

MYTHS and FACTS About FATHERLESSNESS

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"Mainstream" fatherlessness statistics come not from valid sources but from father's rights organizations. They are used to denigrate single and divorced mothers. These specious statistics have made it to the Ways and Means committee. [See the [Statement of Bill Wood, and Jay Gell, Children's Legal Foundation, Charlotte, North Carolina.](#)]

Below are the **REAL** sources for "mainstream" fatherlessness statistics.

----- Forwarded message -----

Date: Sat, 29 Aug 1998 08:46:36 -0700

From: Bruce

Newsgroups: alt.feminism

Subject: What Happens to Children Deprived of Their Natural Fathers

WHAT HAPPENS TO CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF THEIR NATURAL FATHERS

Compared to children in male-headed traditional families where their natural parents are married to each other, children living in female-headed single-parent, lesbian or other environments where they are deprived of their natural fathers are:

1. Eight times more likely to go to prison.
2. Five times more likely to commit suicide.
3. Twenty times more likely to have behavioral problems.
4. Twenty times more likely to become rapists.
5. 32 times more likely to run away.
6. Ten times more likely to abuse chemical substances.
7. Nine times more likely to drop out of high school.
8. 33 times more likely to be seriously abused.
9. 73 times more likely to be fatally abused.
10. One-tenth as likely to get A's in school.
11. On average have a 44% higher mortality rate.
12. On average have a 72% lower standard of living.

Source: "The Garbage Generation" by Daniel Amneus Ph.D. It is posted in HTML format at <http://www.calstatela.edu/faculty/damneus/garbgen.htm>

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Fathers' Absence

- 85% of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes.
- 90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes.
- 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes.
- 75% of all adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers come from fatherless homes.
- 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes.
- 80% of rapists motivated with displaced anger come from fatherless homes.
- 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes.
- 85% of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in a fatherless home.
- California has the nation's highest juvenile incarceration rate and the nation's highest juvenile unemployment rate.
- Juveniles have become the driving force behind the national increase in violent crime; the epidemic of youth violence and gangs is related to the breakdown of the two-parent family.
- 71% of teenage pregnancies are to children of single parents. Daughters of single parents are 2.1 times more likely to have children during their teenage years than are daughters from intact families. 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.
- In 1983, a study found that 60% of perpetrators of child abuse 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.
- 18 million children live in single-parent homes. Nearly 75% of American children living in single-parent families will experience poverty before they turn 11. Only 20% in two-parent families will experience 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.
- Kidnapping: family abductions were 163,200 compared to non-family abductions of 200 to 300, attributed to the parents' disenchantment with the legal system.

Reestablishing fatherhood is not just a minor issue to the Signatories to the Fathers' Manifesto. It is the only way to rid this world of its current social pathology, and they know it. Any and every plan for doing this must be presented and carefully scrutinized, regardless of its "political correctness." There is too much at stake to ignore any possible solution.

The Constitutional right to freedom of religion clearly requires the preservation of families -- and this requires strong fatherhood.

Sources:

["The False Child Abuse Industry"](#) by John Knight
Fathering Magazine

[Fathers' Manifesto Home Page](#)

Coalition of Parent Support - AB 999 (Harvey) - Shared Parenting
(Trish's note: AB 999 is a failed California presumptive joint custody bill.)

Also see: ["Fatherhood Statistics"](#) by John Knight
Fathering Magazine

Fathers' Manifesto is well-known for its misogyny, anti-semitism, racism, and homophobia. It is cited as

a hate group by [Stop The Hate, Google Web Directory - Hate Groups, and The Hate Directory](#), (Ethnic, Racial, Religious, Ethnic, Gender, Sexual Orientation Based Hatred On The Internet). This site includes the Fathers' Manifesto Talmud Survey and main Father's Manifesto web sites. There is also an [HTML](#) version of this web site. Fathers' Manifesto is cited as "Cranky" at [Crank.Net](#) in the categories [chauvinists](#) and [politics](#). It's described as "Fighting feminism, ending affirmative action, and restoring responsible fatherhood."

You've Seen The Myths... HERE IS THE TRUTH

DEBUNKING FATHERLESSNESS: CHILDREN FARE WORSE IN "FATHERLESS HOMES"

Myth: Children in "fatherless homes" have fared poorly over the past three decades.

Fact: "In recent years, the lives of America's children have improved in measurable ways, according to a new collaborative report from federal agencies. America's Children 1999 shows that youth are less likely to smoke, die and or be victimized by crime, but they have made fewer gains in areas that predict their economic futures... Among the report's most positive results is a 40 percent drop in serious violent crime involving juvenile offenders since 1993." Some indicators of child wellbeing have gone down; but others have gone up.

[Pascual, Patrice, "America's Children 1999,"

Connect for Kids

Benton Foundation 1999

http://www.connectforkids.org/benton_topics1544/benton_topics_show.htm?doc_id=15849;

ChildStats, <http://childstats.gov/ac1999/ac99.asp>]

DEBUNKING FATHERLESSNESS: CHILD SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Myth -- Youth from "fatherless homes" are at higher risk for substance abuse.

Fact: Youth living with two biological or adoptive parents are significantly less likely to use alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs, or to report problems with their use, than youth not living with two parents. "[However] the highest risks of youth substance use, dependence, and need for illegal drug abuse treatment are found in families with a father and stepmother. Risks of youth substance use, dependence, and need for illegal drug abuse treatment are generally higher among youth who live with a biological father and a stepmother than among youth who live with a biological mother and a stepfather. Youths who live with a biological father and no mother or stepfather are more likely to use substances, to be dependent on substances, and to need illegal drug abuse treatment than youths who live with a biological mother and no father or stepfather."

[Johnson, Hoffman, and Gerstein (1986), on the effects of family structure on adolescent substance abuse, data from 1995 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse.

http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/prevent/parenting/r_familystructure.html]

Fact: Single-Dad Homes in Survey of Kids' Drug Use

Sixth to 12th graders who live in single-dad homes are more likely than others to use drugs, according to a survey released Thursday.

The survey, done by a division of an Atlanta-based anti-drug organization, also found that high schoolers' use of such drugs as heroin, Ecstasy, and marijuana increased, reversing a three-year decline in overall drug use. Meanwhile, cigarette and alcohol use dropped to a 13-year low.

The survey was conducted at schools which contracted with PRIDE Surveys, an arm of the Parents' Resource Institute for Drug Education, to question students during the 2000-2001 academic year. More than 75,000 students nationwide answered questionnaires anonymously, using pencils to fill in circles on a double-sided answer sheet.

This was the 14th annual survey but officials said it was the first time their group broke down the numbers to look at children who live with their mothers only, fathers only, and stepparents.

[The International Child and Youth Care Center

News Desk, July, 2001

<http://www.cyc-net.org/Newsdesk/news-july2001.html>]

DEBUNKING FATHERLESSNESS: CHILD PHYSICAL ABUSE

Myth -- Children are at greater risk of physical abuse in single mother households than in single father households.

Fact: Children are at greatest risk of physical abuse in a household with a biological parent who is cohabitating with a paramour. However, "[a]mong children in single-parent households, those living with *only* their fathers were approximately one and two-thirds times more likely to be physically abused than those living with only their mothers."

[Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect, National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information; P.O.Box 1182 Washington, DC 20013-1182; Telephone: (703) 385-7565, (800) FYI-3366 FAX: (703) 385-3206;

<http://www.mhsource.com/hy/cabuse.html>]

DEBUNKING FATHERLESSNESS: TEEN PREGNANCY

Myth -- Children of unwed teenage mothers do better when they have more involved fathers.

Fact: "Also examined was whether the history of father involvement up to 1984 had any effect on youths' well-being in 1987. Indicators of well-being include measures of educational and employment attainment, whether or not the adolescent had a child before age 19, whether the adolescent had spent time in jail, and signs of depression. The presence of fathers at home and regular contact with fathers was found to have little to no effect on these well-being outcome measures in the bivariate analyses."

[Christine Winquist Nord and Laura Spencer Loomis Westat, Inc., ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: SELECTED CHILD SUPPORT ARTICLES citing Furstenberg, F.F. and K.M. Harris. 1993. "When and why Fathers Matter: Impacts of Father Involvement on the Children of Adolescent Mothers." in *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies*, R.I. Lerman and T.J. Ooms (Eds.) pp.117-138.]

Propaganda -- Girls 15-19 raised in homes with fathers are significantly less likely to engage in premarital sex.

Fact: "Those subjects who reported unwanted sexual experiences rated their fathers' and mothers' views of women as significantly more traditional than subjects who had not reported such experiences. These data suggest that parents' attitudes about gender roles may be related to vulnerability and lead to unwanted sexual experiences."

[Neal, Cynthia J. and Michael W. Mangis, "Unwanted Sexual Experiences Among Christian College Women: Saying No on the Inside," Wheaton College

http://www.biola.edu/admin/JPT/past/23_3/Neal_Mangis.html]

Fact: Girls 15-19 raised in homes with fathers are significantly *more* likely to become married as teenagers and to not complete college. In 1958 more teenage girls gave birth than in 1998. The only difference was that in 1958, most were married. The teen birth rate is now at its lowest point in half a century!

[The National Center for Health Statistics, see
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/99/trends/index.htm>]

Fact: "Teenagers now account for 31% of all non-marital births, this number has decreased from 50% in 1970."

["Child Trends." see <http://www.childtrends.org/>]

Fact: The teen birth rate in Massachusetts fell to a 30-year low in 2000, according to a new report from the state Department of Public Health.

[Teen birth rate in Mass. hits 30-year low Younger mothers get inadequate care By Associated Press, 3/27/2002]

DEBUNKING FATHERLESSNESS: ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES/LOW S.A.T. SCORES

Myth -- "1% increase in the rate of fatherlessness SAT scores declined 3 points..." (per [The False Child Abuse Industry](#) by John Knight for *Fathering Magazine*)

Fact: "Culminating a decade of steady improvement, US high school students who took the SAT this year posted the highest math scores since 1969, according to scores released yesterday."

"Nationally, the SAT scores released yesterday continue a roughly 10-year trend. Scores declined throughout the 1970s and early 1980's, but they stabilized in the mid-1980's and have risen steadily since then. Many attribute the initial drop to the fact that a far larger and more diverse group began to take the test."

[SAT math scores best since 1969 Figures reflect steady US climb; Mass. students keep up the pace; The Boston Globe; By Scott S. Greenberger, Globe Staff, 8/30/2000]

Myth -- Divorce causes academic and behavioral problems in children.

Fact: "Andrew Cherlin and his colleagues studied random samples of over 11,000 children in Great Britain and over 2,200 children in the U.S., using information gathered on parents' and teachers' reports of behavioral problems and the children's reading and math scores. They statistically controlled for the children's social class, race, the children's early behavioral and test scores, and factors such as physical, mental, and emotional handicaps as assessed by physicians.

After controlling for those factors, boys of divorced parents scored as high as boys from intact couples on the behavioral and academic tests. For girls, there was a small residual effect, apparently caused by the divorce itself, on their parents' and teachers' ratings of their behavioral problems.

This work implies that most of the problems we see in children of divorced parents are due to long-standing psychological problems of the parents, the stresses of poverty and racism, disabilities the children themselves suffer, and so on."

[Mahony, Rhona, Divorce, Nontraditional Families, and Its Consequences for Children
<http://www.stanford.edu/~rmahony/Divorce.html>,
citing to Cherlin, et al., Science, 1991, June 7, 252 (5011), pp.1386-89]

Myth -- High father involvement post-divorce increases children's academic performance.

Fact: "Children of divorced homes with high grade point averages have mothers with a lower level of depression, a higher educational level, less conflict with their ex-spouse, and less intense levels of conflict between mother and child than those children with lower grade point averages."

[McCombs, A., & Forehand, R. (1989). Adolescent school performance following parental divorce: Are there family factors which can enhance success? *Adolescence*, 24, 871-880.]

Myth -- Adolescents from single father households do better academically than those from single

mother households.

Fact: There is little established long-term difference, except that adolescents from single father households are judged by teachers to be less well behaved and to show less effort in class. They also score slightly less than their single-mother counterparts on standardized tests, both verbal and math, and are perceived to be less academically qualified for college. Children raised by single fathers attain on average six months less education.

[Downey, D. B., Ainsworth-Darnell, J. W., & Dufur, M. J. (1998). Sex of parent and children's well-being in single-parent households. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60(4), 878-893]

DEBUNKING FATHERLESSNESS: JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND JUVENILE CRIME **Myth -- Juvenile delinquency is caused by "fatherlessness."**

Fact: "Studies have shown repeatedly a consistent relationship between juvenile delinquency and large family size, marital disharmony, alcohol abuse in parents and overall social deprivation. A consistent relationship has also been shown with delayed reading age, below average scores on intelligence and achievement tests, conduct disorder of childhood and parental aggressive behaviour."

[Kelly, Mary, Bernadette Mackey, and Michael Fitzgerald, A TEN-YEAR DESCRIPTIVE FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF 50 DELINQUENT BOYS, *British Journal of Clinical and Social Psychiatry*, April 1999, Vol. 10 (1999) , no.1 <http://www.scpNet.com/paper4.htm>]

Fact: "Overall, juvenile crime rates have been falling since 1995. And despite a 50 percent drop in the juvenile murder arrest rate from 1992 through 1998, states gave criminal prosecutors increased power to bypass the century-old juvenile system, or chipped away at options juvenile judges had for trying youth cases."

Fact: "The rise in juveniles going to jail is due to prosecutors and judges having more options in trying juveniles as adults."

[Number of juveniles sent to adult prisons skyrocketing, study shows The number of minors in state prisons has more than doubled in the past 12 years, according to a study by the Justice Department February 27, 2000 <http://japan.cnn.com/2000/US/02/27/juveniles.in.jail/>]

DEBUNKING FATHERLESSNESS: VIOLENT CRIME RATES

Myth -- High Youth Crime Rates are a direct result of "fatherlessness."

Fact: "The number of serious crimes reported to police went down for an eighth straight year in 1999. The 7 percent drop extended the longest-running crime decline on record and pushed the murder rate to a 33-year low, the FBI reported yesterday. The overall violent-crime rate sank to a 21-year low of 525 murders, rapes, robberies, and assaults for every 100,000 residents. The last time the figure was lower, 498 in 1978, came before an epidemic of crack cocaine sent violent crime soaring in the mid-1980s."

[Violent crime drops for eighth year FBI report says decline in rate soon may level off By Michael J. Sniffen, *Associated Press*, 10/16/2000]

Fact: The rate of violent crime against Hispanics fell 56 percent over a seven-year period in the 1990s and is now similar to that against whites, the government reported yesterday. The decrease for Hispanics coincided with a steep drop in violent crime against all US residents, and against whites, blacks, and American Indians, according to the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics. In 1993, the violent crime rate for Hispanics was closer to that for blacks, who experienced 70 violent crimes per 1,000 people. By 2000, it was closer to that for whites, who experienced 27 violent crimes per 1,000 people.

[Rate of Violent Crime Drops, Especially Against Hispanics, By Jennifer Loven, *Associated Press*, 4/8/2002]

Fact: A new FBI survey says the nation's crime rates have dropped for the seventh straight year. The survey shows that arrests for serious and violent crimes dropped 5.4% from last year and 12% from the previous year. In addition, the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports for 1998 indicates that the reduction in crime is a national phenomenon; it is lower in every region of the United States."

"The FBI figures also show progress in fighting juvenile crime, with the report revealing that the number of juveniles arrested for serious and violent crimes fell nearly 11% from 1997 to 1998, almost twice as fast as the overall decline in arrest rates. While robberies by juveniles dropped the most, by 17% from 1997, juvenile drug violations and weapons charges also saw significant reductions."

[What's Responsible for the Dropping Crime Rate?; Tuesday, October 19, 1999; Crime rates are down in every region of the U.S.; by Ellen Sung. <http://voxcap.com/content/pc/db/item361.asp>]

DEBUNKING FATHERLESSNESS: INCARCERATION

Propaganda -- Children growing up without a father in the home are more than twice as likely to end up in jail.

Fact: New York Times: a study among 1,000 girls in detention in Alameda, Los Angeles, San Diego and Marin counties, revealed that 54 percent of their mothers and 46 percent of their fathers had been locked up, indicating that the greatest predictor of criminality in girls is having a parent who has been incarcerated.

Fact: The most significant predictor of criminality is having a parent or other close relative who exhibits anti-social behavior or has been incarcerated.

[DiLalla, L. F., & Gottesman, I. I. (1989). Heterogeneity of causes for delinquency and criminality: Lifespan perspectives. *Development & Psychopathology*, 1 (4), 339-349.]

Fact: "Like the overall inmate population, imprisoned parents were overwhelmingly male, 93 percent, and predominantly held in state prisons, 89 percent, rather than in federal ones, 11 percent."

[About 1.5 million US children have a parent in prison, study finds By Michael J. Sniffen, Associated Press, 8/31/2000]

DEBUNKING GENERALIZATIONS BASED ON "FATHERLESSNESS"

Myth -- Children fare worse in single parent homes.

Fact: "... the great majority of children brought up in single-parent families do well. In particular, differences in well-being between children from divorced and those from intact families, tend, on average, to be moderate to small."

[U.S. government census statistics 1998; DHHS, "Percentage Distribution of Children in United States by Number of Parents in Household, see Family Structure, <http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/hsp/98trends/98SEC1.HTM>]

and

Zill, N., Morrison, D. and Coiro, M., 1993. "Long Term Effects of Parental Divorce on Parent-Child Relationships: Adjustment and Achievement in Early Adulthood," *Journal of Family Psychology*, 7(1):91-103.]

Fact: "Whether parents are chronically stressed or depressed often more powerfully influences a child's fate than whether there are two parents in a home or whether a family is poor."

[Weissbourd, Richard. *The Vulnerable Child: What Really Hurts America's Children and What We Can Do About It*. Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1996]

Also see: Coontz, Stephanie. *The Way We Really Are: Coming to Terms with America's Changing Families*, New York: BasicBooks, 1997.]

Myth -- Mothers in intact homes are better parents than single mothers.

Fact: [T]here does not appear to be a significant difference in quality of parenting among divorced and intact mothers, when controlling for income.

[Rosenthal, D., Leigh, G. K., & Elardo, R. (1985). Home environment of three to six year old children from father-absent and two-parent families. *Journal of Divorce*, 9 (2), 41-48.]

and

[Colletta, N. D. (1979). The impact of divorce: Father absence or poverty? *Journal of Divorce*, 3(1), 27-35.]

Fact: "[S]ingle mothers have higher poverty rates than other families and ...a substantial portion of their poverty is a consequence of marital disruption."

[McLanahan, S., & Booth, K. (1989). Mother-only families: Problems, prospects, and politics. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 51 (3), 557-580.]

Myth -- Research on single and divorced mother households proves that divorce harms children.

Fact: "The quality of the single-parent family environment is at least as important for children's well-being as the fact of the divorce itself."

[Heath, P. A., & MacKinnon, C. (1988). Factors related to the social competence of children in single-parent families. *Journal of Divorce*, 11, 49-65.]

Fact: "Meta-analysis supports the notion that the impact of father absence appears to be mediated by family conflict; father absence in itself may not affect children's well-being. The family conflict perspective was strongly confirmed by the data. This perspective holds that children in intact families with high levels of conflict should have the same well-being problems as children of divorce, and the data supported this hypothesis."

[Amato, P. R., & Keith, B. (1991). Parental divorce and the well-being of children: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 110, 26-46.]

Fact: "[T]he effects of marital disruption are often collapsed with single parenting or female-headed households. Distinctions are not made between the homes of never-married women and divorced and separated women.... More basic studies and secondary analyses are needed... to support the sweeping generalizations that are made about the impact of father absence from a relatively small core of data. "

[Gadsden, Vivian L. and Marcia Hall, National Center on Fathers and Families. *Intergenerational Learning: A Review of the Literature*
<http://www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu/litrev/iglr.htm>]

Fact: "[T]he absence of a male role model following divorce is much less significant than the economic, emotional, and psychosocial consequences of family disruption in explaining the negative effects of divorce on children."

[Lamb, M. (1994). Paternal influences on child development. In *Changing fatherhood* (pp. 25). Tilburg, The Netherlands.]

Myth -- Research on single mother households proves that "fatherlessness" harms children.

Fact: "[F]ather absence does not significantly influence the level of well-being of either daughters or sons. Rather... children's perceptions of their relationships with both parents have a more direct influence on their psychological well-being than does the physical presence or absence of their father."

[Wenk, D., Hardesty, C. L., Morgan, C. S., & Blair, S. L. (1994). The influence of parental involvement on the well-being of sons and daughters. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 56 (1), 229-234.]

Fact: "[T]here is little evidence to support the hypothesis that nonresident father involvement has positive benefits for children."

[King, V. (1994). Variation in the consequences of nonresident father involvement for children's well-being. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 56(4), 963-972.]

Fact: "Using data from subsets ranging in size from 777 to 1,501 children from the child supplement to the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), a series of multivariate regression models were tested to determine whether the effects of nonresident father involvement on child well-being vary by race, mother's education, or whether the child was born within or outside of marriage. The results show few interactive effects, and no identifiable set of conditions emerged that increased or reduced the importance of father involvement for child well-being."

[King, Valarie, Carolina Population Center, CB# 8120, University Square, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27516-3997 (U.S.A.)]

Fact: "Meta-analysis supports the notion that the impact of father absence appears to be mediated by family conflict; father absence in itself may not affect children's well-being. The family conflict perspective was strongly confirmed by the data. This perspective holds that children in intact families with high levels of conflict should have the same well-being problems as children of divorce, and the data supported this hypothesis."

[Amato, P. R., & Keith, B. (1991). Parental divorce and the well-being of children: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 110, 26-46.]

Fact: Serious design errors and methodological problems make many studies ostensibly showing harm from father absence inconclusive, e.g. the impact of family-related variables (number of children, sex of parent, cause of parental absence, etc.)

[Blechman, E. A. (1982). Are children with one parent at psychological risk? A methodological review. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 44, 179-195.]

Myth -- There has been a large increase in the percentages of children now living in single father households.

Fact: "The Current Population Survey overestimates the proportion of children living in father-only families, because it identifies many cohabitating biological parent couples as father-only. Though the precise size of the overestimate is not known, analyses of the 1993 Survey of Income and Program Participation indicates that a little over two percent of all children actually lived in father-only families in that year."

[Note 6, U.S. government census statistics 1998; DHHS, "Percentage Distribution of Children in United States by Number of Parents in Household, see Family Structure, <http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/hsp/98trends/98SEC1.HTM>]

MICHAEL E. LAMB ON FATHER ABSENCE:

THE EFFECTS ARE NOT WHAT FATHERHOOD AND FATHER'S RIGHTS GROUPS TELL YOU THEY ARE

For more information, please see this page of [excerpts of Michael Lamb's research](#).

Most researchers past and present looked at father absence in an overly simplistic fashion. Early father absence studies were weakened by researchers not taking the role of the father within the context of the family and society at large. They were also weakened by techniques used to determine the development of masculinity and femininity in children. A bad or inadequate father is worse than no father at all. The fathers' attitude towards his children and the way he interacts with them is important. Data indicated that "quality of the father-son relationship is a more important influence on the boy's masculine development than the amount of time the father spends at home."

Children are not irreparably harmed by the absence of their biological fathers, so fatherhood initiatives that seek to bring the bio-father into the family, regardless of the costs, are short-sighted. The absence of the father may be mellowed by the presence of other positive male role models: "Paternal absence or paternal inadequacy does not rule out the possible presence of other male models. A brother, uncle, grandfather, or male boarder may ensure that the boy has much interactions with a competent adult male. An important role can be played by male neighbors and teachers. Male teachers, particularly, may influence father-absent boys."

Early studies found that fathers away from their children for more than two years regarded them as "sissies." Lamb agreed with this assessment, stating that "boys were less assertively aggressive and independent in their peer relations than boys who had not been separated from their fathers. They were more often observed to be very submissive or to react with immature hostility, and they were actually more aggressive in doll play than boys who had not been separated from their fathers. However, the facts that the fathers were present in the home at the time of this study and that the father-child relationships were stressful make it difficult to speculate about what influence father absence per se had on the children's personality development."

Lamb also found that "Studies of the effects of father absence have been said to show an element of sexism in that more attention has been given to effects on boys than on girls."

Father absence studies began to assess the effects on children of the absence of their fathers *due to military service during World War II*. Comparisons between war time father absence and father absence due to divorce or single parenthood are so far removed from each other that the differing conditions between these situations must be taken into account before using father absence research to describe (and especially to malign) divorced and single mother homes.

Most importantly, "well-socialized and successful adult males were likely to have had highly involved fathers and to have come from homes where their parents had compatible relationships. Some very extensive longitudinal data underscore the importance of both the father's behavior and the father-mother relationship in the personality adjustment of the child. In general, Block (1971) found that males who had achieved a successful emotional and interpersonal adjustment in adulthood had both fathers and mothers who were highly involved and responsible in their upbringing. In contrast poorly adjusted males had fathers who were typically uninvolved in childrearing and mothers who tended to have a neurotic attachment."

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