



# Growing up with a nonresident father: Implications for offspring well-being during adolescence and adulthood

Mindy E. Scott  
Child Trends

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# Background

- **Resident Father Families vs. Nonresident Father Families**
  - Focusing on offspring well-being during adolescence and adulthood.
    - Emphasizes the importance of examining the effects of growing up with a nonresident father at later stages of life course.

# Background

- **Context**
  - The role of relationship closeness and father involvement.
    - For offspring
    - For fathers
      - Specific work examining associations between nonresident father involvement and men's transition to multiple partner fertility.
- **Diversity among nonresident father families**

## Research Questions

- **What are the effects of growing up with a nonresident father on adolescent offspring well-being?**
  - Do adolescents who are not close to their resident fathers do better (the same, or worse) than those with nonresident fathers?
  - Do offspring who are close to their nonresident fathers ever do as well as those who are close to resident fathers?

Source: Booth, A., Scott, M.E., & King. V. (2010). Father residence and adolescent problem behavior: Are youth always better off in two parent families? *Journal of Family Issue*, 31, 585-605.

## Research Questions

- **Do the negative effects of growing up with a nonresident father persist into adulthood?**

Source: Scott, M.E., Goldscheider, F., Steward-Streng, N., & Barry, M. (in progress). Longitudinal effects of growing up with a nonresident father.

# Data

- **Add Health**

- Wave I (1995) (12-18 year olds)
- Wave III (2001-2002) (18-26 year olds)
- Wave IV (2007-2008) (24-32 year olds)
- Sample:
  - Adolescents living with either 2 biological parents or a biological mother, but no biological father at Wave I.
  - Approximately 10,000 resident father families and 5,000 nonresident father families.

## Key Measures

- **Biological father residential status (WI)**
- **Length of time since lived with biological father (WI)**
  - Never lived with father
  - Ever lived with father
    - 1 year or less since lived with bio father
    - 2-5 years since lived with bio father
    - 6-10 years since lived with bio father
    - 11+ years since lived with bio father
- **Father-child relationship closeness (WI)**
  - Range=1-5, “Close” = Quite a bit or Extremely close

# Key Measures

- **Offspring Well-being**

- During Adolescence (Wave I)

- Grades (*4 items, 1=D or lower; 4=A*)
    - Self-esteem (*6 items, 1=disagree/strongly disagree; 4=agree*)
    - Delinquency (*10 items, 0=never; 2=3+ times*)
    - Violence (*8 items, 0=never; 2=more than once*)
    - Substance use (*average of 6 items related to tobacco, alcohol and marijuana use, 0-1 range*)
    - Depression (*7 items, 0=never or rarely; 2=a lot or most of the time*)



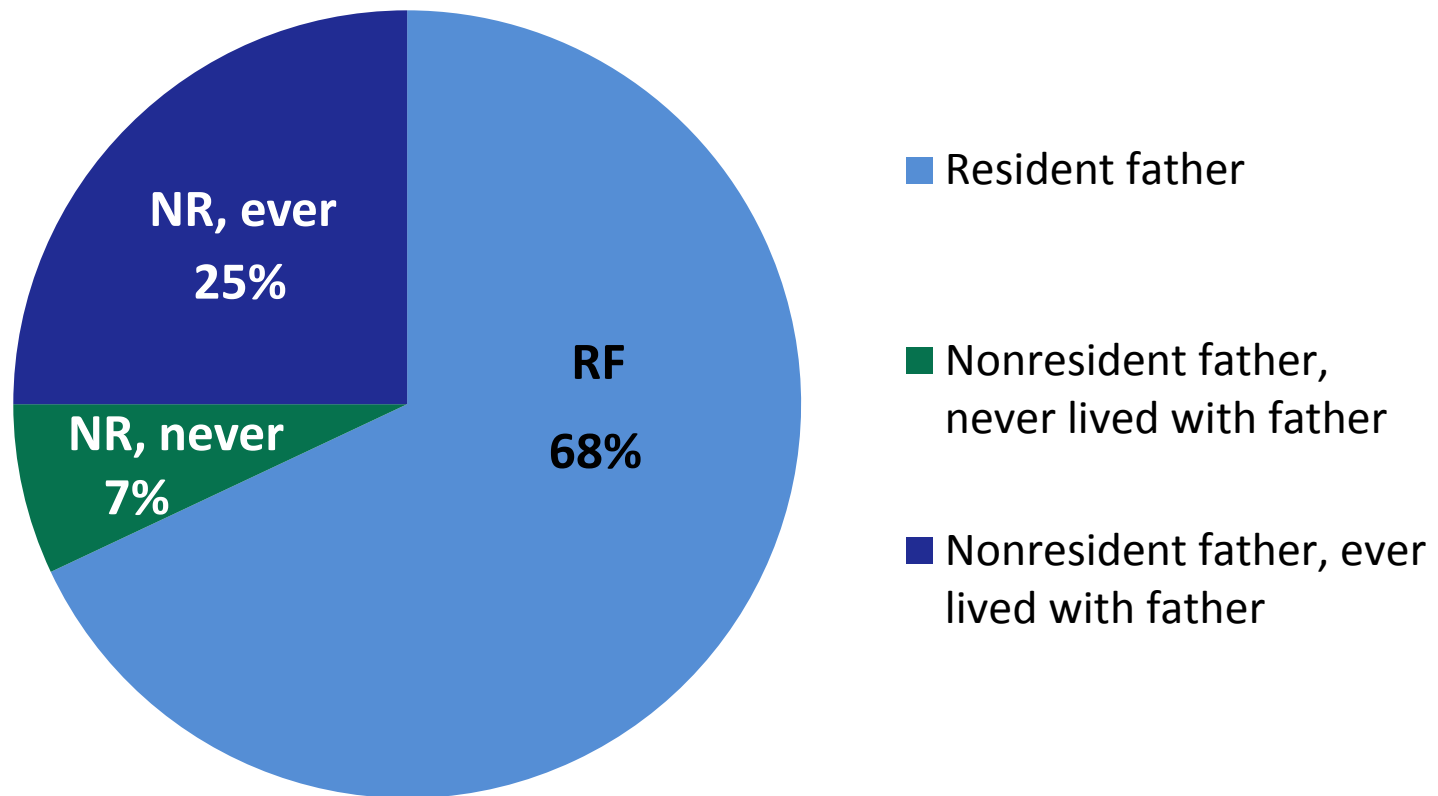
# Key Measures

- **Offspring Well-being**
  - During Adulthood (Wave III, Wave IV)
    - Problem drinking (*0=none; 6=every day/almost every day*)
      - During the past 12 months, on how many days did you drink [5 or more/4 or more] drinks in a row?
      - During the past 12 months, on how many days have you been drunk or very high on alcohol?
    - Depression (*9 items; 0=never/rarely; 3=most of the time/all of the time*)

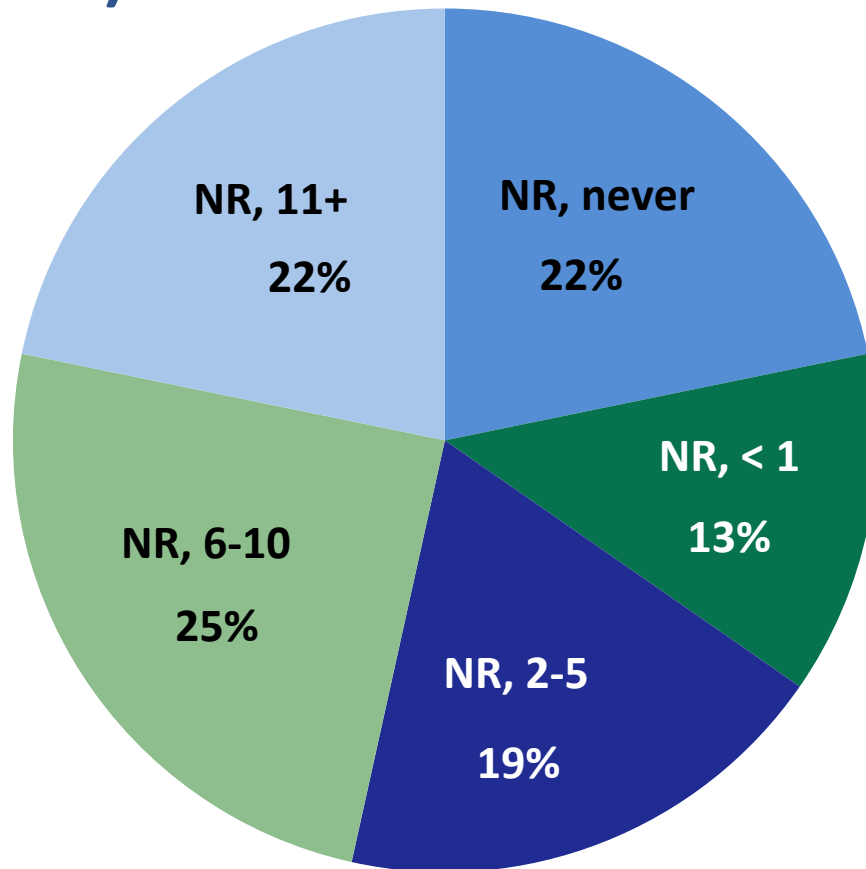
## Analyses – Paper 1

- **Comparison of offspring well-being in resident father vs. nonresident father families.**
  - During adolescence
  - Examine interactions between father residential status and father-adolescent closeness

## Results – Biological Father Residential Status (Wave I)

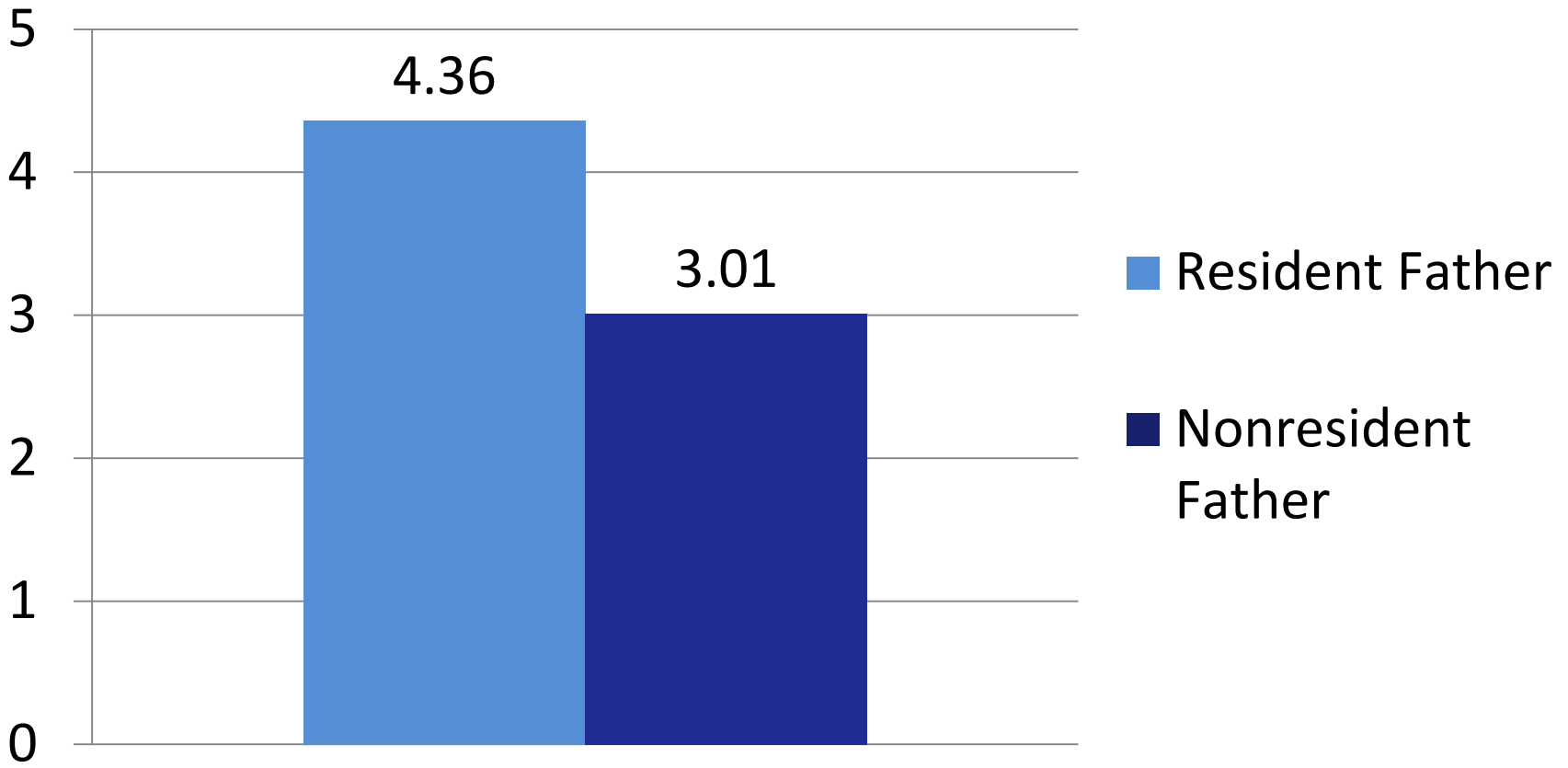


# Results - Biological Father Nonresidential Status (Wave I)

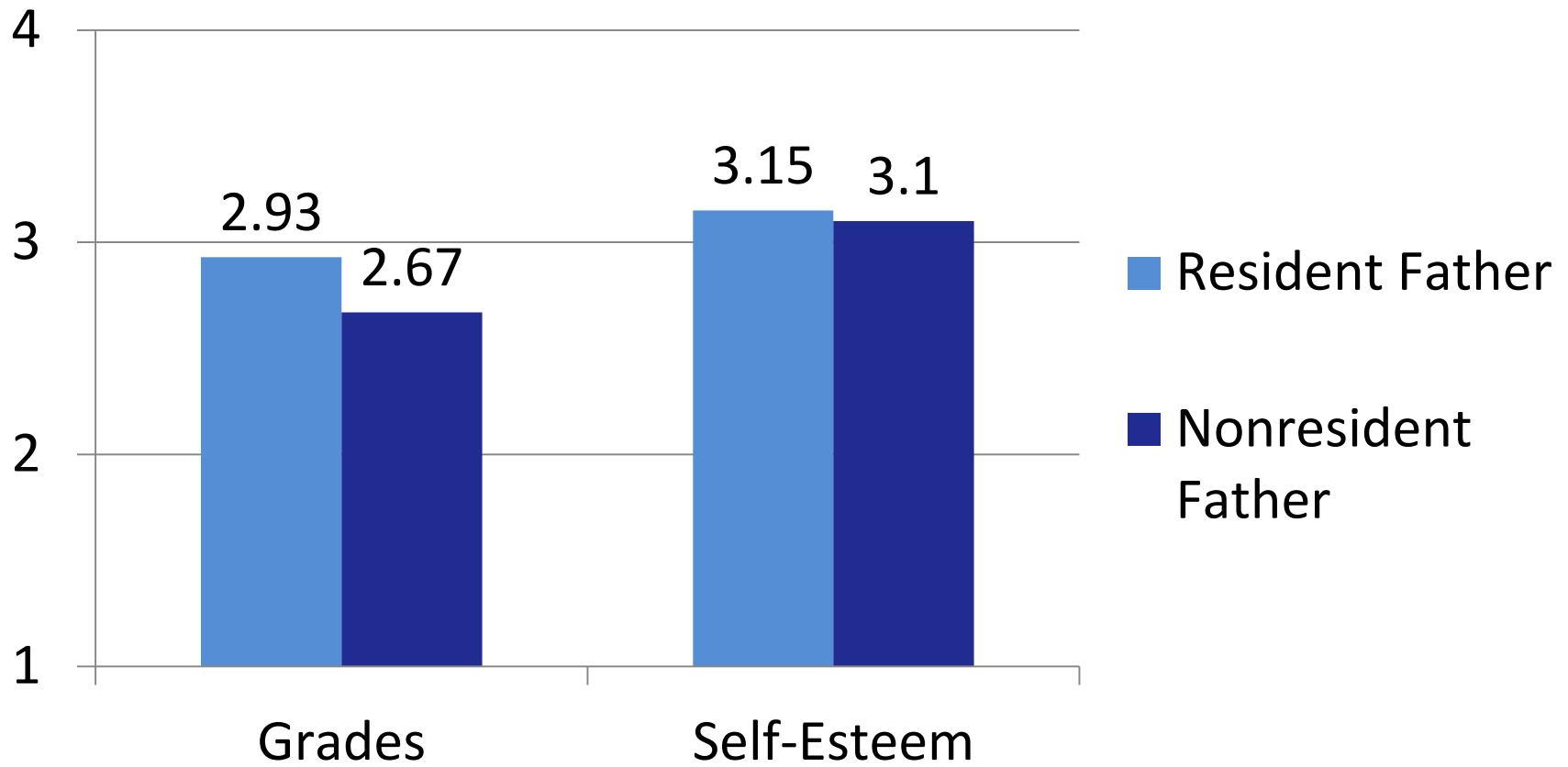


- Nonresident, never lived with father
- Nonresident, 1 year or less since lived with father
- Nonresident, 2-5 years since lived with father
- Nonresident, 6-10 years since lived with father
- Nonresident, 11 or more years since lived with father

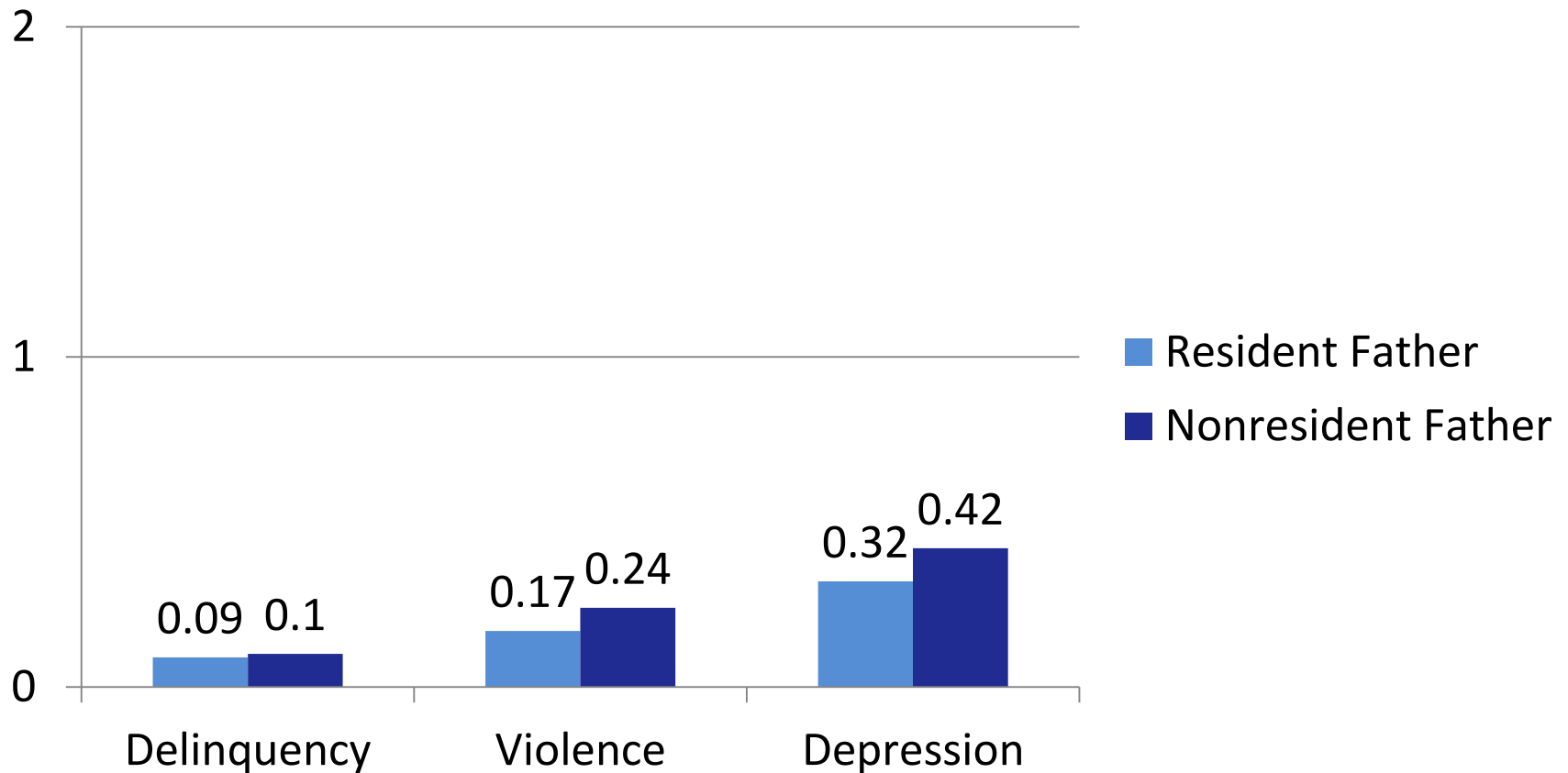
## Results - Average Father-Adolescent Closeness (Wave I)



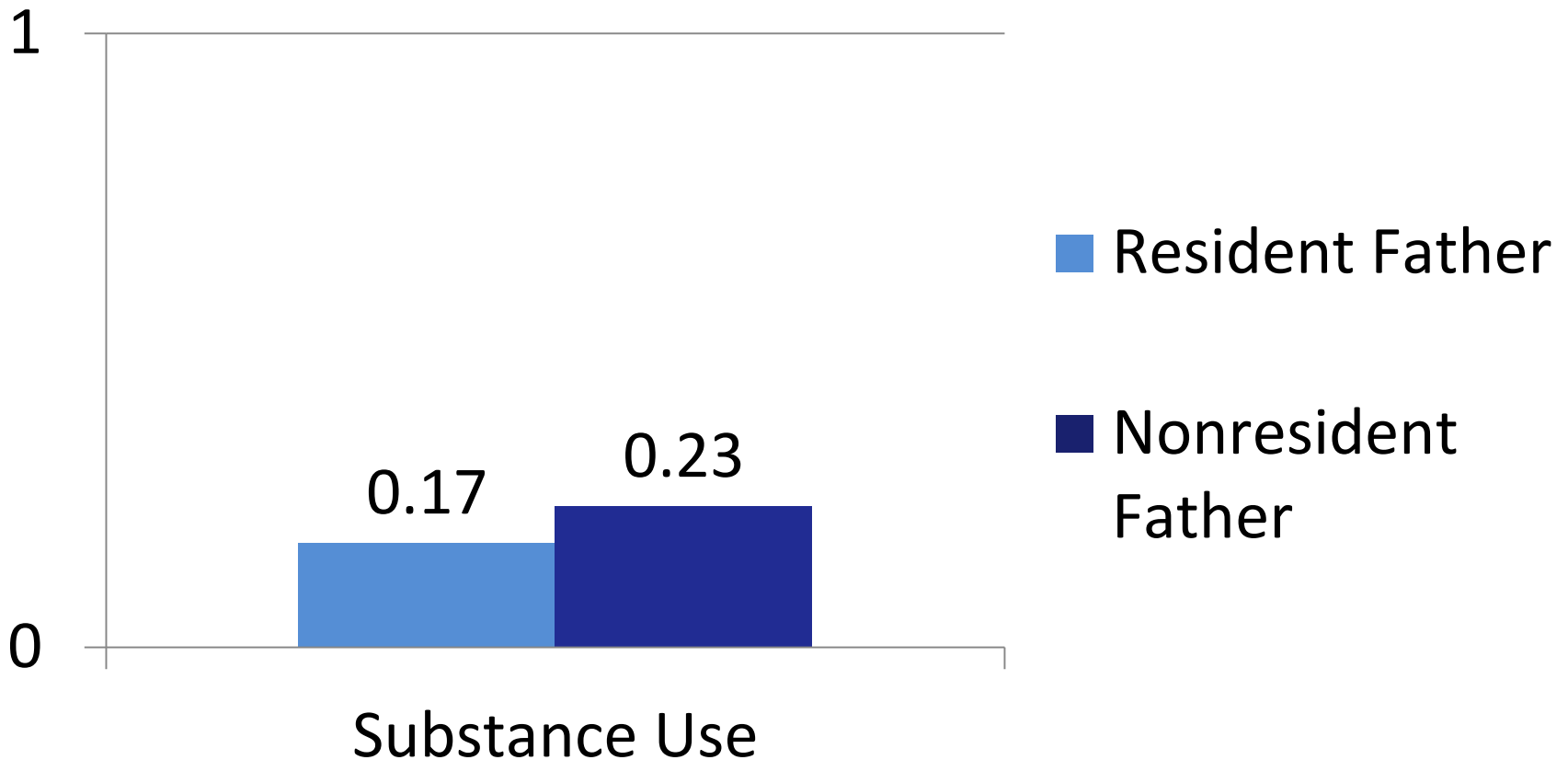
## Results – Adolescent Outcomes (Wave I)



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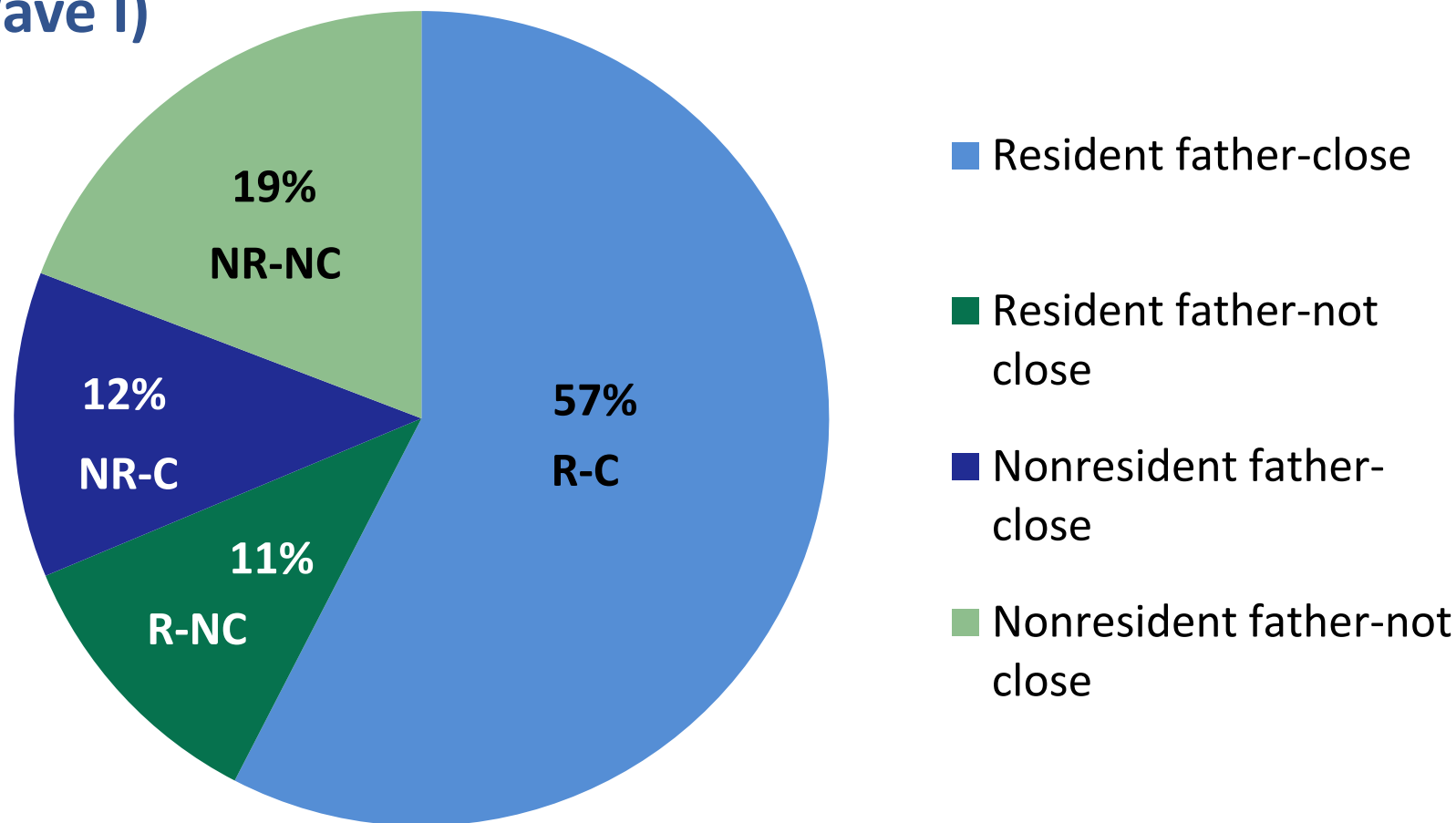


## Results – Adolescent Outcomes (Wave I)

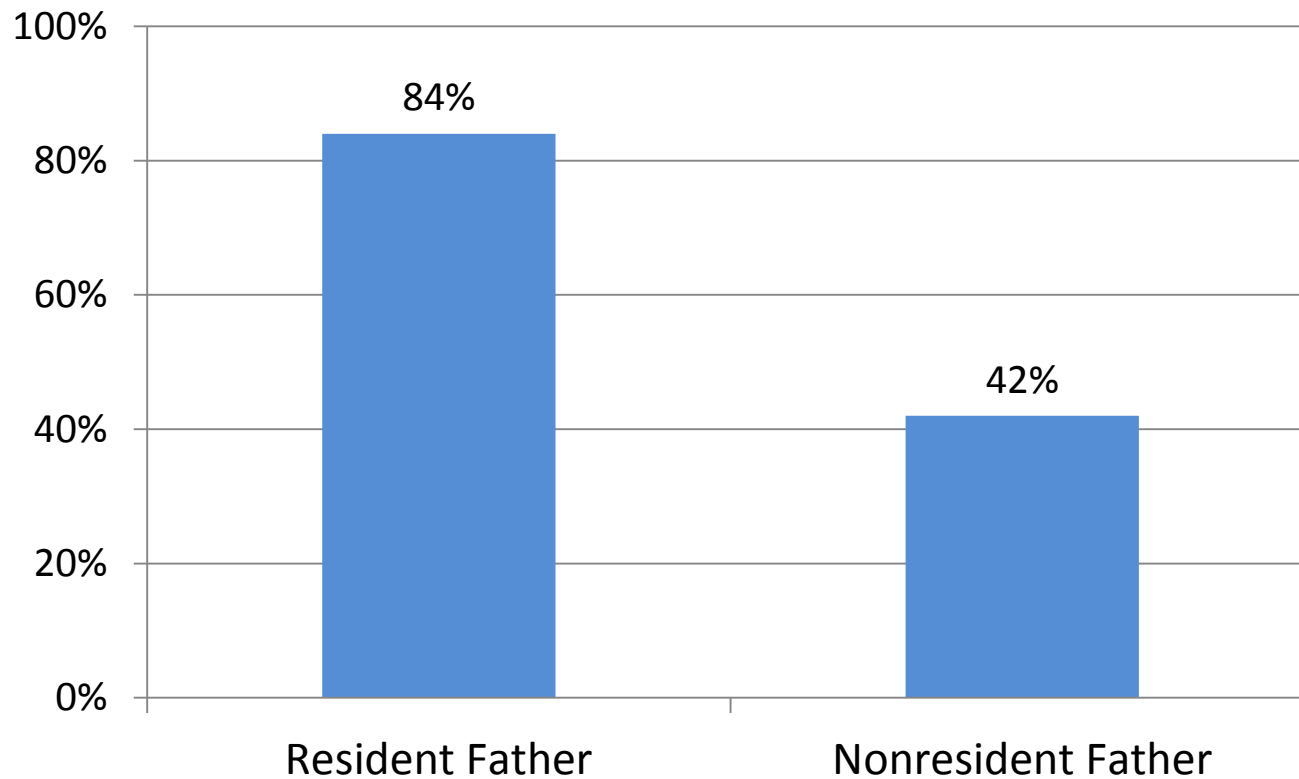




## Results - Father Residence X Father-Child Closeness (Wave I)

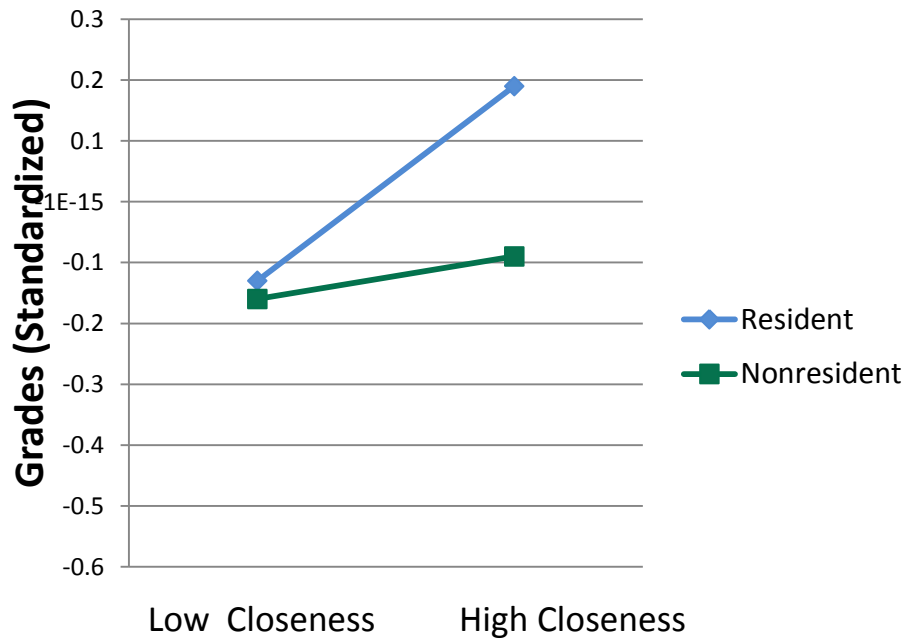


## Results – Percent Close to Biological Father (Wave I)

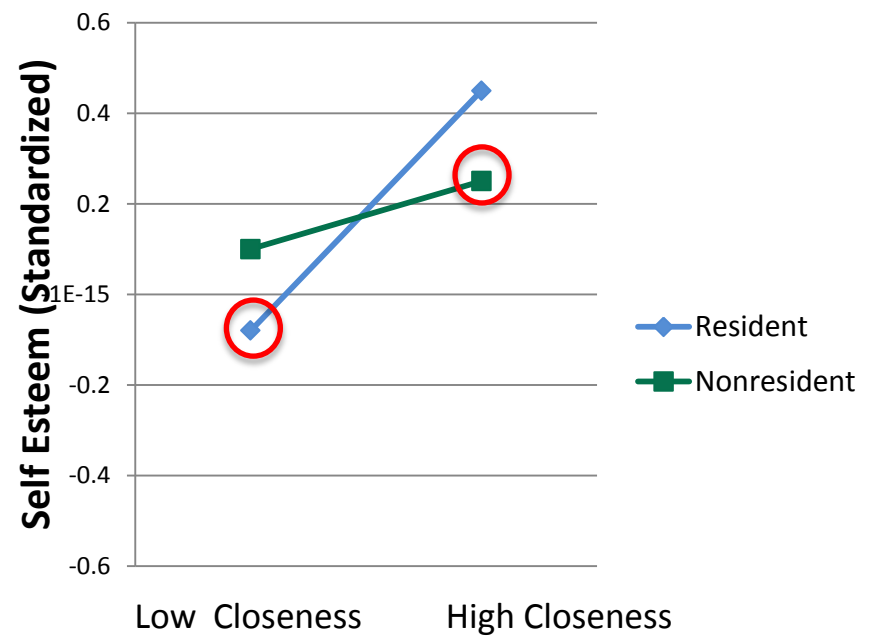


# Results – Interaction Results

## Grades

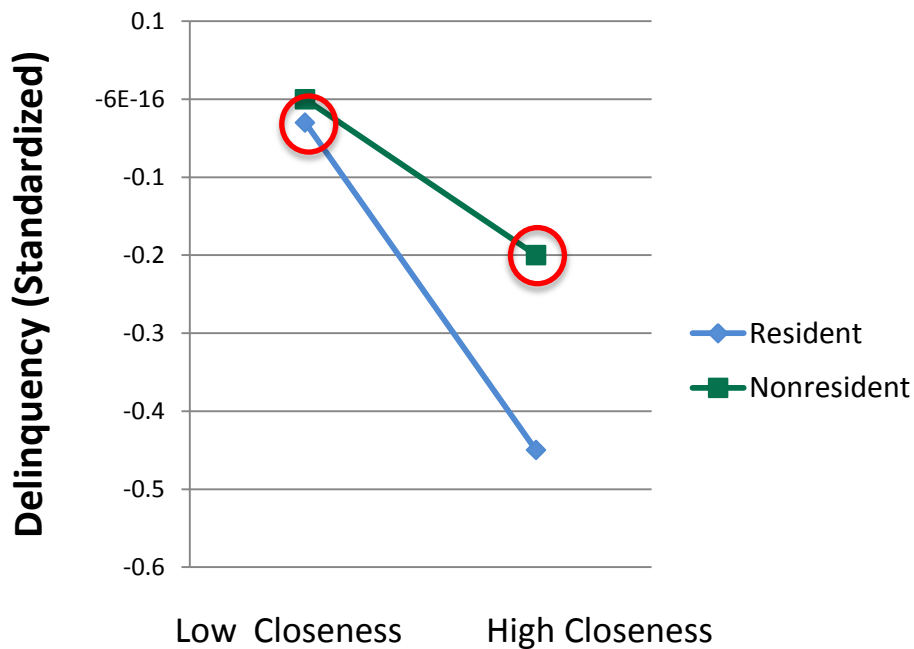


## Self Esteem

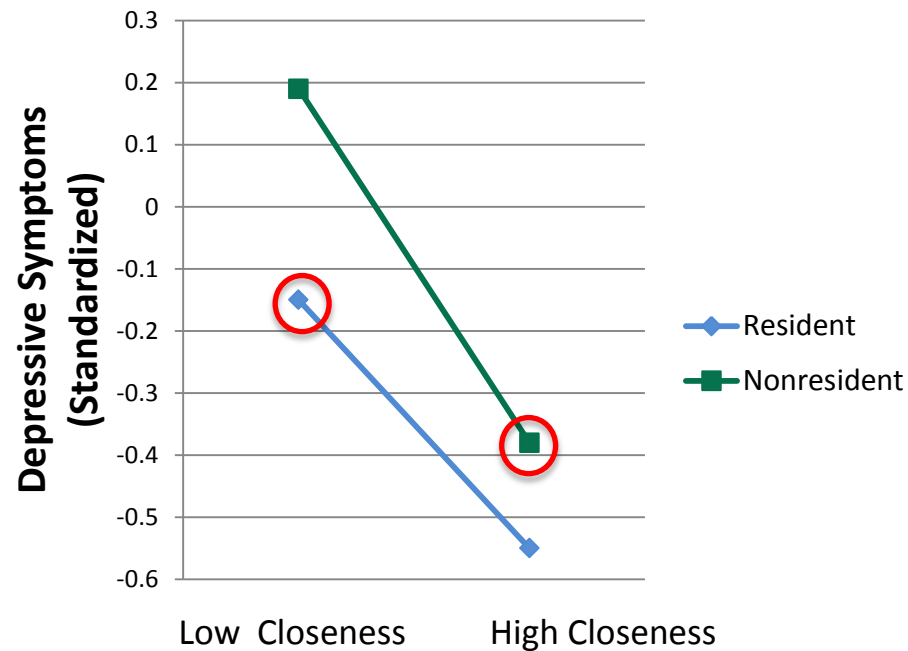


# Results – Interaction Results

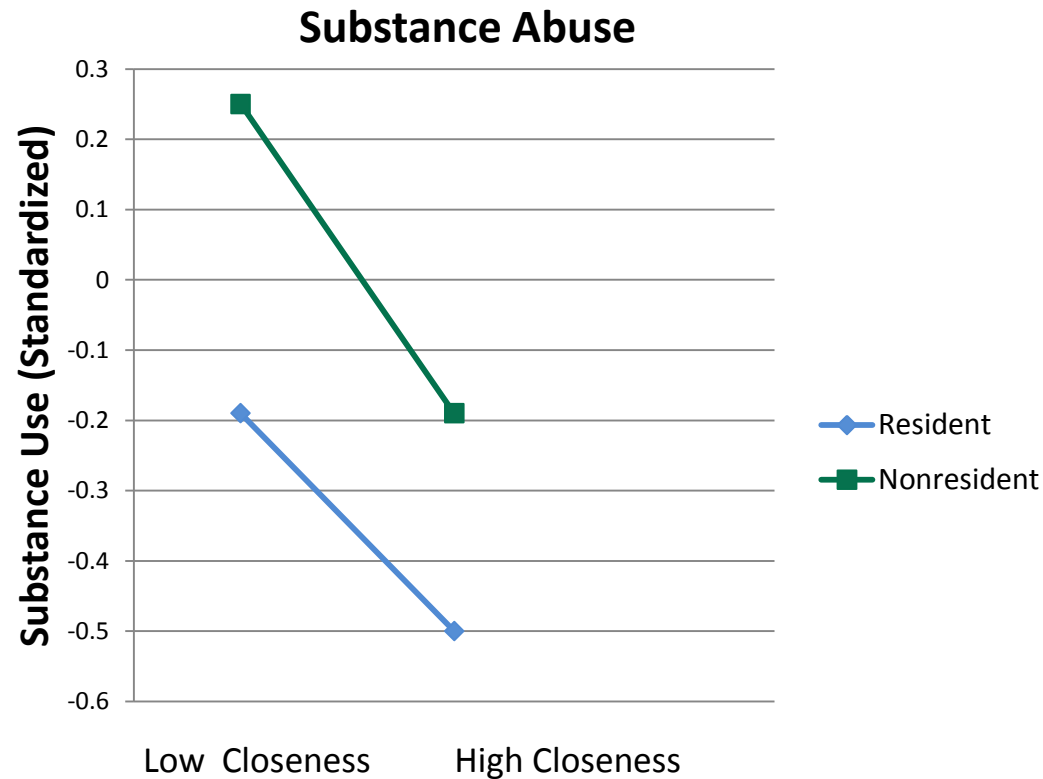
## Delinquency



## Depressive Symptoms



# Results – Interaction Results

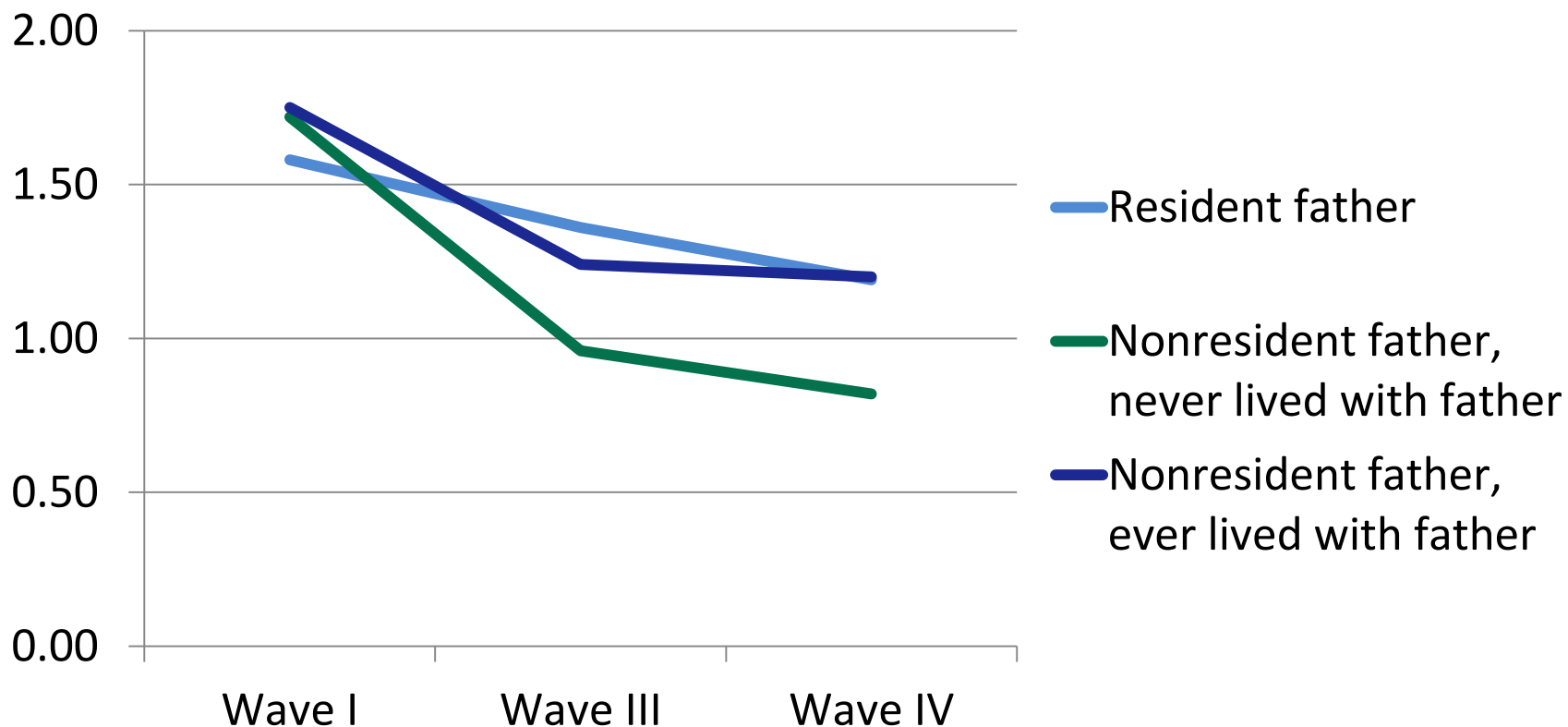


## Analyses – Paper 2

- **Comparison of offspring well-being in resident father vs. nonresident father families.**
  - Examine trajectories of well-being from adolescence into adulthood.
  - Examine differences for daughters vs. sons

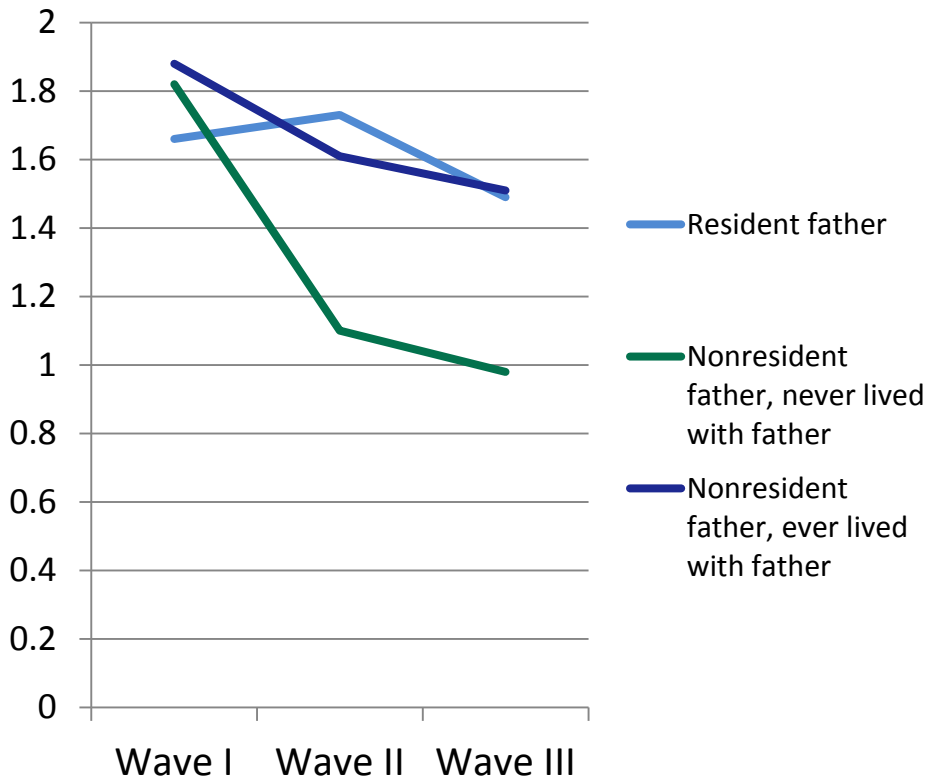
# Preliminary Results – Trajectories of Well-being (Wave I, III, IV)

## Problem Drinking

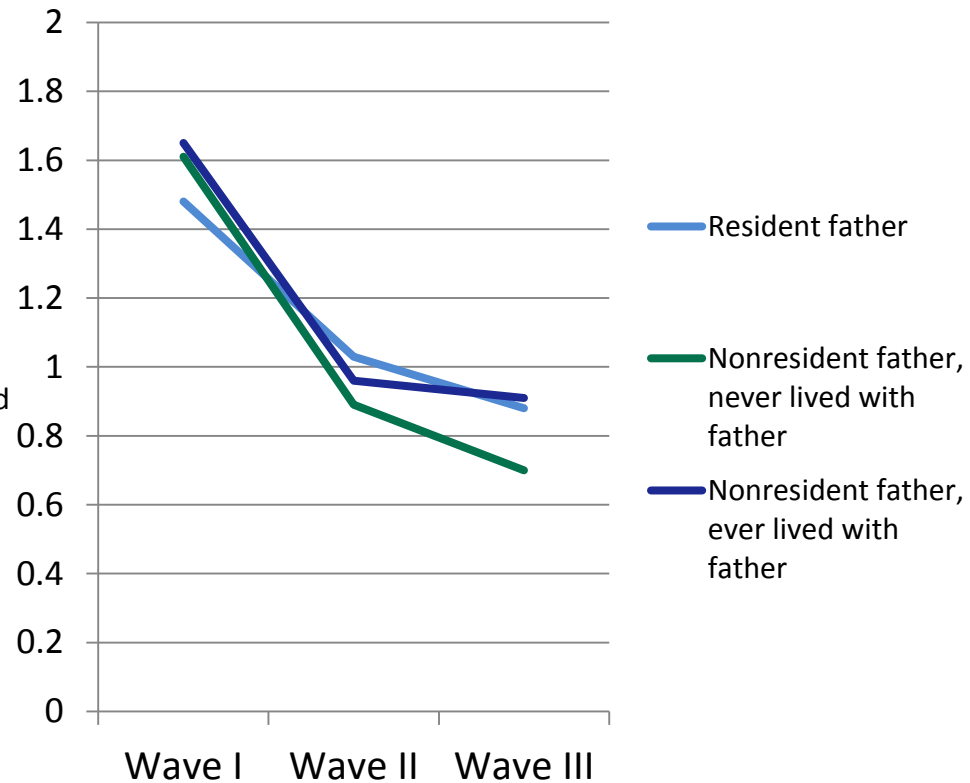


# Preliminary Results – Trajectories of Well-being, by Offspring Gender

## Problem Drinking, Sons



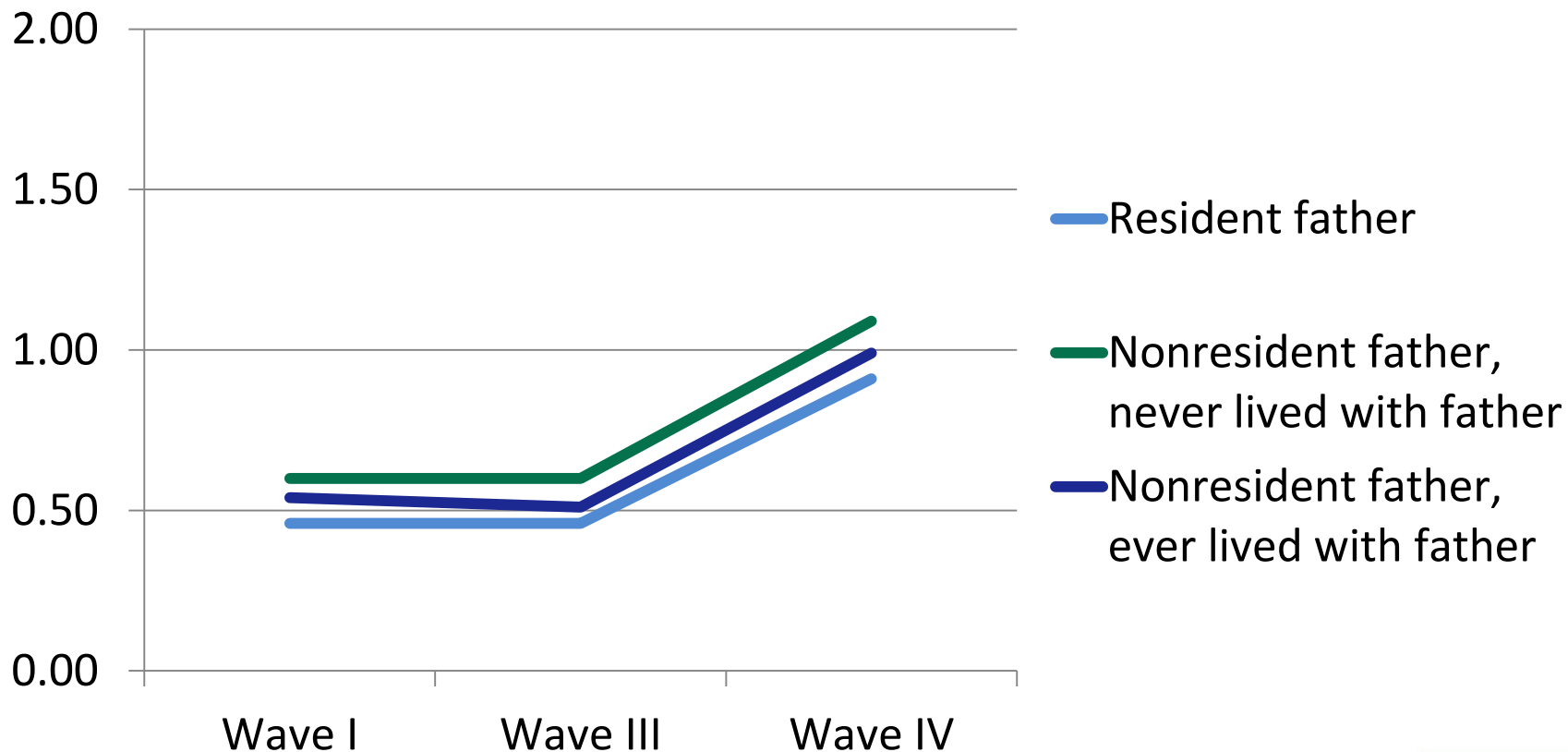
## Problem Drinking, Daughters





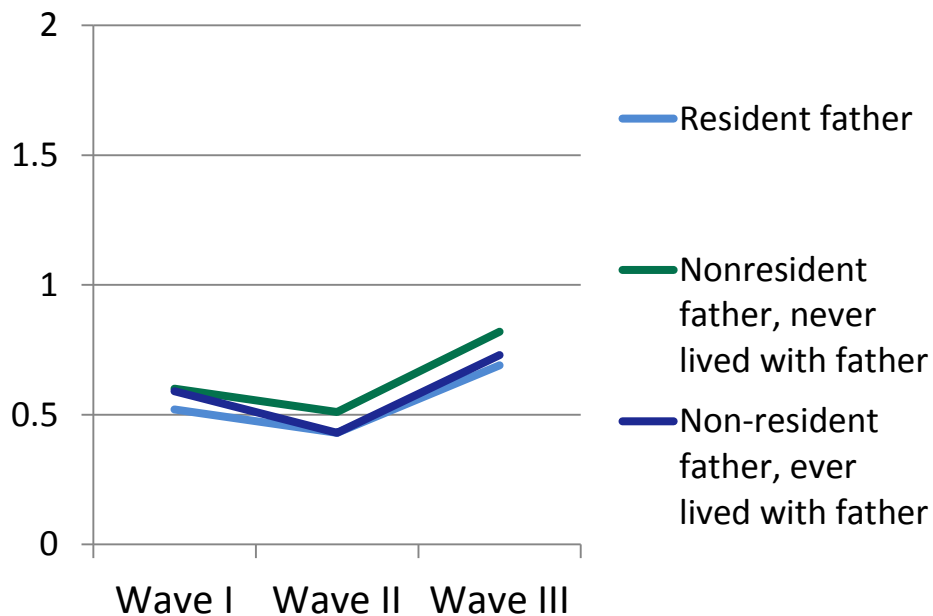
# Preliminary Results – Trajectories of Well-being (Wave I, III, IV)

## Depressive Symptoms

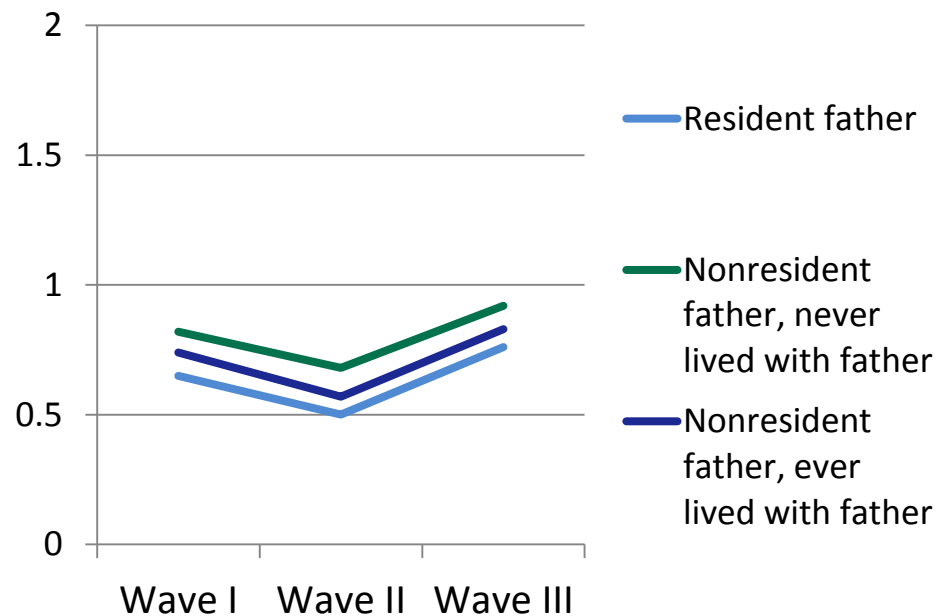


# Preliminary Results – Trajectories of Well-being, by Offspring Gender

## Depressive Symptoms, Sons

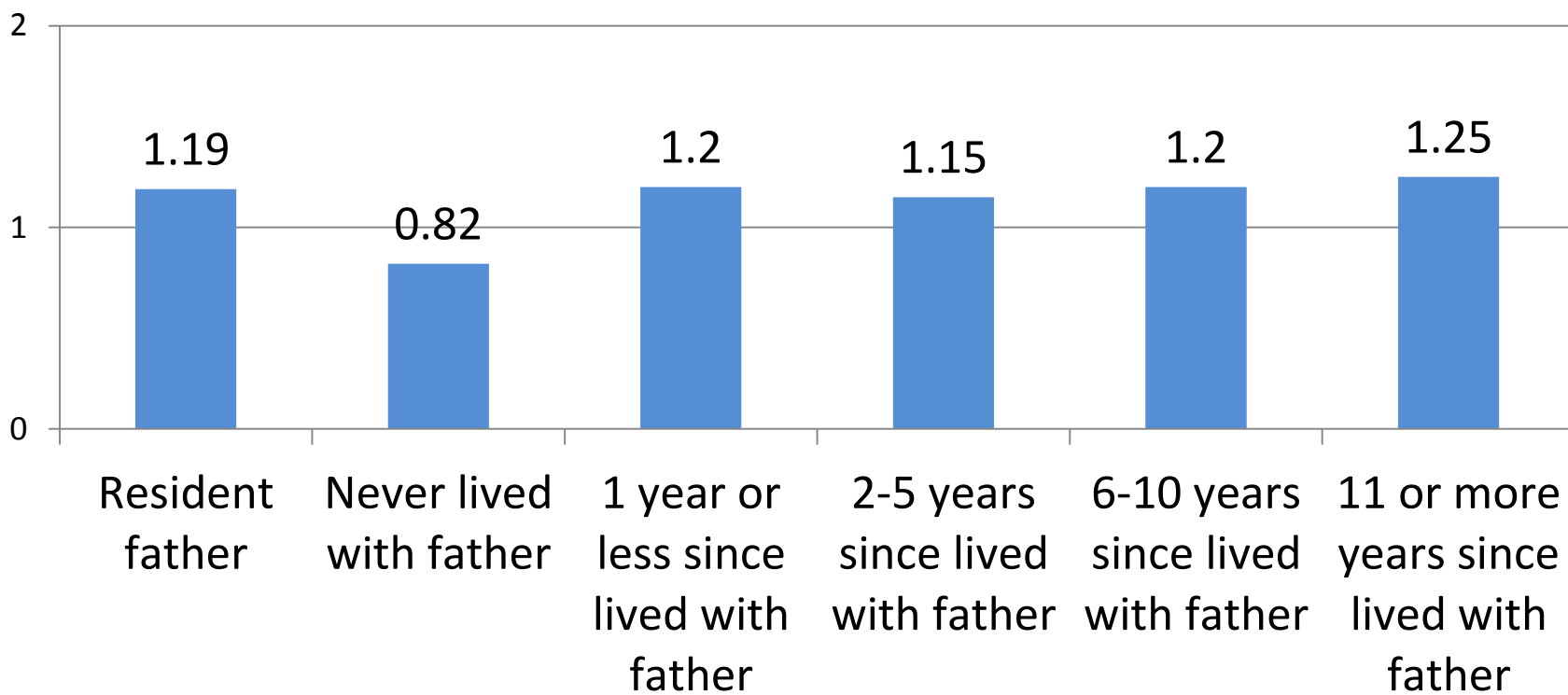


## Depressive Symptoms, Daughters



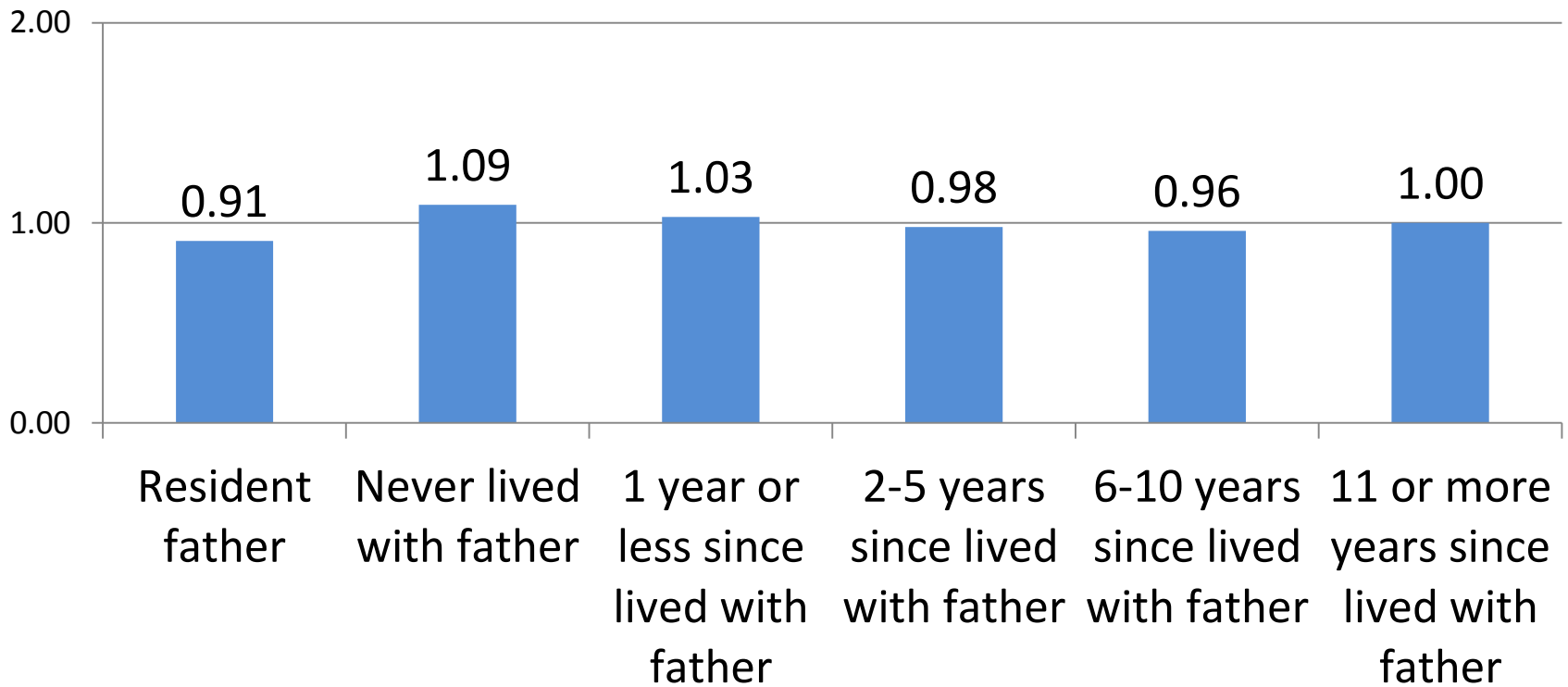
## Results – Differences in Offspring Well-being during Adulthood (Wave IV)

### Problem Drinking



# Results – Differences in Offspring Well-being during Adulthood (Wave IV)

## Depressive Symptoms



## Implications for Policy and Practice

- **Focus on increasing family complexity and diversity.**
- **Importance of father-child relationship quality and father involvement (beyond family structure).**
- **Longer term implications of growing up with a nonresident father.**

## Papers

- **Booth, A., Scott, M.E., & King, V. (2010).** Father residence and adolescent problem behavior: Are youth always better off in two parent families? *Journal of Family Issue, 31*, 585-605.
- **Scott, M.E., Goldscheider, F., Steward-Streng, N., & Barry, M. (in progress).** Longitudinal Effects of Growing up with a Nonresident Father.
- Scott, M.E. (working paper). The effects of nonresident father closeness on offspring well-being during the transition to adulthood.
- Scott, M. E., Booth, A., King, V. & Johnson, D. (2007). Post-divorce father-adolescent relationship quality. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 69*, 1194-1209.
- Scott, M.E., K. Peterson, E. Ikramullah, & J. Manlove. (forthcoming in Handbook of Father Involvement: Multidisciplinary Perspectives, 2nd ed., N. Cabrera and C.S. Tamis-LeMonda, eds.). Father Involvement and the Transition to Multiple-partner Fertility among Unmarried Nonresident Fathers.



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**Mindy Scott**  
**[mscott@childtrends.org](mailto:mscott@childtrends.org)**  
**202-572-6124**

Relevant paper(s) and link on Child Trends site if applicable.

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