

Daddy's Got a New "Friend": Does a New Partner Influence Father Involvement with Nonresident Children?



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Background



- ❧ One in three children will live separately from their father
 - ❧ High divorce rate
 - ❧ Nonmarital fertility
- ❧ Fathers have a positive influence on children
- ❧ How does a new partner influence fathers' involvement with their nonresident children?



Theoretical Framework



❧ Package deal

- ❧ Fathers are involved when they are married to mothers, the protectors, and the providers
- ❧ Extension – when fathers form new relationships, particularly marriages, they become part of a new package and leave old packages behind

❧ Ecological framework

- ❧ Fathers' involvement has a lot to do with contextual factors

❧ Controls are included



Hypotheses



- ❧ Fathers who form new unions are less involved than fathers who remain single
- ❧ Fathers who remarry are less involved than fathers who form other unions (cohabiting, dating)
- ❧ Fathers who feel more confident in their role as fathers will be more involved than fathers who do not

Data



- ❧ Fragile Families and Child Well-Being
- ❧ Time 1, Time 3, Time 5
- ❧ Analytic sample
 - ❧ Single fathers at Time 1 - 370
 - ❧ Single fathers at Time 3 - 466
- ❧ Fathers may be included in one or both samples



Father Involvement

	Time 1	Time 3	Time 5
Play games like "Peek-a-boo" or "gotcha"	X		
Sings songs or nursery rhymes	X	X	X
Reads stories	X	X	X
Tells stories	X	X	X
Play inside with toys such as blocks or legos	X	X	X
Take child to visit relatives	X	X	
Hug or show physical affection to child	X	X	
Put child to bed	X		
Tell (child) you love (him/her)		X	
Let (child) help you with simple chores		X	
Play imaginary games with (him/her)		X	
Tell child you appreciate something he/she did		X	X
Go to restaurant or out to eat with (child)		X	
Assist (child) with eating		X	
Play outside in the yard, park, or playground			X
Take child on an outing, such as shopping or to a restaurant, church, museum, or special activity or event			X
Watch TV or a video together			X

Focal Independent Variable



- Formed a new relationship (1) or remained single (0)
- Married
- Cohabiting
- Dating
- Remained single (reference)



Attitude Toward Parenting



☞ Stress in Parenting Scale

- ☞ Range 4 - 16
- ☞ Higher scores indicate more stress

☞ How he feels as a father

- ☞ Excellent father
- ☞ Very good father
- ☞ Good father
- ☞ Not a good father
(reference)



Control Variables



- œ New child (1) since previous wave
- œ Relationship status with mother at birth
 - œ Married, cohabiting, visiting, not romantic (reference)
- œ Race
- œ Education
- œ Currently in school
- œ Employment status
- œ Child gender
- œ Child health excellent



Analytic Strategy



∞ OLS regression

∞ DV: Father involvement at Time 3 and Time 5

∞ DV: Change in father involvement from T1 - T3 & T3 - T5

∞ Logistic regression

∞ DV: Father involvement increased/remained the same or decreased between T1 - T3 & T3 - T5

∞ New partner dummy

∞ Union status indicators



Father Involvement



	Time 3				Time 5			
	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Level of father involvement (FI)	2.82	2.11	0	7	2.23	1.94	0	7
Change in FI since previous interview	-0.13	2.23	-6.50	6.66	-0.58	2.31	-7.00	5.80
FI increased or remained the same vs. decreased	0.52		0	1	0.50		0	1

New Partner & Union Status



	Time 3	Time 5
	Mean	Mean
New partner	0.36	0.38
Union Status		
Married	0.04	0.04
Cohabiting	0.16	0.19
Dating	0.16	0.16
Single	0.64	0.62

Parenting Characteristics



	Time 3		Time 5	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Stress in parenting	8.31	2.63	8.17	2.96
Excellent father	0.33		0.32	
Very good father	0.28		0.26	
Good father	0.30		0.33	
Not good father	0.10		0.08	
Has a new child	0.18		0.22	
Married at birth	0.03		0.09	
Cohabiting at birth	0.35		0.36	
Visiting at birth	0.42		0.39	
Not romantic at birth	0.20		0.16	

FI by New Partner Status



	Time 3		Time 5	
	New Partner	Single	New Partner	Single
Level of father involvement (FI)	2.57	2.96	2.09	2.33
Change in FI since previous interview	-0.13	-0.13	-0.68	-0.52
FI increased or remained the same vs. decreased	0.48	0.54	0.49	0.50

ANOVA – Time 3



	Married	Cohabiting	Dating	Single
Father involvement	2.51	2.65	2.50	2.96
Change in involvement	-0.65	-0.15	0.05	-0.13
Involvement increased	0.42	0.45	0.53	0.54

ANOVA - Time 5



	Married	Cohabiting	Dating	Single
Father involvement	1.80	2.04	2.23	2.33
Change in involvement	-1.54	-1.01	-0.01	-0.52
Involvement increased	0.31	0.42	0.63	0.50

OLS – Father Involvement



- ❧ New partner indicator not significant (T3 or T5)
- ❧ Excellent fathers : 3.38 (3.01) days more
- ❧ Very good fathers: 2.56 (2.53) days more
- ❧ Good fathers: 1.76 (1.49) days more
 - ❧ than fathers who say they are not good fathers
- ❧ Compared to fathers who were not romantically involved with mothers at birth (T3 only):
 - ❧ Cohabiting at birth: 0.69 days more
 - ❧ Visiting at birth: 0.59 days more
- ❧ Child health excellent: 0.12 days more (T5 only)

OLS – Father Involvement



- ❧ With union status indicators
 - ❧ Cohabiting fathers are slightly less involved than those who remain single (-0.45 days)
 - ❧ Only at T5
 - ❧ No other significant contrasts

- ❧ Effects of controls are the same as in previous analysis

Change in FI from Previous Wave

❧ T3

- ❧ No difference by new partner status
- ❧ All fathers increase their involvement more than fathers with a high school degree

❧ T5

- ❧ No difference by new partner status
- ❧ Fathers who were married to mothers at birth decrease their involvement by 1.12 days per week
- ❧ Fathers currently enrolled in school decrease their involvement by 0.68 days per week

Change in FI from Previous Wave

☞ T3

- ☞ Only significant predictor is level of education
 - ☞ All fathers increase their involvement more than fathers with a high school degree

☞ T5

- ☞ Model 1: Fathers who marry decrease their involvement by 1.17 days more than single fathers
- ☞ Model 2: Cohabiting fathers also show a decline in involvement (-0.58 days)
 - ☞ Fathers who were married to mothers at birth decline in involvement more than other fathers (-1.16 days)
 - ☞ Fathers who are currently in school decline involvement by 0.68 days

Increase/Remain the Same VS. Decrease FI



∞ Nothing is significant in any of the models



Conclusions



- ❧ There is not a clear story as to the impact a new partner has on fathers' involvement with their nonresident children
- ❧ Fathers who remarry show the greatest decline in involvement compared to other fathers
 - ❧ They may have created that new family (new package) that dating and cohabiting fathers are still working on
- ❧ New children are not associated with any of the dependent variables

Limitations



- ❧ Fathers have lower response rates than mothers
 - ❧ May be overestimating involvement
 - ❧ Selection effects

- ❧ For now, no explanation as to why the univariate relationships are not significant but the multivariate relationships are (in some models)



Future Directions



- ❧ Growth curve models to assess FI from T1 to T5
- ❧ Examine further the change in FI indicator
- ❧ Include characteristics of the new partner where applicable
- ❧ Extend analysis to include newly released T9 data



Thank you!



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