likely to drop out of school.

**Source:** U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, *Survey on Child Health*. (1993)

**Repeat, repeat:** Nationally, 29.7 percent of children living with a never-married mother and 21.5 percent of children living with a divorced mother have repeated at least one grade in school, compared to 11.6 percent of children living with both biological parents.


**Underpaid high achievers:** Children from low-income, two-parent families outperform students from high-income, single-parent homes. Almost twice as many high achievers come from two-parent homes as one-parent homes.

**Source:** "One-Parent Families and Their Children," Charles F. Kettering Foundation (1990).

**Dadless and dumb:** At least one-third of children experiencing a parental separation "demonstrated a significant decline in academic performance" persisting at least three years.

**Source:** L.M.C. Bisnairs (et al.), *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, no. 60 (1990)

**Son of Solo:** According to a recent study of young, non-custodial fathers who are behind on child support payments, less than half of these men were living with their own father at age 14.
Slip-sliding: Among black children between the ages of 6 to 9 years old, black children in mother-only households scored significantly lower on tests of intellectual ability, than black children living with two parents.  

Dadless dropouts: After taking into account race, socio-economic status, sex, age and ability, high school students from single-parent households were 1.7 times more likely to drop out than were their corresponding counterparts living with both biological parents.  

Takes two: Families in which both the child's biological or adoptive parents are present in the household show significantly higher levels of parental involvement in the child's school activities than do mother-only families or step-families.  

Con garden: Forty-three percent of prison inmates grew up in a single-parent household -- 39 percent with their mothers, 4 percent with their fathers -- and an additional 14 percent lived in households without either biological parent. Another 14 percent had spent at last part of their childhood in a foster home, agency or other juvenile institution.  

Criminal moms, criminal kids: The children of single teenage mothers are more at risk for later criminal behavior. In the case of a teenage mother, the absence of a father also increases the risk of harshness from the mother.  

Rearing rapists: Seventy-two percent of adolescent murderers grew up without fathers. Sixty percent of America's rapists grew up the same way.  

Crime and poverty: The proportion of single-parent households in a community predicts its rate of violent crime and burglary, but the community's poverty level does not.  

Marriage matters: Only 13 percent of juvenile delinquents come from families in which the biological mother and father are married to each other. By contract, 33 percent have parents who are either divorced or separated and 44 percent have parents who were never married.  

No good time: Compared to boys from intact, two-parent families, teenage boys from disrupted families are not only more likely to be incarcerated for delinquent offenses, but also to manifest worse conduct while incarcerated.  
**Count 'em:** Seventy percent of juveniles in state reform institutions grew up in single- or no-parent situations.


**The Main Thing:** The relationship between family structure and crime is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature.

**Source:** E. Kamarck, William Galston, *Putting Children First*, Progressive Policy Inst. 1990

**Examples:** Teenage fathers are more likely than their childless peers to commit and be convicted of illegal activity, and their offenses are of a more serious nature.


**The 'hood** The likelihood that a young male will engage in criminal activity doubles if he is raised without a father and triples if he lives in a neighborhood with a high concentration of single-parent families.

**Source:** A. Anne Hill, June O'Neill, "Underclass Behaviors in the United States," CUNY, Baruch College. 1993

**Bringing the war back home** The odds that a boy born in America in 1974 will be murdered are higher than the odds that a serviceman in World War II would be killed in combat.

**Source:** US Sen. Phil Gramm, 1995

**Get ahead at home and at work:** Fathers who cared for their children intellectual development and their adolescent's social development were more like to advance in their careers, compared to men who weren't involved in such activities.

**Source:** J. Snarey, *How Fathers Care for the Next Generation*. Harvard Univ. Press.

**Diaper dads:** In 1991, about 20 percent of preschool children were cared for by their fathers -- both married and single. In 1988, the number was 15 percent.


**Without leave:** Sixty-three percent of 1500 CEOs and human resource directors said it was not reasonable for a father to take a leave after the birth of a child.


**Get a job:** The number of men who complain that work conflicts with their family responsibilities rose from 12 percent in 1977 to 72 percent in 1989. Meanwhile, 74 percent of men prefer a "daddy track" job to a "fast track" job.

**Source:** James Levine, *The Fatherhood Project*. 
**Long-distance dads:** Twenty-six percent of absent fathers live in a different state than their children.


**Cool Dad of the Week:** Among fathers who maintain contact with their children after a divorce, the pattern of the relationship between father-and-child changes. They begin to behave more like relatives than like parents. Instead of helping with homework, nonresident dads are more likely to take the kids shopping, to the movies, or out to dinner. Instead of providing steady advice and guidance, divorced fathers become "treat dads."


**Older's not wiser:** While 57 percent of unwed dads with kids no older than two visit their children more than once a week, by the time the kid's seven and a half, only 23 percent are in frequent contact with their children.

**Source:** R. Lerman and Theodora Ooms, *Young Unwed Fathers*. 1993.

**Ten years after:** Ten years after the breakup of a marriage, more than two-thirds of kids report not having seen their father for a year.


**No such address:** More than half the kids who don't live with their father have never been in their father's house.


**Dadless years:** About 40 percent of the kids living in fatherless homes haven't seen their dads in a year or more. Of the rest, only one in five sleeps even one night a month at the father's home. And only one in six sees their father once or more per week.


**Measuring up?** According to a 1992 Gallup poll, more than 50 percent of all adults agreed that fathers today spend less time with their kids than their fathers did with them.

**Source:** Gallup national random sample conducted for the National Center for Fathering, April 1992.

**Father unknown.** Of kids living in single-mom households, 35 percent never see their fathers, and another 24 percent see their fathers less than once a month.

**Source:** J.A. Selzer, "Children's Contact with Absent Parents," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 50 (1988).

**Missed contact:** In a study of 304 young adults, those whose parents divorced after they left home had significantly less contact with their fathers than adult children who parents remained married. Weekly contact with their children dropped from 78 percent for still-married fathers to 44 percent for divorced fathers.


**Commercial breaks:** The amount of time a father spends with his child -- one-on-one -- averages less than 10 minutes a day.

High risk: Overall, more than 75 percent of American children are at risk because of paternal deprivation. Even in two-parent homes, fewer than 25 percent of young boys and girls experience an average of at least one hour a day of relatively individualized contact with their fathers.


Knock, knock: Of children age 5 to 14, 1.6 million return home to houses where there is no adult present.


Who said talk's cheap? Almost 20 percent of sixth- through twelfth-graders have not had a good conversation lasting for at least 10 minutes with at least one of their parents in more than a month.


Justified guilt. A 1990 L.A. Times poll found that 57 percent of all fathers and 55 percent of all mothers feel guilty about not spending enough time with their children.


Who are you, mister? In 1965, parents on average spent approximately 30 hours a week with their kids. By 1985, the amount of time had fallen to 17 hours.


Waiting Works: Only eight percent of those who finished high school, got married before having a child, and waited until age 20 to have that child were living in poverty in 1992.


More Statistics

- 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes (Source: 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 (Source: Center for Disease Control)
- 80% of rapists motivated with displaced anger come from fatherless homes (Source: Criminal Justice & Behavior, Vol 14, p. 403-26, 1978.)
- 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes (Source: National Principals Association Report on the State of High Schools.)
- 75% of all adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers come from fatherless homes (Source: Rainbows for all God’s Children.)
- 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes (Source: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Special Report, Sept 1988)
- 85% of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in a fatherless home (Source: Fulton Co. Georgia jail populations, Texas Dept. of Corrections 1992)
The State of Fatherhood

37.9% of fathers have no access/visitation rights. (Source: p.6, col.II, para. 6, lines 4 & 5, Census Bureau P-60, #173, Sept 1991.)

"40% of mothers reported that they had interfered with the non-custodial father's visitation on at least one occasion, to punish the ex-spouse." (Source: p. 449, col. II, lines 3-6, (citing Fulton) Frequency of visitation by Divorced Fathers; Differences in Reports by Fathers and Mothers. Sanford Braver et al, Am. J. of Orthopsychiatry, 1991.)

"Overall, approximately 50% of mothers "see no value in the father’s continued contact with his children...." (Source: Surviving the Breakup, Joan Kelly & Judith Wallerstein, p. 125)

Only 11% of mothers value their husband's input when it comes to handling problems with their kids. Teachers & doctors rated 45%, and close friends & relatives rated 16%. (Source: EDK Associates survey of 500 women for Redbook Magazine. Redbook, November 1994, p. 36)

"The former spouse (mother) was the greatest obstacle to having more frequent contact with the children." (Source: Increasing our understanding of fathers who have infrequent contact with their children, James Dudley, Family Relations, Vol. 4, p. 281, July 1991.)

"A clear majority (70%) of fathers felt that they had too little time with their children." (Source: Visitation and the Noncustodial Father, Mary Ann Kock & Carol Lowery, Journal of Divorce, Vol. 8, No. 2, p. 54, Winter 1984.)

"Very few of the children were satisfied with the amount of contact with their fathers, after divorce." (Source: Visitation and the Noncustodial Father, Koch & Lowery, Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, Vol. 8, No. 2, p. 50, Winter 1984.)

"Feelings of anger towards their former spouses hindered effective involvement on the part of fathers; angry mothers would sometimes sabotage father's efforts to visit their children." (Source: Ahrons and Miller, Am. Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol. 63. p. 442, July '93.)

"Mothers may prevent visits to retaliate against fathers for problems in their marital or post-marital relationship." (Source: Seltzer, Shaeffer & Charing, Journal of Marriage & the Family, Vol. 51, p. 1015, November 1989.)

In a study: "Visitation Interference - A National Study" by Ms. J Annette Vanini, M.S.W. and Edward Nichols, M.S.W., it was found that 77% of non-custodial fathers are NOT able to "visit" their children, as ordered by the court, as a result of "visitation interference" perpetuated by the custodial parent. In other words, non-compliance with court ordered visitation is three times the problem of non-compliance with court ordered child support and impacts the children of divorce even more. (Originally published Sept. 1992)
Marriage: The Safest Place for Women and Children

by Patrick F. Fagan and Kirk A. Johnson, Ph.D.

The institution that most strongly protects mothers and children from domestic abuse and violent crime is marriage. Analysis of the 1999 findings of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has conducted since 1973, demonstrates that mothers who are or ever have been married are far less likely to suffer from violent crime than are mothers who never marry.

Specifically, data from the NCVS survey show that:

- **Marriage dramatically reduces the risk that mothers will suffer from domestic abuse.** In fact, the incidence of spousal, boyfriend, or domestic partner abuse is twice as high among mothers who have never been married as it is among mothers who have ever married (including those separated or divorced).

- **Marriage dramatically reduces the prospects that mothers will suffer from violent crime in general or at the hands of intimate acquaintances or strangers.** Mothers who have never married--including those who are single and living either alone or with a boyfriend and those who are cohabiting with their child's father--are nearly three times more likely to be victims of violent crime than are mothers who have ever married.

Other social science surveys demonstrate that marriage is the safest place for children as well. For example:

- **Children of divorced or never-married mothers are six to 30 times more likely to suffer from serious child abuse** than are children raised by both biological parents in marriage.¹

Without question, marriage is the safest place for a mother and her children to live, both at home and in the larger community. Nevertheless, current government policy is either indifferent to or actively hostile to the institution of marriage. The welfare system, for example, can penalize low-income parents who decide to marry. Such hostility toward marriage is poor public policy; government instead should foster healthy and enduring marriages, which would have many benefits for mothers and children, including reducing domestic violence.
Violence Against Mothers

The DOJ's National Crime Victimization Survey collects data on victimization through an ongoing survey of a nationally representative sample of Americans. The survey defines violent crime as rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. Domestic or intimate abuse is defined as violent crimes performed by a spouse, former spouse, boyfriend, or former boyfriend.\(^2\)

The NCVS data reveal interesting patterns among mothers (ages 20-50) with children under the age of 12:\(^3\) Specifically:

Never-married mothers experience more domestic abuse. Among those who have ever married (those married, divorced, or separated), the annual rate of domestic violence is 14.7 per 1,000 mothers. Among mothers who have never married, the annual domestic violence rate is 32.9 per 1,000.

Thus, never-married mothers suffer domestic violence at more than twice the rate of mothers who have been or currently are married. (See Chart 1).

Never-married mothers suffer more violent crime. The NCVS provides data on total violent crime against mothers with children under the age of 12. Total violent crime covers rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault committed against the mother by any party. Total violent crime covers violence against mothers by
former and current spouses and boyfriends as well as by relatives, acquaintances, and strangers.

As Chart 2 shows, ever-married mothers with children suffer from overall violent crime at an annual rate of 52.9 crimes per 1,000 mothers. Never-married mothers with children, by contrast, suffer 147.8 violent crimes per 1,000 mothers.

Thus, never-married mothers experience violent crime at almost three times the rate of ever-married mothers. The institution of marriage, in general, shelters mothers from the specter of violence.

![Chart 2: Annual Rates of Total Victimization for Mothers with Children*](image)

**Violence Against Children**

Rates of victimization of children vary significantly by family structure, and the evidence shows that the married intact family is by far the safest place for children.\(^\text{4}\) (See Chart 3.) Although the United States has yet to develop the capacity to measure child abuse by family structure, British data on child abuse are available. These data show that rates of serious abuse of children are lowest in the intact married family but six times higher in the step family, 14 times higher in the always-single-mother family, 20 times higher in cohabiting-biological parent families, and 33 times higher when the mother is cohabiting with a boyfriend who is not the father of her children.
When an abused child dies (see Chart 4), the relationship between family structure and abuse gets stronger: It is lowest in intact always-married families, three times higher in the step family, nine times higher in the always-single-mother family, 18 times higher in the cohabiting-biological parents family, and 73 times higher in families where the mother cohabits with a boyfriend.
What Policymakers Should Do

In legislation and social policy, the government should not penalize parents for marrying. Given the rising evidence that non-married mothers and their children are at greater risk of violent crime and abuse, government policy should not encourage--either directly or in unintended ways--single motherhood and cohabitation.

Yet that is what is being done in many of America's means-tested welfare programs. Because mothers and children are safest from harm within a married family, policymakers should begin the work of implementing policies to reduce the bias against marriage in welfare programs and to strengthen marriage as the primary institution for raising children.

Members of Congress should support President Bush's proposal to spend $300 million per year on efforts to rebuild marriage among the poor. It is the first serious proposal in this regard ever to come before Congress. His suggestions, if adopted into law, would begin the necessary work to reconstruct the institution of marriage, which failed welfare policies of the past have undermined. Now that the first stage of welfare reform--rebuitling an ethic of work--is well underway, Congress should support the President as he focuses on the second important stage: rebuilding a culture of marriage in American society.

Members of Congress should begin to reduce and eventually eliminate the penalty against marriage in most means-tested welfare programs. For example, they could issue a joint resolution indicating their intent to achieve this goal. Then they could request that the Department of Health and Human Services submit a list of options that would be good candidates for this reform.

Conclusion

In establishing programs to help those who need assistance, the question before Congress should not simply be whether or not to fund a program, but how much its policies would improve the well-being of adults and children. Social science data clearly show that mothers and children are safest and thrive best in a married family. It is time for the government to adopt policies that reflect this knowledge and rebuild, rather than undermine, the institution of marriage.

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3. For purposes of this paper, the term "mothers with children" refers to women over age 20 with children under the age of 12 in their household. Limitations in the NCVS do not permit identification of mothers who have children ages 12 to 18 but no younger children. There is no reason to believe that the data on violence would be altered if younger mothers and mothers with older children were included in the survey. Most of the women in this analysis (nearly 97 percent) were between the ages of 20 and 50.


5. See Patrick F. Fagan, "Don't Penalize the Poor for Marrying," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder, forthcoming.