



***GROWING UP WITH A NONRESIDENT FATHER:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR OFFSPRING WELL-BEING DURING ADOLESCENCE AND ADULTHOOD***

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High rates of divorce and increasing rates of nonmarital and non-coresidential fertility limit many fathers' opportunities to be involved in the lives of their children. Further, the strength of the father-child relationship is often weaker when fathers live apart from their children. Prior research consistently shows that children with nonresident biological fathers are at risk for lower well-being across a range of outcomes, compared to those living with a biological father; although research also shows that positive nonresident father involvement and close nonresident father-child relationships may mitigate some of these negative effects. However, this body of research mainly focuses on child well-being during childhood or adolescence, and more research is needed to better understand how growing up with a nonresident father is associated with offspring well-being at later stages of the life course. Also, little research has examined how father-child closeness interacts with fathers' residential status to affect child well-being.

This presentation focuses on two specific research studies that address these limitations. First, using a sample of adolescents from Wave I of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), we examine the effects of having a nonresident father and father-child closeness on adolescent well-being by examining whether adolescents who are not close to their resident fathers do better (the same, or worse) than those with nonresident fathers. We also ask whether adolescents who are very close to their nonresident fathers ever do as well as those who are close to resident fathers.

Next, adding data from Wave III and Wave IV of the Add Health, we extend our understanding of the longer term effects of growing up with a nonresident father by examining trajectories of well-being through adolescence into adulthood. We compare differences in well-being between offspring growing up with nonresident versus a resident father, and measure offspring's depressive symptoms and problem drinking at three different time points. We will also examine whether these differences vary based on the length of time spent without a resident father in the household, and whether they vary for sons versus daughters.