

Custodial Father Families: Predictors, Dynamics and Influences on Adolescents' Emotional Well Being

Abstract

This dissertation's overall aim is to understand one of the less-studied areas of family living arrangements, custodial father families. I ask two different questions leading to two separate studies. One explores the predictors of being a custodial father and the other probes the associations among father-related factors (i.e., father involvement and father disciplinary styles), father-adolescent relationship quality, and adolescents' emotional wellbeing across different father residential statuses. Data from the Fragile Families and Children's Well Being Study were used for both studies. In the first study, fathers' and mothers' educational levels, mothers' perception of fathers' coparenting, mothers' anxiety, and mothers' use of marijuana were significant predictors of fathers being custodial. While education and drug use are congruent with previous literature, the findings about coparenting and maternal anxiety are new. Findings of the second study highlighted the associations between father-child closeness and adolescents' emotional wellbeing and showed that fathers' different residential statuses influence the associations between father-related variables and adolescent emotional wellbeing. There is a need for further research on custodial fathers to understand the similarities and differences of family processes across different family living arrangements.