

Children's Adjustment Following Divorce: Risk and Resilience Perspectives

Joan B. Kelly* and Robert E. Emery

The empirical literature on the longer-term adjustment of children of divorce is reviewed from the perspective of (a) the stressors and elevated risks that divorce presents for children and (b) protective factors associated with better adjustment. The resiliency demonstrated by the majority of children is discussed, as are controversies regarding the adjustment of adult children of divorce. A third dimension of children's responses to divorce, that of lingering painful memories, is distinguished from pathology in order to add a useful complement to risk and resilience perspectives. The potential benefits of using an increasingly differentiated body of divorce research to shape the content of interventions, such as divorce education, by designing programs that focus on known risk factors for children and that assist parents to institute more protective behaviors that may enhance children's longer-term adjustment is discussed.

Parental divorce has been viewed for 40 years as the cause of a range of serious and enduring behavioral and emotional problems in children and adolescents. Divorced families have been widely portrayed by the media, mental health professionals, and conservative political voices as seriously flawed structures and environments, whereas, historically, married families were assumed to be wholesome and nurturing environments for children (Popenoe, Elshtain, & Blankenhorn, 1996; Whitehead, 1998). Although, on average, children fare better in a happy two-parent family than in a divorced family, two essential caveats that distinguish our position from the stereotypical view are underscored. First, unfortunately, many two-parent families do not offer a happy environment for parents or for children (e.g., Cummings & Davies, 1994; Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995). Second, although there are differences in the average psychological well-being of children from happy married families and divorced families, it also is true that the majority of children from divorced families are emotionally well-adjusted (Amato, 1994, 2001; Hetherington, 1999).

A continuing stream of sophisticated social science and developmental research has contributed a more complex understanding of factors associated with children's positive outcomes and psychological problems in the context of both marriage and divorce. As a result, most social scientists relinquished a simplistic view of the impact of divorce more than a decade ago. Research demonstrating that children's behavioral symptoms and academic problems could be identified, in some instances, for a number of years before their parents' divorces was particularly important in facilitating this conceptual shift (Block, Block, & Gjerde, 1986; Cherlin et al., 1991). However, compelling stories of negative outcomes for children of divorce continued to be reported by the media in the past decade, stimulated in part by a 10-year longitudinal study of divorced families that emphasized the enduring psychological damage for children of divorce (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989). More recently, two longitudinal studies that report quite different long-term outcomes for children and young adults (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Wallerstein, Lewis, & Blakeslee, 2000) have interested the media in taking a more discriminating look at divorce research, although the preference in the media for drama and simple dichotomous an-

swers remains evident (e.g., *Time Magazine*, September 25, 2000).

We believe that social science researchers need to look more closely at the varied evidence on children and divorce within and across disciplines and across methodological approaches. Among the basic empirical issues of concern are (a) the confounding of correlation with cause such that any psychological problems found among children from divorced families often are portrayed as "consequences" of divorce, whereas both logic and empirical evidence demonstrate otherwise; (b) the overgeneralization of results from relatively small, unrepresentative, often highly select samples, most notably clinical or troubled samples as in the widely discussed work of Wallerstein; (c) the too ready acceptance of the null hypothesis of no differences in the face of limited and sometimes superficial assessment, particularly in large, often representative samples; and (d) the failure to distinguish between normative outcomes and individual differences in drawing implications for practice and policy, for example, by noting that the majority of children from divorced families are not "at risk" and that family processes *after* divorce are strong predictors of risk versus resilience. These methodological considerations are of vital importance for the conduct of research, and they point to an interpretation of empirical findings that offers a more nuanced and, we think, more complete understanding of the psychological meaning of divorce for children.

Here we review the empirical research literature on the adjustment of children of divorce from the perspective of the stressors that divorce generally presents for children, the type and extent of risk observed in divorced children when compared with those in still married families, and factors that have been demonstrated to ameliorate risk for children during and after divorce. A third dimension of children's postdivorce outcomes, that of painful memories and experiences, is distinguished from the presence of pathology, and some of the differences and controversies between quantitative and clinical research reports regarding longer-term adjustment are highlighted.

Stressors of the Divorce Process

More than two decades ago, divorce was reconceptualized as a process extending over time that involved multiple changes and potential challenges for children, rather than as a single event (Hetherington, 1979; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). The number, severity, and duration of separation and divorce-engendered stressors were observed to vary from child to child, from family to family, and over time. The nature of the initial separation, parental adjustment and resources, parental conflict and

*P.O. Box 7063, Corte Madera, CA 94976-7063 (jbkellyphd@mindspring.com).

Key Words: adjustment, children, divorce, resiliency, risk.

cooperation, repartnering of one or both parents, stability of economic resources, and children's own individual resources are central to how these stressors affect children's short- and longer-term reactions and outcomes. It is anticipated that unalleviated and multiple stressors encumber children's attempts to cope with divorce and are more likely to result in increased risk and psychological difficulties over time.

Stress of the Initial Separation

Independently of the longer-term consequences of divorce, the initial period following separation of parents is quite stressful for the vast majority of children and adolescents (Hetherington, 1979; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). For some children, their stress predates separation because of chronic high conflict and or violence in the marriage. However, the majority of children seem to have little emotional preparation for their parents' separation, and they react to the separation with distress, anxiety, anger, shock, and disbelief (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1982; Wallerstein & Kelly). In general, these crisis-engendered responses diminish or disappear over a period of 1 or 2 years (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992; Wallerstein & Kelly).

Complicating children's attempts to cope with the major changes initiated by separation, most children are inadequately informed by their parents about the separation and divorce. They are left to struggle alone with the meaning of this event for their lives, which can cause a sense of isolation and cognitive and emotional confusion (Dunn, Davies, O'Connor, & Sturgess, 2001; Smart & Neale, 2000; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). The majority of parents fail to communicate their thoughts with each other regarding effective custody and access arrangements for their children (Kelly, 1993), and they seem even less able or willing to provide important information to their children about immediate and far-reaching changes in family structure, living arrangements, and parent-child relationships. In one study of parent-child communications about divorce, 23% of children said no one talked to them about the divorce, and 45% said they had been given abrupt one- or two-line explanations ("Your dad is leaving"). Only 5% said they had been fully informed and encouraged to ask questions (Dunn et al.).

Intensifying children's stress is the abrupt departure of one parent, usually the father, from the household. In the absence of temporary court orders, some children do not see their nonresident parents for weeks or months. For those children with strong attachments to caring parents, the abrupt and total absence of contact is quite distressing and painful (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Those children who have legal or informal permission to see nonresident parents must begin to deal with the logistics and emotions of transitioning between two households. They must integrate and adapt to unfamiliar schedules and physical spaces imposed on them often without consultation (Kelly, 2002; McIntosh, 2000; Smart, 2002; Smart & Neale, 2000), as well as decide what clothes, toys, and resource materials should be with them in each household. They also must shift from one psychological space to another, in which parents may have different rules and levels of anger toward the other parent (Smart). Children must adapt to unaccustomed absences from both parents without the ability to communicate on an at-will basis. Visiting arrangements that are not developmentally attuned to children's developmental, social, and psychological needs also may be a stressor, particularly for very young children who lack the cognitive, language, and emotional maturity to ask questions about,

understand, and cope with the large changes in their lives (Kelly & Lamb, 2000).

Parental Conflict

A major stressor for children is persistent conflict between parents following separation and divorce (Emery, 1982; Johnston, 1994; Johnston & Roseby, 1997). Children in divorcing families have widely varying histories of exposure to marital conflict and violence. Although it often is assumed that parents in high-conflict marriages continue their conflict after separation and divorce, predivorce conflict is far from perfect as a predictor of the amount of postdivorce conflict (Booth & Amato, 2001). Between 20–25% of children experience high conflict during their parents' marriage (Booth & Amato; Hetherington, 1999), and some of these couples reduce their conflict once separated or divorced, whereas others continue to remain entrenched in conflict patterns. Approximately one quarter of divorced parents report low marital conflict (Booth & Amato; Hetherington, 1999; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). In some of these families, intense anger and conflict is ignited by the separation itself and the impact of highly adversarial legal processes (Johnston & Campbell, 1988; Kelly, 2002; Kelly & Johnston, 2001; Wallerstein & Kelly). Thus, some children will be burdened by continuing or intensified conflict, whereas others will experience significantly less conflict on a daily basis.

Although the association between intense marital conflict and children's poor adjustment has been repeatedly demonstrated, findings from studies of the impact of postdivorce conflict and children's adjustment have been mixed. Booth and Amato (2001) reported no association between postdivorce conflict and later adjustment in young adults. Others have found that marital conflict is a more potent predictor of postdivorce adjustment than is postdivorce conflict (Booth & Amato; Buehler et al., 1998; Kline, Johnston, & Tschann, 1990), whereas Hetherington (1999) found that postdivorce conflict had more adverse effects than did conflict in the married families. The varied findings may reflect the use of different measures of conflict and adjustment, a failure to differentiate between types of conflict after divorce, parental styles of conflict resolution, and the extent of direct exposure of the child to anger and conflict.

High conflict is more likely to be destructive postdivorce when parents use their children to express their anger and are verbally and physically aggressive on the phone or in person (Buchanan, Maccoby, & Dornbusch, 1991; Johnston, 1994). Parents who express their rage toward their former spouse by asking children to carry hostile messages, by denigrating the other parent in front of the child, or by prohibiting mention of the other parent in their presence are creating intolerable stress and loyalty conflicts in their children. Not surprisingly, such youngsters were more depressed and anxious when compared with high-conflict parents who left their children out of their angry exchanges (Buchanan et al.). When parents continued to have conflict but encapsulated their conflict and did not put their children in the middle, their children did not differ from children whose parents had low or no conflict (Buchanan et al.; Hetherington, 1999). Although high conflict postdivorce is generally assumed to be a shared interaction between two angry, culpable parents, our clinical, mediation, and arbitration experience in high conflict postdivorce cases indicates that it is not uncommon to find one enraged or defiant parent and a second parent who no longer harbors anger, has emotionally disengaged, and attempts to avoid or mute conflict that involves the child.

Diminished Parenting After Divorce

A related stressor for children is the impact of inept parenting both prior to and following divorce. Whereas intense marital conflict by itself has modest negative effects on children's adjustment, the negative impact of high conflict on children's adjustment is substantially mediated through significant problems in the parenting of both mothers and fathers. In particular, mothers in high-conflict marriages are reported to be less warm, more rejecting, and use harsher discipline, and fathers withdraw more from and engage in more intrusive interactions with their children compared with parents in low-conflict marriages (Belsky, Youngblade, Rovine, & Volling, 1991; Cummings & Davies, 1994; Hetherington, 1999; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000). Further, living with a depressed, disturbed, or character-disordered parent after divorce clearly places children at risk and is associated with impaired emotional, social, and academic adjustment (Emery, Waldron, Kitzmann, & Aaron, 1999; Hetherington, 1999; Kalter, Kloner, Schreiser, & Okla, 1989; Kline et al., 1990). After divorce, there are few opportunities for competent nonresident parents to buffer the more pernicious effects of behaviors of emotionally troubled custodial parents, and the influence of the nonresident parent on children's adjustment diminishes over time (Hetherington, 1999).

Coupled with this is the frequent deterioration in the parenting of both custodial and nonresident parents in the first several years after separation (Hetherington et al., 1982; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Parents are preoccupied with their own emotional responses to divorce, as well as the demands of integrating single parenting with work and social needs. Not only are divorced parents more prone to emotional lability, but depression, alcoholism, drug abuse, and psychosomatic complaints are more frequent compared with married parents. Some children and adolescents become the sole emotional support for their distraught and needy parents (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Hetherington, 1999). Boys appear to experience more angry exchanges and contentious relationships with their custodial mothers compared with girls (Hetherington, 1999). Boys also experience a greater decline in the quality of the home environment following separation than girls, not only because of more coercive mother-son relationships, but also because fathers typically spend more time with their sons than with their daughters during marriage. These emotional and physical interactions are curtailed or cease following separation (Mott, Kowaleski-Jones, & Menaghan, 1997). Most characteristic of diminished parenting is that children experience less positive involvement with their custodial parent, including less affection and time spent and more erratic and harsh discipline (Hetherington). The children's own increased anger and upset makes it even more difficult for distressed single parents to maintain effective parenting practices.

Loss of Important Relationships

Children from divorced families also face the risk of longer-term erosion or loss of important relationships with close friends, extended and new family members, and, particularly, nonresident parents, who typically are their fathers. Children accustomed to seeing their nonresident parents every day prior to separation often see them 4 days per month following separation and divorce. For many children this may lead to a diminished view of their father's importance in their lives and an erosion of closeness and meaning in these parent-child relationships (Amato, 1987; Amato & Booth, 1996; Kelly & Lamb, 2000; Thompson & Lai-

ble, 1999; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Between 18% and 25% of children have no contact with their fathers 2–3 years after divorce (Braver & O'Connell, 1998; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Maccoby & Mnookin, 1992; Seltzer, 1998).

The significant reduction in the time children spend with their nonresident parents is due to a number of psychological, interparental, and institutional barriers. Many fathers reduce their involvement or cease contact with their children following divorce because of their own personality limitations (Arendell, 1995; Dudley, 1996; Emery, 1994; Hetherington, 1999; Kruk, 1992; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Some of these fathers were minimally involved during marriage, whereas others become distracted by new partners after separation. Another group of fathers describe a painful depression about the loss of contact with their children that leads to diminished contact (Arendell; Braver et al., 1993; Kruk; Wallerstein & Kelly). Ambiguities in the visiting parent role, including a lack of clear definitions as to how part-time parents are to behave, and paternal role identity issues contribute to reduced paternal involvement (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1997; Madden-Derdich & Leonard, 2000; Minton & Pasley, 1996; Thompson & Laible, 1999). Maternal remarriage also typically diminishes contacts between children and their fathers (Bray & Berger, 1993; Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992).

Adversarial processes that restrict timely and regular contacts with fathers also limit more extensive involvement and paternal responsibility (Emery, Laumann-Billings, Waldron, Sbarra, & Dillon, 2001; Kelly, 1991, 1993), as do written or informal guidelines recommending restricted visiting plans that were based on unsubstantiated theory (e.g., Hodges, 1991), rather than empirical research (Kelly, 2002; Kelly & Lamb, 2000; Lamb & Kelly, 2001; Warshak, 2000a). Considerable research has indicated that many children, particularly boys, want more time with their fathers than is traditionally negotiated or ordered; that children and young adults describe the loss of contact with a parent as the primary negative aspect of divorce; and that children report missing their fathers over time (Fabricius & Hall, 2000; Healy, Malley, & Stewart, 1990; Hetherington, 1999; Hetherington et al., 1982; Laumann-Billings & Emery, 2000; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Despite such findings, court policy and practice has been slow to change. Compared with nonresident fathers, nonresident mothers are more likely to visit frequently, assume more parenting functions, and less often cease contact with their children (Depner, 1993; Hetherington, 1999; Maccoby & Mnookin, 1992), particularly when mothers endorse the custodial arrangement. In part, this may be related to the different role expectations of mothers in our society.

Moving after divorce is common and may interfere substantially with the contacts and relationships between children and their nonmoving parents (Braver, Ellman, & Fabricius, 2003; Kelly & Lamb, 2003; Warshak, 2000b). In Arizona, 30% of custodial parents moved out of the area within 2 years after separation (Braver et al.). In Virginia, the average distance between fathers and their children 10 years after divorce was 400 miles (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). Relocations of more than 75–100 miles may create considerable barriers to continuity in father-child relationships, because distance requires more time and expense to visit and results in the erosion of closeness in the relationships, particularly with very young children (Hetherington & Kelly; Kelly & Lamb). Paternal remarriage and the demands of new children also diminish paternal commitment to the children of the prior marriage (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992; Hetherington, 1999).

Aside from the psychological and institutional barriers experienced by fathers, maternal attitudes regarding fathers maintaining postdivorce relationships with their children are influential. Evidence shows that mothers may function as gatekeepers to father involvement after divorce, as they have been found to do during marriage (Pleck, 1997). Maternal hostility at the beginning of divorce predicts less visitation and fewer overnights 3 years later (Maccoby & Mnookin, 1992), and, according to one study, 25–35% of custodial mothers interfere with or sabotage visiting (Braver & O’Connell, 1998). Maternal anger and dissatisfaction with higher levels of father contact, regardless of conflict level, is associated with poorer adjustment in children compared with children whose mothers were satisfied with high father involvement (King & Heard, 1999). In this latter study, it is difficult to know whether mothers’ dissatisfaction was caused by poor fathering or by their own upset and anger with their former spouse, although a longitudinal study found that maternal anger/hurt about the divorce and concerns about parenting each predicted maternal perceptions of visiting problems (Wolchik, Fenaughty, & Braver, 1996).

Children themselves also influence the extent of paternal involvement following divorce. Some children limit contact with nonresident parents for both developmentally appropriate and psychologically inappropriate reasons (Johnston, 1993). In response to observing or hearing violence in marriages, frightened and angry children may refuse to visit abusive parents after separation. This choice to reduce or avoid contact may be a healthy response for children who have become realistically estranged, a choice not possible in the married family (Kelly & Johnston, 2001). Some youngsters avoid or reluctantly visit mentally ill parents or those whose disinterest, extreme narcissism, or selfishness interferes with meaningful parent-child relationships. Still other children refuse to visit after separation because they are alienated from a parent with whom they previously had an adequate or better relationship (Gardner, 1998). Although Gardner described this pathological adaptation primarily as the result of an alienating parent’s efforts to sabotage the child’s other parent-child relationship, a more recent formulation portrays the behaviors of the rejected parent as contributing also to the child’s alienation (Johnston, in press; Kelly & Johnston). Mostly, these children (preadolescents and adolescents) are responding to a complex set of factors following separation, including the parents’ personality problems and parenting deficits; the hostile, polarizing, and denigrating behaviors of the parents, which encourages alienation; the child’s own psychological vulnerabilities and anger; and the extreme hostility generated by the divorce and the adversarial process (Johnston; Kelly & Johnston).

Economic Opportunities

Whereas contradictory findings exist (e.g., Braver & O’Connell, 1998), most scholars report that divorce substantially reduces the standard of living for custodial parents and children, and to a lesser extent, the nonresident parent (Duncan & Hoffman, 1985). Census bureau surveys show that one third of custodial parents entitled to support by court order are not receiving it (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2002). Although divorce has generally been blamed for this decline in income, it also is apparent that marriages that end in divorce are more likely to have lower incomes *prior* to separation compared with parents who did not divorce in the same period (Clarke-Stewart, Vandell, McCartney, Owen, & Booth, 2000; Pong & Ju, 2000; Sun, 2001). Divorce further accelerates the downward standard of living. The con-

sequences of reduced economic circumstances may be a significant stressor for many children through disruptive changes in residence, school, friends, and child care arrangements. Booth and Amato (2001) found that 46% of young adults recalled moving in the year following separation, and 25% reported changing schools. On average, the women in the Virginia longitudinal study moved four times in the first 6 years, but poorer women moved seven times (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). Additionally, because child support generally is structured to pay for the basic necessities, children may not be able to participate in sports, lessons, and organizations that brought significant meaning to their lives prior to separation. This is particularly true if there are limited resources, high parent conflict, and poor cooperation.

Remarriage and Repartnering

Divorce creates the potential for children to experience a continuing series of changes and disruptions in family and emotional relationships when one or both parents introduce new social and sexual partners, cohabit, remarry, and/or redi-
 The effect of serial attachments and losses may hinder more mature and intimate attachments as young adults. Estimates suggest that three quarters of divorced men and two thirds of divorced women eventually remarry (Bumpass, Sweet, & Castro-Martin, 1990), and 50% of divorced adults cohabit before remarriage, whereas others cohabit instead of remarriage. It is estimated that approximately one third of children will live in a remarried or cohabitating family before the age of 18 (Bumpass, Raley, & Sweet, 1995). For some, these new relationships are accompanied by family conflict, anger in the stepparent-child relationship, and role ambiguities (Bray, 1999; Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992). Repartnering may be most stressful and problematic for children when entered into soon after divorce (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).

Divorce as Risk for Children

A large body of empirical research confirms that divorce increases the risk for adjustment problems in children and adolescents (for reviews, see Amato, 2000; Emery, 1999; Hetherington, 1999; Kelly, 2000; McLanahan, 1999; Simons et al., 1996). Children of divorce were significantly more likely to have behavioral, internalizing, social, and academic problems when compared with children from continuously married families. The extent of risk is at least twice that of children in continuously married families (Hetherington, 1999; McLanahan; Zill, Morrison, & Coiro, 1993). Although 10% of children in continuously married families also have serious psychological and social problems, as measured on objective tests, estimates are that 20–25% of children from divorced families had similar problems (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Zill & Schoenborn, 1990). The largest effects are seen in externalizing symptoms, including conduct disorders, antisocial behaviors, and problems with authority figures and parents. Less robust differences are found with respect to depression, anxiety, and self-esteem. Whereas preadolescent boys were at greater risk for these negative outcomes than girls in several studies (see Amato, 2001; Hetherington, 1999), no gender differences specifically linked to divorce were found in other studies (Sun, 2001; Vandewater & Lansford, 1998). The complex interaction between gender, age at separation, pre-separation adjustment, sex of custodial parent, quality of relationships with both parents, and extent of conflict confounds efforts to clarify findings regarding gender.

Children in divorced families have lower academic performance and achievement test scores compared with children in continuously married families. The differences are modest and decrease, but do not disappear, when income and socioeconomic status are controlled (for review, see McLanahan, 1999). Children from divorced families are two to three times more likely to drop out of school than are children of intact families, and the risk of teenage childbearing is doubled. However, it appears that youngsters are already at risk for poorer educational performance and lowered expectations well before separation. For example, the risk for school dropout is associated with poverty or low income prior to separation, and this may be exacerbated by the further decline in economic resources following separation (Pong & Ju, 2000). Further, in looking at parental resources available to children prior to separation, parents provided less financial, social, human, and cultural capital to their children compared with parents who remained married (Sun & Li, 2001), and parent-child relationships were less positive (Sun, 2001). Adolescents from divorced families scored lower on tests of math and reading both prior to and after parental separation compared with adolescents in married families, and their parents were less involved in their adolescents' education (Sun & Li, 2002).

The increased risk of divorced children for behavioral problems is not diminished by remarriage. As with divorce, children in stepfamily homes are twice as likely to have psychological, behavioral, social, and academic problems than are children in nondivorced families (Bray, 1999; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Zill, 1998; Zill & Schoenborn, 1990).

Children from divorced families have more difficulties in their intimate relationships as young adults. Compared with young adults in continuously married families, young adults from divorced families marry earlier, report more dissatisfaction with their marriages, and are more likely to divorce (Amato, 1999, 2000; Chase-Lansdale, Cherlin, & Kierman, 1995). Relationships between divorced parents and their adult children also are less affectionate and supportive than those in continuously married families (Amato & Booth, 1996; Zill et al., 1993). When divorced parents denigrated the other parent in front of the children, young adults were more likely to report angry and less close relationships with the denigrating parents (Fabricius & Hall, 2000). Somewhat surprising is the finding that young adults whose parents had low-conflict marriages and then divorced had more problems with intimate relationships, less social support of friends and relatives, and lower psychological well-being compared with children whose high-conflict parents divorced (Booth & Amato, 2001). Parents in low-conflict marriages who divorced differed in certain dimensions, including less integration in the community and more risky behaviors, and this may place their children at greater risk. Further research is needed to understand the aspects of parenting and parent-child relationships in these low-conflict marriages that negatively affect the later relationships of their offspring.

Higher divorce rates for children of divorced families compared with those in still-married families are substantiated in a number of studies (Amato, 1996; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Wolfinger, 2000). The risk of divorce for these young adults is related to socioeconomic factors, as well as life course decisions such as cohabitation, early marriage, and premarital childbearing; attitudes toward marriage and divorce; and interpersonal behaviors, all of which are associated with marital instability (Amato, 1996, 2000). The number and cumulative effect of fam-

ily structure transitions is linked to the higher probability of divorce; three or more transitions (divorce, remarriage, redi-orce) greatly increase the risk of offspring divorce (Wolfinger).

Protective Factors Reducing Risk for Children of Divorce

In the last decade, researchers have identified a number of protective factors that may moderate the risks associated with divorce for individual children and that contribute to the variability in outcomes observed in children of divorce. These include specific aspects of the psychological adjustment and parenting of custodial parents, the type of relationships that children have with their nonresident parents, and the extent and type of conflict between parents.

Competent Custodial Parents and Parenting

Living in the custody of a competent, adequately functioning parent is a protective factor associated with positive outcomes in children. Overall, one of the best predictors of children's psychological functioning in the marriage (Cummings & Davies, 1994; Keitner & Miller, 1990) and after divorce (Emery et al., 1999; Hetherington, 1999; Johnston, 1995; Kalter et al., 1989; Kline et al., 1990) is the psychological adjustment of custodial parents (usually mothers) and the quality of parenting provided by them. A particular cluster of parenting behaviors following divorce is an important protective factor as well. When custodial parents provide warmth, emotional support, adequate monitoring, discipline authoritatively, and maintain age-appropriate expectations, children and adolescents experience positive adjustment compared with children whose divorced custodial parents are inattentive, less supportive, and use coercive discipline (Amato, 2000; Buchanan et al., 1996; Hetherington, 1999; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000; Maccoby & Mnookin, 1992).

Nonresident Parents

There is a potential protective benefit from the timely and appropriate parenting of nonresident parents. Frequency of visits between fathers and children generally is not a reliable predictor of children's outcomes, because frequency alone does not reflect the quality of the father-child relationship. In one study, boys and younger children, but not girls or older children, were better adjusted with frequent and regular contact with their fathers (Stewart, Copeland, Chester, Malley, & Barenbaum, 1997). In the context of low conflict, frequent visits between fathers and children is associated with better child adjustment, but where interparental conflict is intense, more frequent visits were linked to poorer adjustment, presumably because of the opportunities for more direct exposure of the children to parental aggression and pressures (Amato & Rezac, 1994; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Johnston, 1995).

Frequency of contact also has beneficial effects when certain features of parenting are present in nonresident parents. A meta-analysis of 57 studies found that children who had close relationships with their fathers benefited from frequent contacts when their fathers remained actively involved as parents (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999). When fathers helped with homework and projects, provided authoritative parenting, and had appropriate expectations for their children, the children had more positive adjustment and academic performance than did those with less involved fathers. More paternal involvement in children's

schooling was also associated with better grades and fewer repeated grades and suspensions (Nord, Brimhall, & West, 1997). The combination of fathers engaging in activities with their children and providing financial support was associated with increased probability of completing high school and entering college compared with activities alone or activities combined with very low financial support (Menning, 2002). Indeed, when both parents engage in active, authoritative, competent parenting, adolescent boys from divorced families had no greater involvement in delinquent behavior than did those in continuously married families (Simon et al., 1996).

New reports about joint custody, compared with sole custody, also suggest a protective effect for some children. A meta-analysis of 33 studies of sole- and joint-physical custody studies reported that children in joint-custody arrangements were better adjusted on multiple objective measures, including general adjustment, emotional and behavioral adjustment, and academic achievement compared with children in sole-custody arrangements (Bausermann, 2002). In fact, children in joint custody were better adjusted regardless of the level of conflict between parents, and they did not differ in adjustment from the children in still-married families. Although the joint-custody parents had less conflict prior to separation and after divorce than did sole-custody parents, these differences did not affect the advantage of joint custody. Lee (2002) also reported positive effects of dual residence on children's behavioral adjustment, although the effects were suppressed by high interparental conflict and children's sadness.

In sharp contrast to the 1980s, some findings suggest that between 35% and 40% of children may now have at least weekly contacts with their fathers, particularly in the first several years after divorce (Braver & O'Connell, 1998; Hetherington, 1999; Seltzer, 1991, 1998). This may reflect changes in legal statutes and social contexts that now encourage shared legal decision-making, less restrictive views of paternal time with children, and greater opportunities for interested fathers to engage more fully in active parenting. Mothers also are more satisfied with higher levels of paternal involvement than they were 20 years ago (King & Heard, 1999), possibly reflecting changing cultural and work-related trends and the increased role of the father in raising children (Doherty, 1998; Pleck, 1997).

Diminished Conflict Between Parents Following Divorce

Low parental conflict is a protective factor for children following divorce. Although we know little about the thresholds at which conflict becomes a risk factor following divorce in different families, some conflict appears to be normative and acceptable to the parties (King & Heard, 1999). Young adults whose parents had low conflict during their earlier years were less depressed and had fewer psychological symptoms compared with those whose parents had continued high conflict (Amato & Keith, 1991; Zill et al., 1993). When parents have continued higher levels of conflict, protective factors include a good relationship with at least one parent or caregiver; parental warmth (Emery & Forehand, 1994; Neighbors, Forehand, & McVicar, 1993; Vandewater & Lansford, 1998); and the ability of parents to encapsulate their conflict (Hetherington, 1999). Several studies found no differences in the amount of conflict between parents in sole- or joint-custody arrangements (Braver & O'Connell, 1998; Emery et al., 1999; Maccoby & Mnookin, 1992), although

results from a meta-analysis found more conflict in sole-custody families prior to and after divorce (Bausermann, 2002).

Most parents diminish their conflict in the first 2–3 years after divorce as they become disengaged and establish their separate (or remarried) lives. Studies indicate that between 8% and 12% of parents continue high conflict 2–3 years after divorce (Hetherington, 1999; King & Heard, 1999; Maccoby & Mnookin, 1992). The relatively small group of chronically contentious and litigating parents are more likely to be emotionally disturbed, character-disordered men and women who are intent on vengeance and or on controlling their former spouses and their parenting (Johnston & Campbell, 1988; Johnston & Roseby, 1997). Such parents use disproportionate resources and time in family courts, and their children are more likely to be exposed to parental aggression. When one or both parents continue to lash out during transitions between households, mediation experience indicates that children can be protected from this exposure through access arrangements that incorporate transfers at neutral points (e.g., school, day care).

Related to the level of conflict between parents postdivorce is the effect of the coparental relationship. Research shows that between 25% and 30% of parents have a cooperative coparental relationship characterized by joint planning, flexibility, sufficient communication, and coordination of schedules and activities. However, more than half of parents engage in parallel parenting, in which low conflict, low communication, and emotional disengagement are typical features. Although there are distinct advantages of cooperative coparenting for children, children thrive as well in parallel parenting relationships when parents are providing nurturing care and appropriate discipline in each household (Hetherington, 1999; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Maccoby & Mnookin, 1992; Whiteside & Becker, 2000).

Resilience of Children of Divorce

Despite the increased risk reported for children from divorced families, the current consensus in the social science literature is that the majority of children whose parents divorced are not distinguishable from their peers whose parents remained married in the longer term (Amato, 1994, 2001; Chase-Lansdale et al., 1995; Emery, 1999; Emery & Forehand, 1994; Furstenberg & Kiernan, 2001; Hetherington, 1999; Simons et al., 1996; Zill et al., 1993). There is considerable overlap between groups of children and adolescents in married and postdivorce families, with some divorced (and remarried) children functioning quite well in all dimensions, and some children in married families experiencing severe psychological, social, and academic difficulties (Amato, 1994, 2001; Hetherington, 1999). Whereas a slight widening of the differences between children from married and divorced families is found in studies in the 1990s, the magnitude of the differences remains small (Amato, 2001). Both large-scale studies with nationally representative samples and multimethod longitudinal studies using widely accepted psychological and social measures and statistics indicate that the majority of children of divorce continue to fall within the average range of adjustment (Amato, 2001; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Zill et al., 1993).

Not to minimize the stresses and risk to children that separation and divorce create, it is important to emphasize that approximately 75–80% of children and young adults do not suffer from major psychological problems, including depression; have achieved their education and career goals; and retain close ties

to their families. They enjoy intimate relationships, have not divorced, and do not appear to be scarred with immutable negative effects from divorce (Amato, 1999, 2000; Laumann-Billings & Emery, 2000; McLanahan, 1999; Chase-Lansdale et al., 1995). In fact, Amato (1999) estimated that approximately 42% of young adults from divorced families in his study had well-being scores above the average of young adults from nondivorced families.

As we indicated here, the differences in children's lives that determine their longer-term outcomes are dependent on many circumstances, among them their adjustment prior to separation, the quality of parenting they received before and after divorce, and the amount of conflict and violence between parents that they experienced during marriage and after divorce. Children from high-conflict and violent marriages may derive the most benefit from their parents' divorces (Amato et al., 1995; Booth & Amato, 2001) as a result of no longer enduring the conditions that are associated with significant adjustment problems in children in marriages. Once freed from intense marital conflict, these findings suggest that parenting by custodial parents improves, although research is needed to explain more specifically what aspects of parent-child relationships and family functioning facilitate recovery in these youngsters. Clearly, the links between level of marital conflict and outcomes for children are complex. For children whose parents reported marital conflict in the mid-range, divorce is associated with only slightly lower psychological well-being (Booth & Amato, 2001). If this midrange marital conflict represents approximately 50% of the families that divorce, as others have found, then the large number of resilient children seen in the years following divorce is not surprising.

Understanding Contradictory Findings on Adult Children of Divorce

These broadly based findings of long-term resiliency are at odds with the 25-year longitudinal study that has received widespread attention. In *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce* (Wallerstein et al., 2000), the authors report that children of divorce, interviewed in young adulthood, do not survive the experience of divorce and that the negative effects are immutable. These young adults are described as anxious, depressed, burdened, failing to reach their potential, and fearful of commitment and failure.

What accounts for these enormously disparate findings? Many of these differences can be traced to methodological issues and may relate as well to the clinical interpretations of participant interviews about their experiences as divorced young adults. An essential methodological concern is that this study (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989; Wallerstein et al., 2000) was a qualitative study, used a clinical sample, and no comparison group of married families existed from the start. The data were collected in clinical interviews by experienced therapists, and no standardized or objective measures of psychological adjustment, depression, anxiety, self-esteem, or social relationships were used. The goal of the study, initiated in 1969 when information about children of divorce was extremely limited, was to describe in detail the responses of children and parents to the initial separation and divorce, and then to see how they fared over the first 5 years in comparison with their initial reports and behaviors (Wallerstein & Kelly).

The parents in the original sample of 60 families had severe psychological and relationship problems, suggesting that this

sample of families was not "normal," as has been widely asserted by Wallerstein in the media (Waters, 2001). Only one third of the parents were clinically rated as functioning psychologically at an adequate or better level during the marriage; approximately one half of the mothers and fathers were "moderately disturbed" or "frequently incapacitated by disabling neuroses and addictions," including chronic depression, suicide attempts, alcoholism, severe relationship problems, or problems in controlling rage. Additionally, 15–20% of the parents were "severely disturbed," including those diagnosed with severe manic depression, paranoid ideation, and bizarre thinking and behaviors (see Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980, Appendix A, pp. 328–329). In part, the pervasive parent pathology found in the original sample may be the basis for the descriptions presented in the 25-year follow-up of inattentive, selfish, narcissistic, abandoning parents intent on self-gratification. In contrast, in Hetherington's multi-method, longitudinal studies using married families as a comparison group, most divorced parents eventually became as competent as the still-married parents and were caring toward their children in the years following divorce (Hetherington, 1999; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).

It has been stated in the most recent report (Wallerstein et al., 2000) and in personal interviews that the children in the original sample were carefully prescreened, "asymptomatic," and developmentally on track (Waters, 2001, p. 50). In fact, 17% of the children were clinically rated as having severe psychological, social, and or developmental problems (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980, p. 330) and were retained in the sample. The nonrepresentative sample of convenience was referred from a variety of sources, including lawyers, therapists, and the court, or were self-referred. The parents participated in a free, 6-week divorce counseling intervention from which the data were gathered (see Kelly & Wallerstein, 1977; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1977), and the children were seen for three to four sessions by child-trained therapists.

Objective data is limited in the 25-year report (Wallerstein et al., 2000), and few statistical analyses were available. The qualitative findings were presented primarily as six composites; however, without sufficient data, it is impossible for the reader to determine whether the composites were representative of the whole sample. With rare exception, these composites present stark, failed outcomes. The emotional pain and failures of these young adults has been presented in a consistently negative manner, so the overall impression is one of pervasive pathology. Based on the limited data found in the earlier follow-up, one would expect that among the 93 young adults interviewed at the 25-year follow-up there were some subjects without pain, anger, and depression who were enjoying successful marriages and parent-child relationships. We believe that in the absence of objective questionnaires, standardized measures, and statistical analyses, clinical research is particularly vulnerable to a focus on psychopathology to the exclusion of more adaptive coping and resilience. Certainly, the sweeping generalizations in the 25-year report that none of these youngsters escaped the permanently damaging effects of parental divorce are not consistent with the limited data in an endnote in *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce* (2000, p. 333), which indicates that 70% of the sample of adult children of divorce scored either in the "average" or "very well to outstanding" range on an overall measure of psychological well-being. Without standardized adjustment measures, it is difficult to compare these numbers with the findings of other divorce research.

Aside from sampling and methodological concerns, another explanation for the marked divergence in longer-term outcomes of divorced offspring may be a confusion of pain and pathology. Like young adults participating in more objective assessments of pain, participants in the Wallerstein study may have reported considerable distress in reflecting upon their parents' divorce. However, painful reflections on a difficult past are not the same as an inability to feel and function competently in the present.

Painful Memories as Longer-Term Residues of Divorce

A third perception of the short- and longer-term effects of divorce may be a useful complement and balance to risk and resilience perspectives. Painful memories and experiences may be a lasting residue of the divorce (and remarriage) process for many youngsters and young adults. However, it is important to distinguish pain or distress about parental divorce from longer-term psychological symptoms or pathology. Clearly, divorce can create lingering feelings of sadness, longing, worry, and regret that coexist with competent psychological and social functioning. Substantial change and relationship loss, when compounded for some by continuing conflict between parents, represents an ongoing unpleasant situation over which the child or adolescent may have no control. Research that includes standardized and objective measures of both psychological adjustment and painful feelings is useful in disentangling differences in long-term outcomes reported in young adults from divorced families. Such research may help to explain some of the apparent conflict between studies using clinical and quantitative methods.

A decade after divorce, well-functioning college students reported continued pain and distress about their parents' divorces (Laumann-Billings & Emery, 2000). Compared with students in still-married families, they reported more painful childhood feelings and experiences, including worry about such things as their parents attending major events and wanting to spend more time with their fathers. They did not blame themselves for parental divorce, and 80% thought that the divorce was right for their parents. Feelings of loss were the most prevalent of the painful feelings, and the majority reported they missed not having their father around. Many questioned whether their fathers loved them. Despite these painful feelings and beliefs, these young adults did not differ on standardized measures of depression or anxiety from a comparison sample of students in still-married families. These findings were replicated in a second sample of low-income young adults who were not college students. Among factors associated with more pain among children from divorced families were living in sole mother or father custody, rather than a shared custody arrangement, and higher levels of postdivorce parental conflict. When children's parents continued their high conflict, these young adults reported greater feelings of loss and paternal blame and were more likely to view their lives through the filter of divorce (Laumann-Billings & Emery). Young adults in both samples also reported lower levels of loss when they had lived in joint physical custody and were less likely to see life through the filter of divorce. As would be expected, there is no question that divorce impacted the lives of many of these young adults and that parental attitudes and behavior affected the degree of painful feelings lingering after divorce. Although tempting, this impact should not be confused with or portrayed as poor psychological adjustment.

Feelings of loss also were reported by half of 820 college

students a decade after divorce in another study (Fabricius & Hall, 2000). Subjects indicated that they had wanted to spend more time with their fathers in the years after divorce. They reported that their mothers were opposed to increasing their time with fathers. When asked which of nine living arrangements would have been best for them, 70% chose "equal time" with each parent, and an additional 30% said a "substantial" number of overnights with their fathers, preferences that were similar in a sample of young adults in nondivorced families. The typical amount of contact reported in this and other studies between children and their fathers was every other weekend. One can infer from these findings that for many years, many of these students experienced some degree of painful longing for the absent parent that might have been alleviated with more generous visiting arrangements. An analysis of the amount of contact and closeness to fathers indicated that with each increment of increased contact between these children and their fathers, there was an equal increase in young adults reporting closeness to their fathers and a corresponding decrease in anger toward their fathers. Further, the increased feelings of closeness toward fathers did not diminish their reported closeness to mothers (see Fabricius, 2003, this issue). Further, increasing increments of father contact were linked to incremental amounts of support paid by fathers for their children's college (Fabricius, Braver, & Deneau, 2003). In fact, students who perceived their parents as opposed to or interfering with contact with the nonresident parent were more angry and less close to those parents than were students who reported their parents as more supportive of contact with the nonresident parents.

Another source of pain may be the extent to which adult children feel that they had no control over their lives following divorce. As indicated earlier, the majority of children and adolescents are not adequately informed about the divorce and its implications for their lives (Dunn et al., 2001). They also are not consulted for their ideas regarding access arrangements and how they are working for them, both emotionally and practically (Kelly, 2002; McIntosh, 2000; Smart & Neale, 2000). The young adults cited earlier who longed to spend increased time with their fathers either perceived that they had no control over this arrangement or in reality did not have control. In lacking a voice in these divorce arrangements, not only did they miss their fathers over an extended period, but they were left with lingering doubts as to whether their fathers loved them. The substantial presence of involved nonresident parents in children's lives after divorce may be an important indicator to many children that they are valued and loved.

Transitions between two households constitute another arena where many children do not have sufficient input and control, particularly as they move into adolescence, and this may cause lingering angry or painful feelings. Whereas 25% of youngsters had *some to many* negative feelings about transitions between households, 73% had *some to many* positive feelings about the transitions. There was a significant association between positive feelings about transitions and being given a voice or role in some decision-making about the arrangements (Dunn et al., 2001). Although some research calls attention to the importance of children having a voice in formulating or shaping postdivorce parenting plans, there is the danger of burdening children with decisions that the adults cannot make. Giving children the right to be heard, if not done with sensitivity and care, may give children the responsibility for making an impossible choice between their two parents. There is a distinction between providing children

with the possibility of input regarding their access arrangements and the inherent stresses of decision-making—a distinction with which children themselves seem quite familiar and comfortable (Kelly, 2002; McIntosh, 2000; Smart & Neale, 2000).

Implications for Practice and Interventions

There are a number of important implications for practice and intervention that derive from this analysis of children's adjustment following divorce. Rather than communicating a global or undifferentiated view of the impact of divorce, research has begun to identify particular factors that increase children's risk following divorce and, equally important, those that are protective and promote resiliency in children and adolescents. Understanding this literature is central to promoting policies and developing and assessing services that have the potential to help mitigate family problems so that adjustment problems among children from divorced families are diminished. There are few better examples than the importance of adopting a systems approach (including family systems and broader social and legal systems) to helping these children. Whatever its specific nature or focus, interventions are more likely to benefit children from divorced families if they seek to contain parental conflict, promote authoritative and close relationships between children and *both* of their parents, enhance economic stability in the postdivorce family, and, when appropriate, involve children in effective interventions that help them have a voice in shaping more individualized and helpful access arrangements (Kelly, 2002).

Among the hierarchy of interventions available that strive toward some of these ends are parent education programs for parents and children, divorce mediation, collaborative lawyering, judicial settlement conferences, parenting coordinator or arbitration programs for chronically litigating parents, and family and group therapy for children and parents (Kelly, 2002). Clearly, there is a need for more research on these sorts of interventions; at present, only mediation enjoys a solid base of research support regarding the benefits to divorcing and divorced families (Emery, 1994; Emery, Kitzmann, & Waldron, 1999; Kelly, 1996, 2002). The potential benefits of mediation are substantial in both the short term (e.g., reduced parental conflict and improved parent support and communications; Kelly, 1996) and longer term. For example, a randomized trial of an average of 5 hours of custody mediation led to significant and positive effects on parent-child and parent-parent relationships 12 years later (Emery et al., 2001), including more sustained contact between fathers and children, compared with those in the litigation sample.

Divorce education programs for parents and children have proliferated in the United States in the past decade, particularly those associated with family courts (Geasler & Blaisure, 1999). They are generally limited to one to two sessions in the court sector and four to six sessions in the community or schools. Research on this newer preventive intervention is more limited and has focused primarily on parent satisfaction and parental self-reports of the impact of the interventions on their behavior (Kelly, 2002). Programs that are research-based and focused on skill development showed more promise in educating parents and promoting change than did those that are didactic or affect-based (Kelly, 2002). However, few studies of these programs are designed to demonstrate their efficacy in preventing or reducing psychological or social adjustment problems for children of divorce, or in actually modifying parental behaviors associated with poor child outcomes. Several experimental or quasi-exper-

imental studies of lengthier, research-based programs designed to facilitate children's postdivorce adjustment have been conducted that show promising behavioral and psychological changes in both parents and children (for review, see Haine, Sandler, Wolchik, Tein, & Dawson-McClure, 2003, this issue). The child-focused programs, incorporating aspects of risk and resiliency factors described in their article, have demonstrated significant reductions at follow-up in child externalizing and internalizing behaviors and child self-esteem compared with nontreatment controls. Several investigations of mother-focused programs also found reductions in child psychological and behavioral problems, improvements in mother-child relationship quality and discipline, and changed attitudes toward father-child relationships and visiting (Haine et al., 2003). Few programs and research have focused on fathers to test the efficacy of providing newer empirical information regarding the benefits of active, competent parenting among nonresident parents, rather than the more permissive, weekend entertainment model that so frequently emerges after divorce; however, new research is promising (Braver, Griffin, Cookson, Sandler, & Williams, in press).

Another important implication of these findings for practice is as a reminder to practitioners of several seemingly obvious but easily overlooked points. Children and young people from divorced families seen in counseling or psychotherapy are a select group who surely differ from the general population of children of divorce. We must be careful in generalizing to all children from those in small, unrepresentative, or clinical samples, particularly when contributing to public education or policy. We believe that the public education message needs to acknowledge that when divorce occurs, parents and legal systems designed to assist families can utilize particular research knowledge and skills to reduce the risks associated with divorce for children. Although we also wish to promote more happy marriages, we conclude that although some children are harmed by parental divorce, the majority of findings show that most children do well. To suggest otherwise is to provide an inaccurate interpretation of the research findings. Further, such misrepresentations of research are potentially harmful in creating stigma, helplessness, and negative expectations for children and parents from divorced families. Practitioners and educators need to be reminded and remind others that the painful memories expressed by young people from divorced families are not evidence of pathology. At the same time, we should encourage researchers to develop objective, reliable, and valid measures of the important struggles associated with divorce that might be apparent first in schools or clinical practice.

References

- Amato, P. (1987). Family processes in one-parent, step-parent and intact families: The child's point of view. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 49, 327-337.
- Amato, P. R. (1994). Life-span adjustment of children to their parents' divorce. *Future of Children: Children and Divorce*, 4, 143-164.
- Amato, P. (1996). Explaining the intergenerational transmission of divorce. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 58, 628-640.
- Amato, P. (1999). Children of divorced parents as young adults. In E. M. Hetherington (Ed.), *Coping with divorce, single parenting, and remarriage* (pp. 147-164). Mahway, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Amato, P. (2000). The consequences of divorce for adults and children. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62, 1269-1287.
- Amato, P. R. (2001). Children of divorce in the 1990s: An update of the Amato and Keith (1991) meta-analysis. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 15, 355-370.
- Amato, P., & Booth, A. (1996). A prospective study of divorce and parent-child relationships. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 58, 356-365.

- Amato, P., & Gilbreth, J. (1999). Nonresident fathers and children's well-being: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 61, 557-573.
- Amato, P., & Keith, B. (1991). Parental divorce and adult well-being: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 53, 43-58.
- Amato, P. R., Loomis, L., & Booth, A. (1995). Parental divorce, parental marital conflict, and offspring well-being during early adulthood. *Social Forces*, 73, 895-916.
- Amato, P. R., & Rezac, S. (1994). Contact with residential parents, interparental conflict, and children's behavior. *Journal of Family Issues*, 12, 578-599.
- Arendell, T. (1995). *Fathers and divorce*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bausermann, R. (2002). Child adjustment in joint-custody versus sole-custody arrangements: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 16, 91-102.
- Belsky, J., Youngblade, L., Rovine, M., & Volling, B. (1991). Patterns of marital change and parent-child interaction. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 53, 487-498.
- Block, J., Block, J., & Gjerde, P. (1986). The personality of children prior to divorce: A prospective study. *Child Development*, 57, 827-840.
- Booth, A., & Amato, P. R. (2001). Parental predivorce relations and offspring postdivorce well-being. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 63, 197-212.
- Braver, S. L., Ellman, I. M., & Fabricius, W. V. (2003). Relocation of children after divorce and children's best interests: New evidence and legal considerations. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 17, 206-219.
- Braver, S. L., Griffin, W. A., Cookston, J. T., Sandler, I. N., & Williams, J. (in press). Promoting better fathering among divorced nonresident fathers. In W. M. Pinsof & J. Lebow, (Eds.), *Family psychology: The art of the science*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Braver, S. L., & O'Connell, E. (1998). *Divorced dads: Shattering the myths*. New York: Tarcher, Putnam.
- Braver, S. L., Wolchik, S. A., Sandler, I. N., Sheets, V., Fogas, B., & Bay, R. C. (1993). A longitudinal study of noncustodial parents: Parents without children. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 7, 9-23.
- Bray, J. H. (1999). From marriage to remarriage and beyond: Findings from the Developmental Issues in StepFamilies research project. In E. M. Hetherington (Ed.), *Coping with divorce, single parenting, and remarriage: A risk and resiliency perspective* (pp. 253-272). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Bray, J. H., & Berger, S. H. (1993). Nonresident family-child relationships following divorce and remarriage. In C. E. Depner & J. H. Bray (Eds.), *Non-residential parenting: New vistas in family living* (pp. 156-181). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Buchanan, C., Maccoby, E., & Dornbusch, S. (1991). Caught between parents: Adolescents' experience in divorced homes. *Child Development*, 62, 1008-1029.
- Buehler, C., Krishnakumar, A., Stone, G., Anthony, C., Pemberton, S., Gerard, J., & Barber, B. K. (1998). Interparental conflict styles and youth problem behaviors: A two-sample replication study. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60, 119-132.
- Bumpass, L. L., Raley, R. K., & Sweet, J. A. (1995). The changing character of stepfamilies: Implications of cohabitation and nonmarital childbearing. *Demography*, 32, 425-436.
- Bumpass, L. L., Sweet, J. A., & Castro-Martin, T. (1990). Changing patterns of remarriage. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52, 747-756.
- Chase-Lansdale, P. L., Cherlin, A. J., & Kierman, K. E. (1995). The long-term effects of parental divorce on the mental health of young adults: A developmental perspective. *Child Development*, 66, 1614-1634.
- Cherlin, A., Furstenberg, F., Jr., Lindsay, P., Chase-Lansdale, P., Kiernan, K., Robins, P., Morrison, D., & Teitler, J. (1991). Longitudinal studies of the effects of divorce on children in Great Britain and the United States. *Science*, 252, 1386-1389.
- Clark-Stewart, K. A., Vandell, D. L., McCartney, K., Owen, M. T., & Booth, C. (2000). Effects of parental separation and divorce on very young children. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 14, 304-326.
- Cummings, E., & Davies, P. (1994). *Children and marital conflict*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Depner, C. E. (1993). Parental role reversal: Mothers and non-residential parents. In C. E. Depner & J. H. Bray (Eds.), *Nonresidential parenting: New vistas in family living* (pp. 37-57). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Doherty, W. J. (1998). Responsible fathering: An overview and conceptual framework. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60, 277-292.
- Dudley, J. R. (1996). Noncustodial fathers speak about their parental role. *Family and Conciliation Courts Review*, 34, 410-426.
- Duncan, G. J., & Hoffman, S. D. (1985). Economic consequences of marital instability. In M. David & T. Smeeding (Eds.), *Horizontal equity, uncertainty and well-being* (pp. 427-469). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dunn, J., Davies, L., O'Connor, T., & Sturgess, W. (2001). Family lives and friendships: The perspectives of children in step-, single-parent, and nonstep families. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 15, 272-287.
- Emery, R. E. (1982). Interparental conflict and the children of discord and divorce. *Psychological Bulletin*, 92, 310-330.
- Emery, R. E. (1994). *Renegotiating family relationships: Divorce, child custody, and mediation*. New York: Guilford.
- Emery, R. E. (1999). *Marriage, divorce, and children's adjustment* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Emery, R. E., & Forehand, R. (1994). Parental divorce and children's well-being: A focus on resilience. In R. J. Haggerty, L. Sherrod, N. Garnezy, & M. Rutter (Eds.), *Risk and resilience in children* (pp. 64-99). London: Cambridge University Press.
- Emery, R. E., Kitzmann, K. M., & Waldron, M. (1999). Psychological interventions for separated and divorced families. In E. M. Hetherington (Ed.), *Coping with divorce, single parenting, and remarriage* (pp. 323-344). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Emery, R. E., Laumann-Billings, L., Waldron, M., Sbarra, D. A., & Dillon, P. (2001). Child custody mediation and litigation: Custody, contact, and co-parenting 12 years after initial dispute resolution. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 69, 323-332.
- Emery, R. E., Waldron, M., Kitzmann, K. M., & Aaron, J. (1999). Delinquent behavior, future divorce or nonmarital childrearing, and externalizing behavior among offspring: A 14-year prospective study. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 13, 568-579.
- Fabricius, W. V. (2003). Listening to divorce: New findings that diverge from Wallerstein, Lewis, and Blakeslee. *Family Relations*, 52, 385-396.
- Fabricius, W. V., Braver, S. L., & Deneau, K. (2003). Divorced parents' financial support of their children's college expenses. *Family Court Review*, 41, 224-241.
- Fabricius, W. V., & Hall, J. (2000). Young adults' perspectives on divorce: Living arrangements. *Family and Conciliation Courts Review*, 38, 446-461.
- Furstenburg, F. F., & Kiernan, K. E. (2001). Delayed parental divorce: How much do children benefit? *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 63, 446-457.
- Gardner, R. A. (1998). *The parental alienation syndrome* (2nd ed.). Cresskill, NJ: Creative Therapeutics.
- Geasler, M. J., & Blaisure, K. R. (1999). 1998 Nationwide survey of court-connected divorce education programs. *Family and Conciliation Courts Review*, 37, 36-63.
- Haine, R. A., Sandler, I. N., Tein, J.-Y., & Dawson-McClure, S. R. (2003). Changing the legacy of divorce: Evidence from prevention programs and future directions. *Family Relations*, 52, 397-405.
- Healy, J., Malley, J., & Stewart, A. (1990). Children and their fathers after parental separation. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 60, 531-543.
- Hetherington, E. M. (1979). Divorce: A child's perspective. *American Psychologist*, 34, 851-858.
- Hetherington, E. M. (1999). Should we stay together for the sake of the children? In E. M. Hetherington (Ed.), *Coping with divorce, single parenting, and remarriage* (pp. 93-116). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Hetherington, E. M., & Clingempeel, W. G. (1992). Coping with marital transitions: A family systems perspective. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 57.
- Hetherington, E. M., Cox, M., & Cox, R. (1982). Effects of divorce on parents and children. In M. Lamb (Ed.), *Nontraditional families* (pp. 233-288). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Hetherington, E. M., & Kelly, J. (2002). *For better or for worse*. New York: Norton.
- Hetherington, E. M., & Stanley-Hagan, M. M. (1997). The effects of divorce on fathers and their children. In M. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (pp. 191-211). New York: Wiley.
- Hodges, W. (1991). *Interventions for children of divorce: Custody, access, and psychotherapy*. New York: Wiley.
- Johnston, J. R. (1993). Children of divorce who refuse visitation. In C. Depner & J. Bray (Eds.), *Nonresidential parenting: New vistas in family living* (pp. 109-135). Newbury Park: CA Sage.
- Johnston, J. R. (1994). High-conflict divorce. *Future of Children*, 4, 165-182.
- Johnston, J. R. (1995). Research update: Children's adjustment in sole custody compared to joint custody families and principles for custody decision making. *Family and Conciliation Courts Review*, 33, 415-425.
- Johnston, J. R. (in press). Parental alignments and rejection: An empirical study of alienation in children of divorce. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*.
- Johnston, J. R., & Campbell, L. (1988). *Impasses of divorce: The dynamics and resolution of family conflict*. New York: Free Press.
- Johnston, J. R., & Roseby, V. (1997). *In the name of the child. A developmental approach to understanding and helping children of conflict and violent divorce*. New York: Free Press.
- Kalter, N., Kloner, A., Schreier, S., & Okla, K. (1989). Predictors of children's post-divorce adjustment. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 59, 605-618.

- Keitner, G. I., & Miller, I. W. (1990). Family functioning and major depression: An overview. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *147*, 1128–1137.
- Kelly, J. B. (1991). Parent interaction after divorce: Comparison of mediated and adversarial divorce processes. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, *9*, 387–398.
- Kelly, J. B. (1993). Developing and implementing post-divorce parenting plans: Does the forum make a difference? In J. Bray & C. Depner (Eds.), *Non-residential parenting: New vistas in family living* (pp. 136–155). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kelly, J. B. (1994). The determination of child custody. *Future of Children: Children and Divorce*, *4*, 121–242.
- Kelly, J. B. (1996). A decade of divorce mediation research: Some answers and questions. *Family and Conciliation Courts Review*, *34*, 373–385.
- Kelly, J. B. (2000). Children's adjustment in conflicted marriage and divorce: A decade review of research. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, *39*, 963–973.
- Kelly, J. B. (2002). Psychological and legal interventions for parents and children in custody and access disputes: Current research and practice. *Virginia Journal of Social Policy and Law*, *10*, 129–163.
- Kelly, J. B., & Johnston, J. R. (2001). The alienated child: A reformulation of parental alienation syndrome. *Family Court Review*, *39*, 249–266.
- Kelly, J. B., & Lamb, M. E. (2000). Using child development research to make appropriate custody and access decisions. *Family and Conciliation Courts Review*, *38*, 297–311.
- Kelly, J. B., & Lamb, M. E. (2003). Developmental issues in the resolution of relocation cases involving young children: When, whether, and how? *Journal of Family Psychology*, *17*, 193–205.
- Kelly, J. B., & Wallerstein, J. S. (1977). Brief interventions with children in divorcing families. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *47*, 23–29.
- King, V., & Heard, H. E. (1999). Nonresident father visitation, parental conflict, and mother's satisfaction: What's best for child well-being? *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *61*, 385–396.
- Kirn, W. (2000, September 25). Should you stay together for the kids? *Time*, *156*, 74–82.
- Kline, M., Johnston, J., & Tschann, J. (1990). The long shadow of marital conflict: A model of children's postdivorce adjustment. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *53*, 297–309.
- Krishnakumar, A., & Buehler, C. (2000). Interparental conflict and parenting behaviors: A meta-analytic review. *Family Relations*, *49*, 25–44.
- Kruk, E. (1992). Psychological and structural factors contributing to the disengagement of noncustodial fathers after divorce. *Family and Conciliation Courts Review*, *30*, 81–101.
- Lamb, M. E., & Kelly, J. B. (2001). Using the empirical literature to guide the development of parenting plans for young children: A rejoinder to Solomon and Biringen. *Family Court Review*, *39*, 365–371.
- Laumann-Billings, L., & Emery, R. E. (2000). Distress among young adults in divorced families. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *14*, 671–687.
- Lee, M.-Y. (2002). A model of children's postdivorce behavioral adjustment in maternal and dual-residence arrangements. *Journal of Family Issues*, *23*, 672–697.
- Maccoby, E., & Mnookin, R. (1992). *Dividing the child*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Madden-Derdich, D. A., & Leonard, S. A. (2000). Parental role identity and fathers' involvement in coparental interaction after divorce: Fathers' perspectives. *Family Relations*, *49*, 311–318.
- Madden-Derdich, D. A., & Leonard, S. A. (2001). Shared experiences, unique realities: Formerly married mothers' and fathers' perceptions of parenting and custody after divorce. *Family Relations*, *51*, 37–45.
- McIntosh, J. (2000). Child-inclusive divorce mediation: Report on a qualitative research study. *Mediation Quarterly*, *18*, 55–70.
- McLanahan, S. S. (1999). Father absence and children's welfare. In E. M. Hetherington (Ed.), *Coping with divorce, single parenting, and remarriage: A risk and resiliency perspective* (pp. 117–146). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- McLanahan, S. S., & Sandefur, G. (1994). *Growing up with a single parent*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Menning, C. L. (2002). Absent parents are more than money: The joint effects of activities and financial support on youths' educational attainment. *Journal of Family Issues*, *23*, 648–671.
- Minton, C., & Pasley, K. (1996). Fathers' parenting role identity and father involvement: A comparison of nondivorced and divorced resident fathers. *Journal of Family Issues*, *17*, 26–45.
- Mott, F., Kowaleski-Jones, L., & Meneghan, E. (1997). Parental absence and child behavior: Does a child's gender make a difference? *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *59*, 103–118.
- Neighbors, B., Forehand, R., & McVicar, D. (1993). Resilient adolescents and interparental conflict. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *63*, 462–471.
- Nord, C. W., Brimhall, D., & West, J. (1997). *Fathers involvement in their children's schools*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Pleck, J. H. (1997). Paternal involvement: level, sources, and consequences. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (3rd ed.; pp. 66–103). New York: Wiley.
- Pong, S.-L., & Ju, D.-B. (2000). The effects of change in family structure and income on dropping out of middle and high school. *Journal of Family Issues*, *21*, 147–169.
- Popenoe, D., Elshstain, J. B., & Blankenhorn, D. (1996). *Promises to keep: Decline and renewal of marriage in America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Seltzer, J. (1991). Relationships between fathers and children who live apart: The father's role after separation. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *53*, 79–101.
- Seltzer, J. (1998). Father by law: Effects of joint legal custody on nonresident fathers' involvement with children. *Demography*, *35*, 135–146.
- Simons, R. L., & Associates (1996). *Understanding differences between divorced and intact families: Stress, interaction, and child outcome*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Smart, C. (2002). From children's shoes to children's voices. *Family Court Review*, *40*, 307–319.
- Smart, C., & Neale, B. (2000). 'It's my life too'—Children's perspectives on post-divorce parenting. *Family Law*, *30*, 163–169.
- Stewart, A., Copeland, A., Chester, N., Malley, J., & Barenbaum, N. (1997). *Separating together: How divorce transforms families*. New York: Guilford.
- Sun, Y. (2001). Family environment and adolescents' well-being before and after parents' marital disruption: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *63*, 697–713.
- Sun, Y., & Li, Y. (2001). Marital disruption, parental investment, and children's academic achievement. *Journal of Family Issues*, *22*, 27–62.
- Sun, Y., & Li, Y. (2002). Children's well-being during parents' marital disruption process: A pooled time-series analysis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *64*, 472–488.
- Thompson, R., & Laible, D. (1999). Noncustodial parents. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *Parenting and child development in nontraditional families* (pp. 103–124). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Vandewater, E., & Lansford, J. (1998). Influences of family structure and parental conflict on children's well-being. *Family Relations*, *47*, 323–330.
- Wallerstein, J. S., & Blakeslee, S. (1989). *Second chances: Men, women and children a decade after divorce*. New York: Tickner & Fields.
- Wallerstein, J. S., & Kelly, J. B. (1977). Divorce counseling: A community service for families in the midst of divorce. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *47*, 4–22.
- Wallerstein, J. S., & Kelly, J. B. (1980). *Surviving the breakup: How children and parents cope with divorce*. New York: Basic Books.
- Wallerstein, J. S., Lewis, J. M., & Blakeslee, S. (2000). *The unexpected legacy of divorce: A 25 year landmark study*. New York: Hyperion.
- Warshak, R. A. (2000a). Blanket restrictions: Overnight contacts between parents and young children. *Family and Conciliation Courts Review*, *38*, 422–445.
- Warshak, R. A. (2000b). Social science and children's best interests in relocation cases: Burgess revisited. *Family Law Quarterly*, *34*, 83–113.
- Waters, R. (2001). The 30 years war. *Psychotherapy Networker*, *March/April*, 40–52.
- Whitehead, B. D. (1998). *The divorce culture: Rethinking our commitments to marriage and family*. New York: Knopf.
- Whiteside, M. F., & Becker, B. J. (2000). Parental factors and young child's post-divorce adjustment: A meta-analysis with implications for parenting arrangements. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *14*, 5–26.
- Wolchik, S. A., Fenaughty, A. M., & Braver, S. L. (1996). Residential and non-residential parents' perspectives on visitation problems. *Family Relations*, *45*, 230–237.
- Wolfinger, N. H. (2000). Beyond the intergenerational transmission of divorce: Do people replicate the patterns of marital instability they grew up with? *Journal of Family Issues*, *21*, 1061–1086.
- Zill, N. D. (1988). Behavior, achievement, and health problems among children in stepfamilies: Findings from a national survey of child health. In E. M. Hetherington & J. D. Arasteh (Eds.), *Impact of divorce, single parenting, and stepparenting on children* (pp. 325–368). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Zill, N., Morrison, D., & Coiro, M. (1993). Long term effects of parental divorce on parent-child relationships, adjustment, and achievement in young adulthood. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *7*, 91–103.
- Zill, N., & Schoenborn, C. A. (1990). *Developmental, learning, and emotional problems: Health of our nation's children, United States, 1988*. Advance data from Vital and Health Statistics, No. 190. Washington, DC: National Center for Health Statistics.