

LOW-INCOME NON-CUSTODIAL FATHERS AND CHILD SUPPORT  
ENFORCEMENT: THE POLICY OF PROMOTING FATHERING  
THROUGH FINANCIAL OBLIGATION

A THESIS

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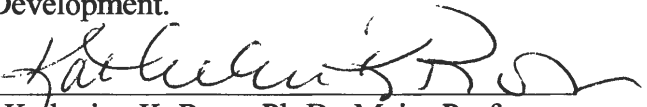
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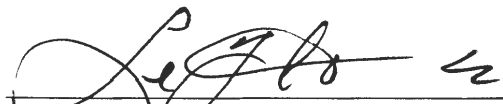
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Heidi B. Scalice entitled "Low-income Non-custodial Fathers and Child Support Enforcement: The Policy of Promoting Fathering through Financial Obligation. I have examined this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science with a major in Child Development.

  
Katherine K. Rose, Ph.D., Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

  
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\_\_\_\_\_

  
Department Chair

Accepted:

  
Dean of the Graduate School

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father Rickey M. Greene who was my Mr. Mom and defined his own roles of fatherhood. We love you and miss you.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the many people who have contributed to this thesis. I would like to thank my committee chair and major professor Dr. Katherine Rose for her unyielding patience and superb guidance during this process. I am thankful for Dr. Rhonda Buckley, and Dr. Shann-Hwa (Abraham) Hwang, who served as vital members of my thesis committee. Their expertise and helpful suggestions contributed greatly to the flow of my research. I would also like to acknowledge the staff from Elite Research, LLC. The long days of lab hours executing the preliminary and primary analyses of this project really helped me to not only understand my research but also the role statistics play in academic research. Finally I would like to thank my husband and family members for their support, patience, and understanding the importance of completing this project. Now that I am finished, my husband and I can share the role of cooking gourmet meals.

## ABSTRACT

# LOW-INCOME NON-CUSTODIAL FATHERS AND CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT: THE POLICY OF PROMOTING FATHERING THROUGH FINANCIAL OBLIGATION

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The purpose of this study was to perform a secondary analysis on The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study's dataset of non-residential father involvement with their child during their five-year follow-up. Using child support status, reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother, and income level as independent variables, this study examined group differences between fathers varying at these levels in terms of their perceptions of their roles as fathers, as well as the quantity and quality of time they spent with their children. The results revealed that fathers with legal child support agreements did not differ in their level of involvement with their child from fathers without formal legal child support agreements. Fathers' relationship with mother, income level, and reason for non-custodial status, however, revealed significant group differences suggesting that these may be more influential factors to father-child relationships than the existence of a formal child support agreement.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Recent studies indicate a child's healthy adjustment to life is inextricably intertwined with the presence of a healthy relationship with his or her father (Quesenberry, Ostrosky, & Corso, 2004). Although father and fatherhood has many definitions, one definition is an equal co-parent in raising a child or children (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998). In pioneering research, a father's role was deemed as the provider, disciplinarian, and often the parent to socialize his children (Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993; Liebman & Abell, 2000). Today, however, the father's role is conceptualized as not only as the provider, but also as a nurturer (Cabrera, Shannon, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2007; Lige, 2003). He provides childcare, and he contributes to the healthy development of his children's mental and socio-emotional wellbeing (Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993; Quesenberry, Ostrosky, & Corso, 2004). Scholarly interest continues to re-examine the father role as equally important as the mother (Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000).

The presence of a father in the life of his child has been shown to give a child a greater opportunity to achieve educational success, economic stability, and socio-emotional fulfillment (Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, & Bremberg, 2008). For the past five decades or more, research involving parental influence affecting child development usually entails and outlines maternal influence with little mention of the father's impact

(Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993; Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998; Liebman & Abell, 2000). This indicates a growing need to continue to detail the vital role fathers play in their children's development. Father involvement has been described as socio-emotional and financial contribution to the well being of a child (Cabrera, Shannon, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2007; Lamb, 1982). Studies indicate a father's involvement is paramount, just as much as in the case of non-residential fathers as those who are present in the home (Fragile Families in Urban Essex: Research Brief, 2007).

The dramatic increase in the number of non-residential fathers is inarguably a direct reflection of the changing political and social landscape in American society, and could be viewed as one of the reasons studies such as the current one are so necessary (Garfinkel, McLanahan, Meyer, & Seltzer, 1998; Liebman & Abell, 2000). Non-residential fathers are defined as divorced, or never married biological or adoptive fathers living outside the households in which their children reside (Sorensen, 1997). Research on non-residential fathers demonstrates their presence as critical components to children's growth and development (Sobolewski & King, 2005). Whether divorced or never married, non-residential fathers' roles are the same as a residential father provider, sustainer, and childcare provider (Sobolewski & King, 2005). Furthermore, a father's relationship with the mother affects his visitation rights or privileges of his children (Pleck & Hofferth, 2008). One of the many complex legal issues a non-residential father may experience is paying child support. This becomes more complicated when the mother receives welfare benefits. In an effort to transition the mother from government

assistance to self-sufficiency, the federal government places significant importance on the father's payment of child support (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS], 2002). This emphasis is an example of the many ways in which public policy impacts the non-residential father relationship with his child.

The above-described scenario may also determine the level of parental responsibility undertaken by the non-residential father, particularly when child support demands become problematic. In such a case, child support collection methods represent the ultimate irony; the laws have the effect of hindering the father's ability to earn a living, yet this very fact in many cases may make it difficult for many fathers to pay the child support he owes (Pirog-Good & Brown, 1996). This in turn may force the father to "go underground" in an effort to preserve his ability to earn a living, which may result in the mother not receiving any child support benefits (Rich, Garfinkel, & Gao, 2007, p. 792). Empirical evidence shows child support collection strategies may be hindrances to non-residential father involvement (Lin & McLanahan, 2001; Plotnick, Garfinkel, McLanahan, & Ku, 2006). Moreover, maternal gatekeeping may take on a more salient role when mothers withhold children from their fathers in demand for financial concessions (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Roy & Dyson, 2005). These are just few examples of public policy impacting non-residential fathers' relations with their children. Although created to help the custodial parent (usually the mother) care for the children, this system may produce results that contradict its stated intentions, resulting in unintended consequences to the father-child relationship, as well as the co-parenting efforts engaged

in by the two parents. It is imperative that research examines ways in which child support policy may unintentionally influence these complex relationships.

Non-residential father involvement may be negatively impacted by child support enforcement policies due to the American court system's view of the father as the main financial provider for his children. With the help of empirical evidence, and the Fragile Families Study research, it is this author's intent to discuss, report and analyze the influence of child support policy on non-residential father involvement. Through a nationally representative data set, the researcher will investigate the quality and quantity of time non-residential fathers spend with their children, how fathers support children (i.e. buying groceries, clothing, toys, and child support payment), how the co-parenting relationship with the child's mother may influence non-residential father involvement, and how public policy may affect their involvement (i.e. Child Support Enforcement policy).

## **Purpose of Study**

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study is to examine the association of child support status, and relationship with the mother of children, with the quality and quantity of time spent by non-custodial fathers with their children on the non-custodial fathers' perception of his role as a father and his perception of his child. The researcher will perform a secondary analysis of the nationally representative sample of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study's five-year core father information dataset.



## **Rationale of Study**

Through examination of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Database, based on the five-year survey of data collection of non-custodial fathers during their longitudinal study, the researcher will use quantitative research measures to determine the quality and quantity of time spent by non-custodial fathers with their children, as well as their child support arrangements with the mother. Also, the researcher has interest in collecting data on the self-perceptions of fathers about their role, and their perceptions of their children.

## **Research Questions**

Based on the purpose of this study, the following research questions will be investigated:

1. Are there differences between the quantity of time spent with their children by non-residential fathers based on child support status, reasons for non-residential status, relationship with child's mother and income level?
2. Are there differences between the quality of time fathers spent with their child of non-residential fathers, measured by types of activities engaged in when together based on child support status, reason for non-residential status, relationship with child's mother, and income level?
3. Are there differences in perceptions of their child between fathers based on child support status, reason for non-residential status, relationship with child's mother, and income level?

4. Are there differences between father perceptions of their father role based on their child support status, response to non-residential status, relationship with child's mother, and income level?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Fatherhood scholarship is a multifaceted topic with various opportunities to begin research within the context of father roles. In the case of non-residential fathers, Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Models of Human Development will be the theoretical guide this study.

Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory made its first appearance in the field of developmental psychology in the 1970s (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Since its inception, it has seen many changes, yet the basis is still the same. Bronfenbrenner (1994) introduced the concept of an individual's development being affected by its environment through the use of the ecological model as a guide to explaining human development. The ecological models of human development consist of five levels: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. In the first level, the microsystem is a series of personal interactions of the "developing person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 39) within the immediate environment (i.e. home life or family). For the purposes of this study, the father is the developing person nestled in the microsystem of his home life and relationships with his children and mother. Based on his interactions with his immediate family, the father will either progress in his role as a father, or become restricted in his role as a father.

Next is the mesosystem, which is the relationship between the developing person and two or more settings (home and school, home and workplace, etc.). As the subject interacts within the immediate setting and the community, these entities intersect in providing avenues for growth and development of self and beliefs. Third is the exosystem. The exosystem is the indirect connections having influence on the subject's development. For instance, the rising gas prices are directly affected by the calamity in the Middle East, yet the fighting indirectly affects a father's perception of his co-parenting and father-child relationship.

Continuing with the fourth level of the model is the macrosystem. Bronfenbrenner describes this level as a "societal blueprint of a particular culture or subculture" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). This includes the beliefs, attitudes, cultural traditions, educational level, and lifestyles of the community in which the developing person resides. For example, the macrosystem that exists within American society is the traditional belief of a father's role was that he was provider and sustainer of his family. Within this context, a man's perception of father role can be influenced by this concept. When he becomes a father, his perception of his role is to be solely responsible for the financial growth and stability of his family based on the traditional belief of this culture. His perception of the "societal blueprint" may direct his interaction with his co-parenting and father-child relationship. In the fifth and last level of the ecological model, the chronosystem describes a method of utilizing time (i.e.) as an influential factor in human development.

Bronfenbrenner (1994) believed that human development was influenced by “change or consistency” over a period in the environment in which a human lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). Fathers’ perceptions of their roles have changed over a period time due to the monumental events that took place in American history. In the introduction of this paper, the author briefly discussed Ralph LaRossa’s (1988, 1991, & 1997) concept of changing culture and conduct of fatherhood. Throughout the twentieth century, aspects of fatherhood has changed and remained consistent with regard to his role within his family. Although the traditional belief of the father role has remained consistent through American society, the changing face of the father role provides opportunity for men to decide which they believe is best suited for them when they become fathers. This is an example of the chronosystem level of the ecological model of human development.

Over decades, fatherhood has changed and in some cases has remained the same. His perception of his role is dependent on his interaction with one or all of these levels of the ecological model. Based on the topic of research, each of these levels has either direct or indirect influences on the development of children.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Child Support Enforcement Bureau:** an agency established by the federal government for state and local agencies to collect court ordered child support to maintain healthy growth and development of children from birth to 18 years old.

**Fathers:** refer to the biological or adoptive relationship to a child (Day, Lewis, O'Brien, & Lamb, 2005).

**Fatherhood:** refers to societal views of fathers and father role (Day, Lewis, O'Brien, & Lamb, 2005).

**Father involvement:** is the interaction between fathers and their children (i.e. caregiver, nurturer, provider, teacher/playmate, etc.) (Day, Lewis, O'Brien, & Lamb, 2005).

**Fatherhood conduct:** describes the behaviors and attitudes fathers subscribe to within the parenting role (LaRossa, 1988).

**Fatherhood culture:** the collective beliefs of norms and values of men associated with the fathering role (LaRossa, 1988).

**Maternal gatekeeping:** a "collection of a mother's beliefs and attitudes" towards a father's role (i.e. financial provider, family sustainer, etc.). (Allen & Hawkins, 1999, p. 199).

**Non-residential fathers:** divorced/never married/single fathers, who live outside of the home in which their children reside (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999).

**Underground employment:** a type of employment in which fathers seek cash payment for manual labor (Rich, Garfinkel, & Gao, 1998).

## **Delimitations**

Key factors recognized as delimitations and affecting the results of this study are the following:

1. The researcher is performing a secondary analysis of data from the five-year core rather than the whole longitudinal study.
2. The non-residential father respondents from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study will be the only participants measured for the secondary analysis, which could remove a significant amount of data provided by father respondents.
3. The data collected will be based on the income level, response for non-custodial status, relationship with mother, and child support status. Although other independent variables exist that may affect a father's perception such as age, cultural background, ethnicity, educational background of mother and father, emotional and psychological wellbeing of both parents and child(ren). However, all of these factors are beyond the scope of this study.
4. The release of FFCW follow-up studies conducted in 2009 during the process of this study.
5. Researcher recognizes the numerous federal amendments made to child support policies, yet many are deemed beyond the scope of this study.
6. State Child Support Enforcement Bureaus may have made amendments to current policies that the researcher may not be able to include in this study.

7. The researcher recognized the potential to use another theory: Social Conflict Theory with Family Perspective. For this study, the basic elements of the social conflict theory are too complex for encompassing all necessary independent variable needed for measuring father's perception of his role.

In this section, the author discussed the rationale for a quantitative research through secondary analysis to investigate the perceptions of low-income non-residential fathers when factored with child support status, demographical information, and co-parenting relationship with mother. To help illustrate fathers' perception being affected by environmental factors is Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Human Development.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### **A Retrospective of Child Support Policies**

In the 1930s, the federal government passed a welfare package to assist poverty stricken families in attaining a better quality of life (Page & Larner, 1996). The Aid for Families with Dependent Children Program (AFDC) began as an attempt to eliminate the number of children living in poverty, but today, under the auspice of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation of 1996 (PWROR), it has changed in its focus. AFDC was created to provide financial assistance to families in need due to special circumstances (i.e. deceased parent, disabled parent) (Page & Larner, 1997). In order to receive assistance, The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS, 2002) required families to have children under the age of 18, and they had to be living below the established level of poverty. Although a federally mandated program, states were given the freedom to create their own regulations and eligibility requirements within the federal guidelines outlined in the policy. Throughout the decades, there have been major changes in the law, including the addition to the welfare package: child support enforcement. The following is a brief history of child support enforcement in the U.S.

#### **Child Support Enforcement is Born**

The first federal legislation for child support enforcement was passed in 1950 (US Department of Health and Human Services [HHS], 2002). This legislation held state



welfare agencies responsible for reporting any families receiving assistance through the Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program in which a child was “abandoned or deserted by a parent” (HHS, 2002, p. 1). From 1965 to 1975, several amendments were added for identifying non-custodial parents who were delinquent in payment through granting the ability to obtain place of employment and home address from federal agencies such as Internal Revenue Services, The Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare (HHS, 2002). Furthermore, these amendments allowed state agencies to heavily pursue non-custodial parents for payment by any means permitted through federal guidelines. In the spirit of identifying non-custodial parents not paying court ordered child support, the Social Security Amendment of 1967 mandated that the states create an organization for establishing paternity of children (HHS, 2002); and the most detailed public law, Social Services Amendment of 1974 required states to establish their own Child Support Enforcement (CSE) entity for collecting payments, locating delinquent non-custodial parents, and for maintaining updated records of court ordered child support cases especially of those who are welfare recipients (HHS, 2002).

This amendment began the relinquishment of employment wages of the non-custodial parent. If there were any AFDC recipients collecting court ordered child support payments, the state and local agencies would receive a portion of the payment before the custodial parent received the funds. The federal government believed this would help “offset” (HHS, 2002, p. 2) the welfare costs of the family receiving aid. Upon collection of child support the states received incentives from the federal

government (Rich, Garfinkel, & Gao, 1998). The aforesaid are the foundation of the federal and state governments' perspectives on the importance of collection of child support, and the willingness to create policies that enforce payment on mandated child support. The next amendments are the cornerstones of the present child support enforcement policies.

### **Decade Milestones**

Major milestones for child support enforcement came in the 1980s. From 1982 to 1989 Congress passed various amendments implementing stricter guidelines for state and local welfare agencies to abide by for the collection of delinquent non-custodial payments (Reichman, Teitler, & Curtis, 2011). Among these stricter state regulations were the methods for the collection of monies. Through IRS refunds, employment wages, "liens against real and personal security" (HHS, 2002, p. 4; Reichman, Teitler, & Curtis, 2011), and/or any other means of collecting payments the states now had the ability to withhold any form of income from non-custodial parents. Within this timespan, state and local welfare agencies were given a tremendous amount of power for establishing paternity, expediting support orders, and the ability to locate non-custodial parents in order to collect child support. While the AFDC policies resulted in aid for thousands of families in need of assistance, some unintended consequences resulted from this initiative. For example, families only qualified for AFDC if one parent was absent from the home, making it impossible for two-parent headed families to receive assistance. As a result, some families broke apart not due to conflict, but a desire for the father to create a way

for his family to receive aid (Page & Lerner, 1996). This is an example of policy influencing family systems, specifically the father-child relationship.

Major advancements of child support policies came in the late 1990s. From 1996 to 1999, the federal government developed legislations that would monumentally increase the Child Support Enforcement Bureau's power. Under President Clinton's Administration, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation of 1996 (PRWOR) was created as a reformation of AFDC to encourage welfare recipients to find or return to work in order to reduce the need for federal assistance, and develop state social service programs to help non-custodial fathers (HHS, 2002). In theory, this policy would encourage welfare recipients to take control of their lives through returning to work, or receiving higher education and becoming less dependent on state and federal assistance, and educate the public on the importance of fathers. However, by emphasizing the importance of collecting child support payments, the federal government placed extreme responsibility on the states to institute more rigid child support standards to hold fathers accountable for lack of payment and to lessen the custodial mothers' dependence on welfare (HHS, 2002).

In 1997, Children's Health Insurance Program, also known as CHIP was created to provide medical coverage to children from impoverished living environments (HHS, 2002). Also, the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 provided the ability for the Child Support Enforcement Bureau to use a federal parent locator service in order to find

delinquent parents. Having access to this service made locating a delinquent non-residential parent a lot easier to find.

As a supplement to the amendments made in 1997, The Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998 was passed to include medical support for children, penalizing state government for lack collection, and making it a felony for non-custodial parents failure to make child support payments (HHS, 2002). In fact, this made it mandatory for the government to collect medical support through child support payment if the child was a recipient of the Children's Health Insurance Program for medical care (HHS, 2002).

With the new millennium, came significant improvements and provisions to previous laws. In 2005, the United States House and Senate passed The Child Support Provisions of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. This bill was created to help reduce the federal deficit associated with federal programs geared to enforce child support. The families of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) will now receive annual fees, and if a non-custodial parent still owes arrears although their children are age 18 or older, their tax refunds will now be collected to zero balance the amount owed (Roberts, 2006). Most of the recent legislations, from 2008-2010 involves safeguarding personal information found within the parent locator services, increase of medical support for families and their children, and increase in intergovernmental contact for child support orders.

As technological systems improve, so too will the government's methods of collecting child support, which will allow them to create and craft more legislations to become more efficient and effective in their means of child support retrieval and locating delinquent non-custodial parents. Though the perspective is to eradicate child poverty and increase non-residential father involvement, there are significant consequences and effects of their strict enforcement for states and non-custodial parents.

### **Consequences and Effects of Stricter Enforcement**

As legislation became more advanced and detailed about the responsibilities of the state and local governments for collection of child support payments, the stricter the consequences for delinquent parents. Many non-custodial parents, especially fathers, experienced demeaning consequences. These consequences included: detainment, driver license suspension, no claims for bankruptcy, and retrieval of monies through personal banking accounts, denial of passports, portions of lottery winning retrieved, and insurance liens, etc. (HHS, 2002). Moreover, mothers who were receiving welfare became more dependent on the fathers of their child/children to provide monthly financial assistance through child support enforcement, and mothers were now more likely to desire the fathers to provide for their children so they could continue to receive federal assistance (Garfinkel, McLanahan, Meyer, & Seltzer, 1998). Conversely, stricter enforcement caused mothers and families to continue to depend on government assistance, and non-custodial fathers to neglect their legal financial obligations in order to maintain a decent quality of life (Turetsky, 2001). Mothers receiving child support

payments continued to face economic hardship because the payments were too low to support their families for one month. For example, in an article titled, *Child Support and Low-Income Families: Deadbeat Dads or Policy Mismatch*, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC, 1999) discussed that one of the effects of child support on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients was that mothers and children only saw \$50 of the allotted amount of the calculated child support garnished from the non-custodial fathers' employment wages. The rest of the money goes to the state for reimbursement of aid given to the mother. Although the intended purpose of the PRWOR is to encourage welfare recipients to depend less on assistance through the means of child support, it is evident that the child support payment is not enough to support a mother and her child(ren).

Another effect of child support enforcements is non-custodial fathers exploring the possibility of supplementing an "underground" job to their regular job in order to sustain his quality of life (Rich, Garfinkel, & Gao, 2007, p. 792). According to Rich, Garfinkel, and Gao (2007), underground employment is performing a labor for the receipt of cash payment. Non-custodial fathers, especially those of low socio-economic status, find opportunities (e.g. start their own business through performing side jobs in manual labor) to make extra money to offset the money garnished from their regular employment wages. In their study, Rich, Garfinkel, & Gao (2007) explore the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study for its data on the unmarried father participants (varying across ethnicities, socio-economic status and age) and "relationship between strict child support

enforcement and levels of underground and regular employment” (p. 791). The team reported minimal evidence of fathers being affected by stricter child support enforcement, yet the evidence also demonstrated the necessity to continue having an underground job. Also, the authors’ investigation reported an increase in “regular sector” (p. 82) hours, and the decrease in underground hours, which they deemed to be important because the findings suggest a necessity for non-custodial fathers to have a supplement to their regular wages. Again, in theory the PRWOR was established to help needy families through work incentive and child care programs; however, non-custodial fathers, those of low-income levels, seem to experience difficulty sustaining his family financially due to monetary consequences placed on him for lack of payment.

### **Summary**

The federal government has made tremendous efforts to improve the lives of needy families. With the creation of the AFDC, the federal government saw a need to help its needy families have an equal opportunity to a better quality of life. TANF and the PRWOR, replacements of the AFDC, utilized many avenues in shaping and strengthening methods of helping welfare recipients, one of them: child support enforcement. Although officially established in the 1950s under a Social Security Act, child support policies have now evolved from attachments to amendments to child support enforcement agencies.

Via federal guidelines and regulations, state and local governments were given the ability institute a child support enforcement system guaranteeing collection from non-

custodial parents, usually fathers. Although child support policies are an effort to support single-parent families with children under the age of 18, regrettably, there are consequences to the enforcement of those policies on non-custodial parents, and depending on the socio-economic status, non-custodial parents must choose to make payment and face economic hardships to fulfill legal obligation, or they receive punitive damages (e.g. driver license suspension, or detainment) for lack of payment.

As child support enforcement research continues to be a major aspect of non-residential father involvement, this could help shape future policies for the empowerment of fathers and families. Knowing the history of fathers is a place to begin for policymakers to re-examine the contributions of fathers throughout the history of American family life.

### **The Evolution of Fatherhood**

With an understanding of the current state of policy related to child support brings the need to explore the myriad roles fathers play in their children's lives, since research shows that *provider* does not appear to be the sole role associated with fathers over time. As early as the nineteenth century, scholars and professionals alike from various fields found interest in the study of fatherhood. With the pioneering research in the institute of fatherhood came various definitions of fatherhood based on the expertise of various scholars. Historically, roles within the family for the father were that of *provider*, *protector*, *executor of discipline*, and *leader* of his family (Bigner, 1970; Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998; Liebman & Abell, 2000). Based on these roles for the



purposes of this study a father is defined as having an adoptive or biological kinship to a child (Day, Lewis, & Lamb, 2005). Presently, the growing research shows fathers taking an additional role as nurturer (Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993). External factors (i.e. socioeconomic status) have contributed to altering the father's role over time (Roy, 2008); and growing academic research about fatherhood and fathering tend to focus on the roles fathers play in their children's lives.

Moreover, current research details *culture* and *conduct* behaviors of fatherhood, which Ralph LaRossa (1988; 1991; 2000) describes as two separate entities of the institute of fatherhood, yet researchers tend to use the behaviors of these entities interchangeably. This is relevant because *culture* refers to "values, beliefs, and shared norms of fatherhood" (LaRossa, 1988, pp. 451); while, *conduct* is defined by the behaviors and roles of fathers. With this understood, it is imperative to see fatherhood culture as consistently evolving, yet the conduct or behavior of fatherhood slowly progressing to be aligned with the culture (Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993; LaRossa, 1988). Therefore, it is important to understand the father's role within the family structure, both past and present, through the eyes of culture and conduct.

## **Past**

Throughout the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, fatherhood or fathering in American society evidenced an expectation that the male parent provide discipline, leadership, financial stability for the livelihood of his family, and the masculine role model for both his wife and children (Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993; Bigner, 1970). Somewhere

between the 1920's and 1970's, the fatherhood culture gradually shifted from traditional to contemporary (LaRossa, Jaret, Gadgil & Wynn, 2000). The cultural shift represents the perception of fathers' role within the family changing within the American Society.

Pinpointing an exact decade of the cultural shift of fatherhood is somewhat vague, yet previous research shows signs of a change happening between the 1920's and the 1970's. Researchers have utilized several means of collecting information about fathers: 1) popular culture, and 2) reanalysis of previous research. However, the most popular method was through the examination of American media history during the early twentieth century (Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993; LaRossa, 1988). By using the annals of American media (e.g. magazines and comic strips) to identify a decade of change, researchers such as Ralph LaRossa, Joseph Pleck, Maxine Atkinson, and Stephen P. Blackwelder, along with many others, analyzed popular media during the twentieth century to shed some light on American cultural perspectives on fatherhood. A form of media examined by Ralph LaRossa and several others is comic strips. Although comic strips tend to generalize the culture of fatherhood during a specific time period (i.e. 1950's, etc.), empirical evidence suggests this form of research to be helpful in presenting or showing the change of societal perspective about fathers and fatherhood (LaRossa, et al., 2000).

In an article titled *The Changing Culture of Fatherhood in Comic Strips*, Ralph LaRossa (1988), discusses his analysis of fatherhood in Father's Day edition comic strips in newspapers throughout the twentieth century. His research of these "holiday" comic

strips as early as the 1920s through the 1950s, has a universal theme of characterizing fathers or fatherhood as uninvolved and lacking fundamental parenting skills (i.e. changing diapers, feeding, etc.). For example, LaRossa reported that ninety percent of the comic strips illustrated fathers as providers and somewhat elusive when attending to household chores and parenting. He concluded that American popular culture believed fathers were still providers and breadwinners. In another study, research team Atkinson and Blackwelder (1993) used the same method and found the culture of fatherhood slowly changing from provider to nurturer in the 1970s. In a more detailed explanation, Atkinson and Blackwelder identified the Women's Liberation Movement as an influential component in shaping the cultural shift of fathers' role within the family system. Women entered the workforce as an assertion of independence and equality with their male counterparts. This slowly changed the culture of fatherhood from provider to nurturer. Via comic strips, one can see the culture of fatherhood changing through the eyes of cartoonists; and cartoonists' depictions may be reflections of the culture during a specific time.

## **Present**

The evolution in American society has allowed fathers of today to pursue more nurturing relationships with their children. In the past, the culture of fatherhood was one of provider, protector, executor of discipline, and leader of his family; in present time, he is not only all of the aforementioned but also he is a nurturer, and caregiver.

Now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, “changing trends of American society” influence the new development of contemporary father roles (Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, & Lamb, 2000, p. 127). For example, Cabrera, et al (2000) discussed in their essay, *Fatherhood in the Twenty-First Century*, that maternal employment created the new image of the father: provider and caregiver. Despite social pressures of maintaining the past fatherhood norms, many fathers today provide nurturing and affection on a scale more closely associated with mothers. As mothers continue to help sustain their families financially, the need for fathers to contribute their time to their children is essential (Cabrera, et al, 2000). Furthermore, fathers becoming more actively involved with their children’s activities increase the children’s chances of academic and social success (Bigner, 1970; McBride & Lutz, 2004; McBride, Rane, & Bae, 2001; Quesenberry, Ostrosky, & Corso, 2004). As academic research on fatherhood continues to grow, more and more evidence surfaces on the importance of fathers’ influences on other aspects of their children’s development (Collier, 2001; Scanzoni, 1979). This is the culture of the “new father” in America: an equal counterpart to the mother for their children’s growth and development.

### **Summary**

The culture of fatherhood is rapidly changing due to the contemporary conduct of motherhood. Despite this growth, the conduct of fatherhood slowly correlates with the culture of fatherhood. Mentioned earlier, fatherhood conduct relates to the behaviors and roles fathers play within their family system. LaRossa (1988) states fatherhood conduct

influences the fatherhood culture because behaviors shape culture. Popular culture and empirical evidence demonstrates acceptance of fathers becoming more involved in their children's lives, yet fathers are still likely to be the financial provider. Fatherhood conduct still works from the mode of the traditional fathering role, (i.e. breadwinner, disciplinarian, etc.) and it often determines the amount of interaction with his family. The culture and the conduct of motherhood were reflections of the traditional role of the mother: stay at home wife and full-time mother; she was the center of the home (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1995). Now, with fifty percent of the mothers reporting participation in the workforce, this not only changes the family demographics but also changes the culture of fatherhood (Galinsky, Bond, Sakai, Kim, & Giuntoli, 2008).

### **From Breadwinner to Caregiver: The Different Fathering Roles**

What response does the word "father" elicit? What does it mean to be a father? Today, the word "father" evokes myriad emotions and descriptions. Though these ideas and concepts of fathering may vary, most agree that fathers are far more involved than they were fifty years ago (Bigner, 1970; Downer, 2007). This means a father's role has become multifaceted and bears little resemblance to the traditional role to which American society once subscribed. The father is now a nurturer, caregiver, teacher/advisor, and socializer (Blatt, 2007; Bronte-Tinkew, Carrano, & Guzman, 2006; Pancsofar & Vernon-Feagans 2006; Quesenberry, Ostrosky, & Corso, 2004); and these added new roles balance the concept of father as being solely the financial backbone of his family. Therefore, a discussion of the conceptualization of fathering, which entails the

meaning of fathering, and descriptions of the added roles in which a father contributes within his family system is needed.

### **Traditional Roles**

In the past, researchers focused on the traditional role of a father (Bengtson, et. al, 2005); now, evidence shows that positive and fully engaged fathers have significant developmental benefits to the children that he fathers (Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993: Losoncz, 2008). Moreover, fathering is about sharing the emotional, physical, and mental responsibilities of parenting a child (Losoncz, 2008). With this new perspective on fathering within social sciences, conceptualizing about fathering becomes a challenge. What exactly is conceptualization about fathering? Conceptualization of fathering is the chosen definition of the researcher depending on the content of his/her study. Although there are many definitions of fathering, for the purposes of this study, the father is conceptualized as having an egalitarian role in parenting his child. This includes his actualization as a caregiver, provider/financial epicenter, nurturer, socializer/playmate, and teacher to his children.

### **Contemporary Roles**

From a conventional point of view, a father's role was to be the financial epicenter for his family, and on rare occasions, he was a babysitter for his children when their mother had commitments elsewhere (LaRossa, et. al, 2000). Today, a father is not a babysitter, he is a caregiver, and his role essentially is about providing the physical and emotional needs such as bathing, clothing, and soothing his child in times of anxiety

(Blatt, 2007; Jain, Belsky, & Crnic, 1996). Though these activities are the same for a mother, a father's interaction with his child may be different (Blatt, 2007). In 2007, for the first two years of an infant boy's life, Blatt observed him and his parents. In her recollection, she found that fathers interacted with their children differently than did the mother. For example, while giving his son a bath, the father was observed soothing his son about the temperature of the water by assuring him he would get used to the water; this was something not observed in the mother's behavior during bathtime. In a matter of seconds, the infant boy relaxed and enjoyed his bath. As a caregiver, a father is as equally engrossed in his children as a mother; and the children's behaviors positively reflect his attention.

As a financial epicenter or breadwinner, in a traditional sense, the father worked to provide the necessities and luxuries for his family (LaRossa, et. al, 1991), and he imparted the responsibility of money management to his wife to help maintain the upkeep of the house and family (Pahl, 1995). Sometimes his interaction with his children involved disciplining them if they misbehaved at school or at home, thusly making him a disciplinarian. His role as a disciplinarian was comprised of "punishing the child for inappropriate behavior," or encouraging acceptable and polite behavior (Jain, Belsky, & Crnic, 1996, pp. 434). These roles, in a traditional sense, conceptualized the father to one-sided interactions with his family. From a contemporary perspective, research showing that fathers are conceptualized as nurturers, is one of the prominent added features to his parenting role (Roy, 2008). As a nurturer, his family is most important and he wants to

contribute to their emotional and spiritual health (Lige, 2003). Additionally, fathers may bring a balance of understanding and patience when mothers are anxious about inappropriate behaviors demonstrated by their children (Blatt, 2007). For example, in her observation of an infant boy, Blatt (2007) reported the mother as being concerned when she recognized her son playing with his private parts; and the father reassured his behavior was common among baby and toddler boys and she should not worry. This is just one of many accounts in which a father as a nurturer is a comforter to his family.

While being a nurturer and the financial epicenter are great contributions to the healthy growth and development of his children, another role often associated with being a father is that of a socializer, or playmate. A father's participation in his children's social life is very critical to their language and socio-emotional development (Pancsofar & Vernon-Feagans, 2006). Although mothers and fathers both affect their language development, Pancsofar and Vernon-Feagans (2006) reported that mothers and fathers differ in interacting with their children, which lends to how their expressive language is developed. For example, when having conversations with their children, mothers asked "yes or no" questions, and fathers asked open-ended questions. Asking open-ended questions allows for the child to form sentences rather than one word answers, and this gives the children freedom to articulate their thoughts (Pancsofar & Vernon-Feagans, 2007).

In accordance to enhancing his children's language development, his role as a playmate helps to develop his children's socio-emotional and physical development



(Quesenberry, Ostrosky, & Corso, 2004). While in his role as a playmate, a father participates in lighthearted and entertaining indoor and outdoor activities, and his involvement offers them the opportunity to explore certain physical abilities and talents often associated with sports (Jain, Belsky, & Crnic, 1996). Moreover, any time a father positively interacts with his child (i.e. reading a book, playing “catch”, etc.), he is boosting his/her self-esteem and confidence for future relationships with peers or other adults (Quesenberry, Ostrosky, & Corso, 2004). In these moments a father has with his children while actualizing his roles, he directly and indirectly becomes a teacher. As a teacher, a father defines incidents or situations to help his children learn and understand life lessons (Jain, Belsky, & Crnic, 1996). In the event that he is involved in a teaching moment, he may execute his patience and understanding to demonstrate or explain the emotion or concept, he is trying to impart to his child (Blatt, 2007).

### **Summary**

The word *father* elicits many responses, and among them are caregiver, disciplinarian, financial provider, nurturer, playmate/socialize, and teacher. Conceptualization of fathers in these roles defines him as a parent with meshing layers of responsibilities within a family system. The new father is an involved and attentive parent compared to the traditional one that is depicted as dismissive and inattentive (Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993) with the public institutions of American society slow in acknowledging this fact. Given the nature of many child support and divorce laws, it is

evident that more education is necessary to bring awareness to the efforts being made by fathers to enrich the lives of their children.

### **Maternal Gatekeeping and Father Involvement**

While many researchers have investigated the role of fathers in their children's lives, others have examined the role mothers play in encouraging or discouraging paternal involvement in their children's lives. This is often referred to as *maternal gatekeeping*. Maternal gatekeeping is a "collection of a mother's beliefs and attitudes" towards a father's role to his children (Allen & Hawkins, 1999, pp. 199). Often, a mother's beliefs and attitudes about the father of her children either encourage or discourage the father-child relationship. In their research, on maternal gatekeeping, Allen and Hawkins defined three dimensions in their focus on maternal gatekeeping: 1) mothers' reluctance to relinquish responsibility over family matters by setting rigid standards; 2) external validation of a mothering identity; and 3) differentiated conceptions of family roles. For the purpose of this literature review, the author will discuss the first dimension as it has the potential to negatively affect non-residential father involvement.

For non-residential fathers, maternal gatekeeping often determines the caliber of his relationship with their children, and according to some researchers, the father's ideas about his role (McBride, et. al, 2005). In this section, the negative aspects of maternal gatekeeping and cooperative co-parenting will be discussed as issues related to non-custodial father involvement.

## **Negative Aspects of Maternal Gatekeeping**

Regrettably, “Babymama Drama” (Roy & Dyson, 2005, pp. 289) is a major factor in the negative aspect of maternal gatekeeping. This refers to mothers’ hostile and distrustful interactions with the fathers of their child(ren). Their hostility and distrustful behavior could be the residue of a sour ending to a romantic relationship with the father of their child(ren) (Carlson, McLanahan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2005). Allen and Hawkins (1999) described this type of maternal gatekeeping as a “mother’s reluctance to relinquish responsibility over family matters by setting rigid standards” (pp. 199). This is the mother controlling every aspect of her child or children’s lives, while placing unrealistic expectations on the father. Allen and Hawkins assert that this reluctance ultimately comes from the traditional belief that mothers are the basic caregivers and nurturers of their children, and fathers are the financial sustainers of them all. “Relinquishing responsibility” forces the mother to trust in the father in which she has learned not to trust due to circumstances or prescribed beliefs in men’s inability to parent effectively.

Also, “setting rigid standards” is a mother’s way to control the interaction between the father and child(ren). If the father demonstrates lack of attention to something the mother feels is significant to her child’s wellbeing, she may seize the opportunity as evidence of the father’s failure to parent effectively. To back up this claim, using Allen and Hawkins definition of maternal gatekeeping, McBride et al (2005) hypothesized and reported maternal gatekeeping as an antecedent to father involvement and father identity role. Simply put, maternal gatekeeping contributes to how a man

perceives his role as a father, and based on his interaction with the mother, determines the quality of involvement with his children. All of this is evidence of the significance of maternal approval for long-lasting paternal involvement.

### **Cooperative Co-parenting and Maternal Gatekeeping**

Benefits of maternal gatekeeping are vast, yet most researchers agree that cooperative parenting plays a vital role in father involvement, especially with nonresidential fathers (Amato, Meyers, & Emery, 2009; Fragile Families Brief, 2004). Cooperative co-parenting involves the custodial mother and the non-custodial father working together in raising their children (Carlson, McLanahan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008; Sobolewski & King, 2005). With trust in the ability to parent and effectively communicate, cooperative co-parenting enhances maternal support and increases nonresidential father involvement (Carlson, McLanahan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008). A Fragile Families Research Brief (2004) highlights co-parenting relational factors such as positive mother and father behaviors, supportiveness, and positive affect as indicators for increased father involvement. The findings presented maternal support as being an essential component to increased father involvement. Maternal support includes encouragement of the father-child relationship, inclusion of father in daily affairs involving their children, and praising his contributions and efforts (Fragile Families Research Brief, 2004). Furthermore, increased father involvement extends beyond obligatory child support payment into contributing to household expenses and other childcare needs (i.e. academic support, emotional and social support).

Also, within the same context, Carlson, McLanahan, and Brooks-Gunn (2008) discussed maternal support as an influential factor of cooperative co-parenting, and it was imperative for nonresidential father involvement. Moreover, through effective parental communication and maternal trust, nonresidential fathers are more than likely to become more engaged with their children's daily activities. Evidence such as this is indicative of the substantial role mothers play in nonresidential father involvement, and also is vital information for lawmakers within the family court system to reanalyze their programs to benefit both parents and shift their focus to promoting cooperative co-parenting. The family court system has an obligation to help both parents to understand the importance of establishing a healthy friendly relationship rather than emphasizing the importance financial obligations of nonresidential fathers.

Mothers, usually the custodial parents, help fathers develop relationships with their children depending on the type of support they offer. Maternal gatekeeping, a set of beliefs and/or attitudes towards the father role, often determines the quality of father-child relationship, especially among nonresidential fathers and their children. As the concept of maternal gatekeeping develops in fatherhood scholarship, the idea of effective co-parenting correlates with a positive form of maternal gatekeeping. Effective co-parenting practices demonstrate both parents willingness to raise their children long after their romantic relationship has ended (Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, 2004; Sobolewski & King, 2005). Additionally, effective co-parenting creates a positive atmosphere for healthy growth and development of the children involved.

## **Summary**

The premise of child support policies is to help children have access to resources for a better quality of life, and to increase non-residential father involvement (Page & Lerner, 1996; Sobolewski & King, 2005). If this belief is inherent in child support enforcement, perhaps it is the responsibility of policymakers, along with the family court system, to recognize other forms of support that fathers offer to their families, as well. If co-parenting involves both the mother and father supporting each other in decision making regarding their children's wellbeing, then perhaps it is time for the totality of a father's contribution to his children be properly recognized.

### **Formal and Informal Support Offered by Fathers**

Effective co-parenting entails recognition of each parent's contribution to the family. This could be formal or informal support offered by the parents. Formal refers to means of measuring a person's contribution to the family. Informal refers to immeasurable methods, yet these are still necessary for maintaining a healthy functioning family system (Lerman, 2010). Whether married or single/divorced, a father's role within his family structure is essential to not only the health and wellbeing of his children, but also for the mothers. Depending on marital status, a father's contribution may be different; however, his participation is indispensable for sustaining stability of his family (Losoncz, 2008). For example, fathers partner with mothers in the following ways when married in shares of household activities and emotional support (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Sousa and Rodrigues, 2009).

As research on formal and informal supports offered by fathers becomes more recognized, these are a just a few ways in which married fathers contribute their support to mothers. This perspective illustrates fathers' role as a multi-faceted dynamic within his family system. Though his role changes when he is no longer romantically involved with the mother, fathers may still offer support some type of support to her. As a single/divorced non-residential father, his support may be executed differently contingent upon the quality of the relationship with the mother. According to Lerman (2010) non-custodial fathers spend time and money for supporting their children and mothers. For example fathers may still offer their time in providing guidance, discipline, decision-making, and emotional support to mothers with regard to their children. He also provides financial support to the mother and his children but in a different way (Lerman, 2010; Public Policy Institute of California, 1999).

A father may be court ordered to pay child support, but he also may be providing monies to help the mother pay her monthly expenses (e.g. rent, phone, electricity, etc.). children's extracurricular activities, children's food and clothing or other necessary items (e.g. toiletries) (Public Policy Institute of California, 1999). Sometimes a non-residential father may even help spend his time and money on another father's child(ren) if the

### **Summary**

Resident and non-resident fathers offer support to the mothers of their children in various ways. Some of those ways include guidance and discipline of children, partnering with the mother in making decisions about their children, emotional support,

and financial support. Though these support systems change slightly when no longer romantically involved, fathers' contributions to a mother's support system are essential to the healthy growth and development of their children. Consideration of the formal and informal support systems offered by fathers to mothers should be deemed important to the family court system. A non-residential father's role within his family dynamic extends beyond formal obligation (time and money), but also into informal methods (emotional and social) of providing stability to his family.

### **Research Questions**

From this discussion of the multi-faced role fathers play in raising their children, it is imperative that we understand how current child support mandates influence on the relationships fathers form and maintain with their children and children's mothers.

Therefore, the research questions guiding the current study are:

1. Are there differences between the quantity of time spent with their children by non-residential fathers based on child support status, reason for non-residential status, relationship with child's mother and income level?
2. Are there differences between the quality of time fathers spent with their child of non-residential fathers, measured by types of activities engaged in when together based on child support status, reason for non-residential status, relationship with child's mother, and income level?



3. Are there differences in perceptions of their child between fathers based on child support status, reason for non-residential status, relationship with child's mother, and income level?
4. Are there differences between father perceptions of their father role based on their child support status, reason to non-residential status, relationship with child's mother, and income level?

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

Chapter two was a literature review of fathering and father involvement. To understand the various factors affecting fathering and father involvement, particularly low-income non-custodial fathers, the author discussed a brief history of fathering and fathering (i.e. traditional and contemporary roles of fathers), conceptualizing about fathering (i.e. fathers as nurturers, caregivers, etc.), maternal gatekeeping and cooperative co-parenting, and formal and informal supports offered by fathers to mothers of their child.

Although the previous chapter discussed fathers in general, it could be understood that this includes non-residential fathers. Understanding the importance of low-income non-custodial fathering is slowly gaining recognition. Because there was a need for such research, Princeton University began a study called Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, which address demographic and familial characteristics (e.g. single-parent families) that may be considered affecting these families living in impoverished conditions or living in non-traditional families. Many studies have stemmed from The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, and this study will perform a secondary analysis on an available dataset to help answer the research questions below:

1. Are there differences between the quantity of time spent with their children by non-residential fathers based on child support status, reason for non-residential status, relationship with child's mother, and income level?
2. Are there differences between the quality of time fathers spent with their child of non-residential fathers, measured by types of activities engaged in when together based on child support status, reason for non-residential status, relationship with child's mother, and income level?
3. Are there differences in perceptions of their child between fathers based on child support status, reason for non-residential status, relationship with child's mother, and income level?
4. Are there differences between fathers' perceptions of their father role based on their child support status, reason to non-residential status, relationship with child's mother, and income level?

In this chapter, the author describes the methodology of the present study.

Included in this section, the author will describe the Institutional Review Board (IRB) plan, setting, sample size/participants, measurement instruments, and data collection/procedure. This study will utilize a quantitative design to describe the results of the data collection. The purpose of the quantitative research is to measure the effects of demographical information of the low-income non-custodial fathers, child support status of non-custodial low-income fathers, the relationship with mother, and the quantity and quality of time spent by non-custodial fathers during visitation.

### **Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

Since this is a secondary analysis of a popular nationwide study, no human participants will be tested. However, the researcher still submitted an application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) detailing the purpose of the study, and requesting approval to commence with data analysis. Upon approval from the university's IRB, the researcher proceeded with the data analysis of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study: Survey of New Parents- Fathers' Five-Year Follow-Up Survey.

### **Setting**

Reichman, Teitler, Garfinkel, and McLanahan (2001) wrote an article about the sample and design of The *Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study's* core study. It is comprised of eligible new mothers and fathers' in-person telephone interviews from baseline to five-year follow-ups on the children at ages 1, 3, and 5 years of age. The present study examines the core 5-year data collected on the participating non-residential (unmarried) fathers through quantitative research design, and also examines non-residential fathers' child support status through certain sections of the *Fathers' Five-Year Follow-Up Survey*.

### **Sample/Participants**

The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study is a nationally representative sample of 4,789 families participated from 20 of the U.S.'s. largely populated cities (200,000 or more) within the time period of 1998 and 2000 (Reichman, et al, 2001). In the national sample of the Five-year follow-up of the Fragile Families and Child Study,

2,235 new fathers were interviewed of which 1,598 were unmarried at the child's birth. However, of the 4,789 participating families only 997 fathers responded to the five-year follow-up survey.

### **Data Collection/Procedure**

#### **Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study's Procedure**

According to Reichman, Teitler, Garfinkel, and McLanahan (2001), the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study was designed to examine these four questions:

1. What are the conditions and capabilities of unmarried parents, especially fathers?
2. What is the nature of the relationships between unmarried parents?
3. How do children born into these families fare?
4. How do policies and environmental conditions affect families and children?

The research team of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study conducted in-person and telephone interviews based on surveys specifically designed for their data collection procedure. The purpose of the telephone interviews was to collect information ranging from mother and father attitudes of their roles as parents and partners to neighborhood characteristics. For recruiting purposes, interviewers determined eligibility based on mother's eligibility status, and the study's design. Such criteria included the ability to interview both mother and father, and the child must be living with at least one of the parents for the next five years or more. Mothers became ineligible if the father was deceased, if she was a minor, or if the study's quota was met based on marital status.

Upon eligibility and for the baseline process, the mothers were interviewed at the hospital or via telephone. Once the mothers were accepted for the study, fathers were contacted for the baseline interview. If fathers were not available during this stage of the study, the research team tried contacting him for the first, third, and five-year follow-up interviews. The research team collected information in waves: baseline, first, second, and third. The baseline interview process is at birth of child; the first wave is the child at the age of one; the second wave is the child at the age of three, and third wave is an interview when the child is five. During the baseline data collection process, the researchers interviewed the new mothers either in person or via telephone.

### **Present Study**

The current study was conducted using the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study of the five-year core datasets of the participating fathers. For the secondary analysis of the father documentation, the researcher contacted Princeton University's Office of Population Research (OPR) for authorized access of the datasets provided by the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study. After permission was granted, the researcher registered and created an account and password on the OPR website, and downloaded datasets of the fathers' and mothers' five-year core. To continue with analysis of the datasets, the researcher utilized the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to help analyze the father information. In addition to obtaining datasets from the OPR, the researcher downloaded the public version of the *Fathers' Five-Year Follow-Up Survey* created by the Fragile Families Research team currently

available on the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing website. The data associated with this survey was used for the secondary analysis.

### **Measurement Instruments**

The present study utilized the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study's survey instrument titled *Fathers' Five-Year Follow-Up Survey*. This is a questionnaire created by the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study research team for the telephone interview conducted with fathers when their children were five years old. This is a twelve-section survey categorized by letters and topical titles (e.g. Section A: Family Characteristics, etc.) in order to obtain descriptive information about the respondent fathers' relationship with child, perception of his role and of his child, educational and income level, as well as employment status, family characteristics, demographics, religion, and current relationship status.

### **Independent Variables**

Independent variables identified for this study are reason for non-residential status, child support status, relationship with mother, and income level.

**Reason for non-residential status.** Fathers' response from this question guided the researcher in determining if there are connections between this and the listed dependent variables. Fathers selected from the various choices about the reasons for their custodial status. For this study, the following items were regrouped into five choices:

*What is the main reason (he/she) stopped living with you (most of the time)?*

1. Father Incarcerated,

2. Parent's Broke Up/Parents Don't Get Along,
3. Legally Lost Custody/Court Removal, and
4. Other (encompasses child's health problems, other parent too child/kidnapped, neighborhood safety, financial problems, etc.)

**Child support status.** Non-residential fathers' responses about whether or not they had court ordered child support is listed in *Section C: Mother-Child Relationship* of the *Fathers' Five-Year Follow-up* as well as whether or not he is paying it.

*C13. Do you have a legal agreement or child support order that requires you to provide financial support to (CHILD)?*

Yes.....1

No.....2

**Relationship with child's mother.** Non-residential fathers' response to this question about the current status of the relationship each had with their children's mothers. For this study, the following items are the categorical groupings and the question for the analysis. The question choices "Refused" and "Mother Deceased" will be removed for further testing of the variables:

*What is your relationship with (MOTHER) now? Are you.....?*

1. Married/Romantically Involved,
2. Separated/Divorced,
3. Friends, and
4. No Relationship



**Income levels.** This will be determined by the non-residential fathers’ estimated response of his annual income at the time of the interview. This is a 11-item choice response and research removed the responses “Don’t Know” and “Refused” and regrouped the income ranges into two categories: below \$11,000 and \$11,000 or more. This regrouping is based on the 2009 Employment Status.

**Dependent Variables**

Dependent variables identified for this study are quantity of time, quality of time, father perception of child, and father perception of role.

**Quantity of time.** Items related to non-custodial fathers’ responses about the amount of time they see their children provided data for this variable (i.e. weekends, daily, holidays, etc.). The number of nights spent with child during the previous year was recoded into three categories: Between 1 and 30 nights per year; between 31 and 60 nights per year; and over 61 nights per year. The number of days spent with child during past 30 days was recoded into three categories: 0 days per month; between 1 and 9 days per month and 10 or more days per month.

*A2D. How many nights has (CHILD) spent with you in the past twelve months?*

*(Amount specified)* Nights

None.....0

*A3E. About how many days did you see (CHILD) in the past 30 days?*

*(Amount specified)* Number of days

None.....0

*A3G. How many days did (CHILD) live with you out of the past 30 days?*

**PROBE: By live, we mean that (he/she) slept or stayed overnight in your home?**

(Amount Specified) Days

None.....0

**Quality of time.** Items related to the kinds of activities the non-custodial fathers are engaged in while visiting with his children (e.g. recreational activities, academic activities, life skill training). For question B26 *Days Per Week* and *Don't Know* was nominally coded from 0 to -2. However, due to the uneven distribution of time spent with child for each of the activities, it was determined that the child activity variables should be recoded into three separate levels: 0 days per week; once a week; and two or more times per week.

*B26. Now I would like to ask you some questions about things you may do with (CHILD). Please tell how many days you do each of these activities in a typical week. How many days a week do you (READ ITEM)?*

- Sing songs or nursery rhymes with (CHILD)
- Read stories to (CHILD)
- Tell stories to (CHILD)
- Play inside with toys such as blocks or Legos with (CHILD)
- Tell (CHILD) that you appreciated something (he/she) did
- Play outside in the yard, park, or playground with (CHILD)

- Take (CHILD) on an outing, such as shopping, or to a restaurant, church, museum, or special activity or event
- Watch TV or a video together

**Father perception of child.** The questionnaire had a 19-point question for fathers to report his view of his child's behavior and temperament. The fathers had the option of choosing "not true", "somewhat or sometimes true", "or very true or often". To determine if these items needed to be regrouped, a factor analysis was conducted and five categorical items were created and labeled the Perception of Child Subscales. These subscales were used for the primary analysis and named to identify the category in which these child items belong. The five categories and the perception of child items are the following:

1. Behavior is comprised of six items:

- Child is stubborn, sullen, or irritable
- Child is disobedient
- Child can't concentrate, can't pay attention long
- Child can't sit still; (he/she) is restless or hyperactive
- Child has temper tantrums or hot temper
- Child doesn't seem to feel guilty after misbehaving

2. Affect is comprised of five items:

- Child clings to adults/is too dependent
- Child is too fearful or anxious

- Child has sudden changes in mood or feelings
  - Child cries a lot
  - Child is nervous, high strung, or tense
3. Social is comprised of three items:
- Child doesn't get along with other children
  - Child is unhappy, sad, depressed
  - Child is withdrawn; (he/she) doesn't get involved with others
4. Developmental is comprised of two items:
- Child has a speech problem
  - Child acts too young for (his/her) age
5. Attention Seeking is comprised of three items:
- Child has trouble getting to sleep
  - Child wants a lot of attention
  - Child feels worthless or inferior

**Father perception of role.** Items to the non-residential fathers' responses about his view of his role as a father provided data for this variable.

*B20A. Please think about how you feel about yourself as a father to (CHILD). Would you say you are...*

An excellent father..... 1

A very good father.....2

A good father.....3

A good father.....3

Not a very good father?.....4

*B31A. Being a parent is harder than I thought it would be. Do you*

Strongly agree.....1

Somewhat agree.....2

Somewhat disagree.....3

Strongly disagree.....4

*B31B. I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent. Do you...*

Strongly agree.....1

Somewhat agree.....2

Somewhat disagree.....3

Strongly disagree.....4

*B31C. I find that taking care of my child(ren) is much more work than pleasure.*

Strongly agree.....1

Somewhat agree.....2

Somewhat disagree.....3

Strongly disagree.....4

*B31D. I often feel tired, worn out, or exhausted from raising a family. Do you...*

Strongly agree.....1

Somewhat agree.....2

Somewhat disagree.....3

Strongly disagree.....4

### Summary

In this section was a detailed description of the methodology for this study. This was a secondary analysis of Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study datasets from the custodial mothers and non-custodial fathers responses in the FFCWS' questionnaire. Furthermore, the researcher provided information about IRB process, setting, sample/participation, data collection/procedure, and measure instruments. In the *measure instruments* section, the researcher illustrated the independent and dependent variables used for the present study. All of the data collected from this process was a guide for the plan of analysis and results section of the study.

## CHAPTER V

### RESULTS

A secondary analysis was conducted on The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study's father five-year follow-up survey. The original dataset consisted of a total of 4,898 father participants. Due to a large number of fathers from the original wave not participating in this wave, only data from 977 father participants were used in this study. Additionally, due to missing data from some questions among the 977, several of the following analyses were conducted only on the subset with complete data. For this reason, the *n* may differ from analysis to analysis. Furthermore, additional analyses were conducted to test for relationships between variables to test for possible covariate factors.

#### **Descriptive Analysis**

##### **Reason for Non-Residential Status**

To begin the analyses, descriptive information related to the reason for non-residential status of the fathers, the father's reported relationship with the mother, and the statuses of a formal child support agreement were obtained. As shown in Table 1, of the 977 father participants, 701 fathers responded with the greatest percentage of the fathers reporting that they either "broke up" or "don't get along" with the mother of their child (42.5%). The second most frequently reported reason fathers gave for not having custody of their children was incarceration (21.4%). Less than a quarter of fathers reported losing custody, either due to legal reasons or court removal (14.0%), with the lowest percentage

of fathers reporting loss of custody due to the fact that he or the mother had moved (9.6%). The remaining father respondents fell into the category of “other”, which included father financial and/or health problems, child health problems, deceased child, neighborhood safety, parent took child away or kidnapped child, or father is disabled (12.6%).

### **Child Support Status**

In regard to the existence of a legal child support agreement, of the 977 father participants, 916 fathers skipped this question leaving a total of 60 fathers responding to this question. As seen in Table 1, the majority of the fathers who responded replied that they had no legal child support agreement (63.3%) with the remaining indicating that a legal agreement for child support was in place (36.7%).

### **Relationship with Mother**

As seen in Table 1, in regard to the father’s relationship with the child’s mother, 974 fathers responded with the largest percentage responding that the participant and the mother of the child were friends (44.9%), a little over a quarter of the fathers reported having no relationship with the mother (28.7%), less than a quarter of fathers reported that he and the mother of child were either separated or divorced (14.6%) and the remaining fathers reported being married or romantically involved with the mother (11.8%).



Table 1

*Frequencies and Percentage for Categorical Independent Variables*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Main reason why child does not live with you.			
Father Incarcerated	150	15.4	21.4
Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along	298	30.5	42.5
Lost Custody / Court Removal	98	10	14
One Parent Moved	67	6.9	9.6
Other	88	9	12.6
Skipped	160	16.4	
Don't Know	7	0.7	
Refused	3	0.3	
Missing	106	10.8	
You have legal agreement/child support order required provide financial support?			
Yes	22	2.3	36.7
No	38	3.9	63.3
Total	60	6.1	100
Skip	916	93.8	
Don't Know	1	0.1	
What is your relationship with mother now?			
Romantic / Married	115	11.8	11.8
Separated / Divorced	142	14.5	14.6
Friends	437	44.7	44.9
No Relationship	280	28.7	28.7
Total	974	99.7	100
Mom Died	1	0.1	
Don't Know	2	0.2	

*Note.* Frequencies not summing to 977 and percentages not summing to 100 reflect missing data.

Perception of Role Items

Fathers were also asked to rate the perceptions that they had of themselves as fathers. As seen in Table 2, scores for each question used to operationalize father’s perceptions of themselves as fathers ranged from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 4 (*strongly disagree*). Fathers in this sample indicated an average level of agreement with the statement, “ being a parent is harder than I expected“(M = 2.22 , SD= 1.08), a high levels of agreements with the statements, “I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent” (M =3.38, SD = .92), “I find taking care of my children more work than pleasure(M = 3.11, SD = 1.11), and “I often feel tired/exhausted from raising a family” (M=2.99, SD = 1.05).

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Father’s Income and Father’s Perception of Role

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
How much did you earn from all regular jobs in past 12 months (amount)?	718	21165.97	20023.44	0	100000
Being a parent is harder than I expected.	583	2.22	1.08	1	4
I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent.	586	3.38	.92	1	4
I find taking care of my children more work than pleasure.	586	3.11	1.11	1	4
I often feel tired/exhausted from raising a family.	584	2.99	1.05	1	4

Quantity of Time Items

Fathers were asked to give the number of days each spent with his child in the past thirty days. Scores for each question used to operationalize fathers’ quantity of time with their child ranged from 0 to 30 days. Fathers in this sample indicated spending an average of 7 days with their child(ren) ( $M = 7.42$ ,  $SD = 8.91$ ). Fathers were also asked to give the number of nights he spent with his child in the past year. Scores for each question used to operationalize father’s quantity of time with their child ranged from 1 to 365 nights. Fathers in this sample indicated spending an average of 70 nights per year with their child ( $M = 70.06$ ,  $SD = 67.17$ ). Please see Table 3 for more specific breakdown of father responses.

Table 3  
*Means and Standard Deviations of Father with Quantity of Time Variables*

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Nights Spent Per Year	590	70.06	67.17	1	365
Day Spent Per Month	976	7.42	8.91	0	30

## Quality of Time Items

Fathers were also asked to indicate how many days per week they spent in specific activities with their child. As seen in Table 4, results revealed that fathers in this sample spend an average of 2 days a week engaging in child-oriented activities with their children.

Table 4

*Means and Standard Deviations of Number of Days Per Week Spent on Activities with Child*

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Sing songs/nursery rhymes with child?	583	1.72	1.80	0	7
Read stories to child?	584	1.93	1.72	0	7
Tell stories to child?	586	2.09	1.97	0	7
Play inside with toys with child?	586	2.62	2.08	0	7
Tell child you appreciated something he/she did?	583	3.99	2.34	0	7
Play outside in yard/park/playground with child?	585	2.48	1.92	0	7
Take child on outing/event/activity?	584	2.02	1.74	0	7
Watch TV/video together?	586	2.81	2.09	0	7

## Perception of Child Items

As seen as in Table 5, fathers were asked to rate their level of agreement with 19 child description items listed in the survey. Scores used to operationalize a father's perception of child ranged from 1 (not true) to 3 (very true). Fathers in this sample overwhelmingly disagreed with statements indicating negative perceptions of their children's behavior.

Table 5

### *Frequencies and Percentage for Perception of Child Variables*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Child can't concentrate/pay attention long			
Not true	378	38.7	65.2
Somewhat true	158	16.2	27.2
Very true	44	4.5	7.6
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	6	0.6	
Child can't sit still/is restless/hyperactive			
Not true	293	30	50.4
Somewhat true	208	21.3	35.8
Very true	80	8.2	13.8
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	5	0.5	
Child cries a lot			
Not true	461	47.2	78.9
Somewhat true	98	10	16.8
Very true	25	2.6	4.3
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	2	0.2	

Table 5, continued

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Child is disobedient			
Not true	409	41.9	70.2
Somewhat true	160	16.4	27.4
Very true	14	1.4	2.4
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	3	0.3	
Child doesn't get along with other children			
Not true	504	51.6	86.9
Somewhat true	64	6.6	11
Very true	12	1.2	2.1
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	6	0.6	
Child clings to adults/is too dependent			
Not true	311	31.8	53.7
Somewhat true	177	18.1	30.6
Very true	91	9.3	15.7
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	7	0.7	
Child doesn't seem to feel guilty after			
Not true	344	35.2	59.3
Somewhat true	184	18.8	31.7
Very true	52	5.3	9
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	6	0.6	
Child has trouble getting to sleep			
Not true	462	47.3	79.5
Somewhat true	99	10.1	17
Very true	20	2	3.4
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	5	0.5	

Table 5, continued

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Child is nervous, high strung, tense			
Not true	472	48.3	81.2
Somewhat true	87	8.9	15
Very true	22	2.3	3.8
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	5	0.5	
Child has speech problem			
Not true	494	50.6	84.7
Somewhat true	62	6.3	10.6
Very true	27	2.8	4.6
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	3	0.3	
Child is stubborn, sullen, irritable			
Not true	344	35.2	59.2
Somewhat true	200	20.5	34.4
Very true	37	3.8	6.4
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	5	0.5	
Child has sudden mood changes			
Not true	341	34.9	58.6
Somewhat true	207	21.2	35.6
Very true	34	3.5	5.8
Skip	391	40.0	
Don't know	4	.4	
Child has temper tantrums			
Not true	333	34.1	57.2
Somewhat true	211	21.6	36.3
Very true	38	3.9	6.5
Skip	391	40.0	
Don't know	4	.4	
Child is too fearful anxious			
Not true	385	39.4	67.1
Somewhat true	156	16	27.2
Very true	33	3.4	5.7
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	12	1.2	

Table 5, continued

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Child is unhappy, sad, depressed			
Not true	500	51.2	85.9
Somewhat true	73	7.5	12.5
Very true	9	0.9	1.5
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	4	0.4	
Child wants a lot of attention			
Not true	120	12.3	20.6
Somewhat true	280	28.7	48.1
Very true	182	18.6	31.3
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	4	0.4	
Child is withdrawn, doesn't get involved with			
Not true	518	53	89.3
Somewhat true	52	5.3	9
Very true	10	1	1.7
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	6	0.6	
Child feels worthless/inferior			
Not true	549	56.2	94.5
Somewhat true	24	2.5	4.1
Very true	8	0.8	1.4
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	5	0.5	
Child acts too young for his/her age			
Not true	524	53.6	90
Somewhat true	45	4.6	7.7
Very true	13	1.3	2.2
Skip	391	40	
Don't know	4	0.4	

*Note.* Frequencies not summing to 977 and percentages not summing to 100 reflect missing data.



As seen in Table 6, the mean score standard deviations, and range of scores for each of the five categorical child subscales are presented. It should be noted that higher scores indicate a greater belief for each of the child’s actions. For, example, behavior subscale score ranged from 6.00 to 18.00, with the average score of 8.83 ( $SD = 2.45$ ), indicating that fathers have a greater agreement with child’s negative behaviors. It should be noted that less than 582 fathers gave responses to these perception of children scores.

Table 6  
*Father’s Perception of Child Subscale Scores*

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Behavior Subscale	577	8.83	2.45	6	18
Affect Subscale	571	5.74	1.64	4	12
Social Subscale	578	3.43	.89	3	9
Developmental Subscale	581	2.32	.71	2	6
Attention Seeking Subscale	578	4.42	1.03	3	9

### **Preliminary Analysis**

To test for the existence of relationships between independent variables to control for covariates in the primary analysis, a crosstabulation analysis using Pearson's chi-square and Cramer's  $V$  tests was conducted to examine the associations between reason for non-residential status and legal child support agreement, relationship with mother, and income level. Significant relationships between these variables indicate the need to include those variables as covariates in primary analyses because the relationship between the two variables together may influence the outcome.

#### **Reason for Non-Residential Status**

A crosstabulation with Pearson chi square analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between non-residential status and mandated child support, relationship with mother, and income level. The results revealed significant associations between reason for non-residential status and relationship with mother,  $\chi^2(12) = 107.63, p < .001$ , Cramer's  $V = .249$ . Since there were significant associations, the relationship between reason for non-residential status and relationship with mother should be examined for primary analyses. As shown in Table 7, is the association between reason for non-residential status and income was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(4) = 104.67, p < .001$ . Cramer's  $V = .484$ . The results revealed significant associations between reason for non-residential status and income level. However, there were no significant associations between reason for non-custodial status and legal child support agreement,  $\chi^2(4) = 5.77, p = .214$ , Cramer's  $V = .395$ .

Table 7

*Frequencies and Percentages of Child Support Status, Income, and Relationship with Mother by Reason for Non-Residential Status*

	Father Incarcerated		Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along		Lost Custody / Court Removal		One Parent Moved		Other		$\chi^2$	p
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Legal agreement/child support order required provide financial support?											5.77	.217
Yes	3	33.3	3	27.3	7	63.6	1	20.0	1	100.0		
No	6	66.7	8	72.7	4	36.4	4	80.0	0	.0		
What is your relationship with mother now?											107.63	.000
Romantic / Married	45	35.2	19	6.8	7	8.1	9	14.3	2	3.5		
Separated / Divorced	12	9.4	79	28.2	16	18.6	5	7.9	6	10.5		
Friends	57	44.5	112	40.0	36	41.9	34	54.0	24	42.1		
No Relationship	14	10.9	70	25.0	27	31.4	15	23.8	25	43.9		

Table 7, continued

	Father Incarcerated		Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along		Lost Custody / Court Removal		One Parent Moved		Other			
Income 2 Levels											104.67	.000
Below \$11,000	73	90.1	56	26.2	22	32.4	15	31.3	15	40.5		
\$11,000 or More	8	9.9	158	73.8	46	67.6	33	68.8	22	59.5		

## **Child Support Status**

A separate crosstabulation analysis using Pearson's chi-square and Cramer's  $V$  tests was conducted to examine the associations between legal child support agreement and reason for non-custodial status, relationship with mother, and income. As seen in Table 8, the associations between legal child support agreement and reason for non-custodial status, relationship with mother, and income did not show significant associations, all *ps ns*. These results indicated that child support status can stand alone as an independent variable and will not have to be examined with relationship with mother.

## **Relationship with Mother**

A crosstabs analysis using Pearson's chi-square and Cramer's  $V$  tests was conducted to examine the associations between relationship with mother and reason for non-custodial status, legal child support agreement, and income. As seen in Table 9, the associations between relationship with mother and reason for non-custodial status,  $\chi^2(12) = 107.62, p < .001$ , Cramer's  $V = .242$ . These results revealed that the associations between relationship with mother have significant bearing on the fathers' reason for non-residential status. Therefore indicating that these associations might affect the type of involvement with child in the primary analysis. It should be noted that there were no significant associations between relationship with mother and legal child support agreement,  $\chi^2(3) = 3.80, p = .284$ , Cramer's  $V = .279$ . No association between relationship with mother and child support status indicates that fathers of the child support status can stand alone in primary analysis.

Table 8

*Frequencies and Percentages of Reason for Non-Residential Status, Income, and Relationship with Mother by Child Support Status*

	Yes		No		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
	n	%	n	%		
Main Reason why Child Does Not Live with You					5.77	.217
Father Incarcerated	3	20.0	6	27.3		
Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along	3	20.0	8	36.4		
Lost Custody / Court Removal	7	46.7	4	18.2		
One Parent Moved	1	6.7	4	18.2		
Other	1	6.7	0	0.0		
What is your relationship with mother now?					3.8	.284
Romantic / Married	7	41.2	14	43.8		
Separated / Divorced	1	5.9	0	0.0		
Friends	2	11.8	9	28.1		
No Relationship	7	41.2	9	28.1		
Income 2 Levels					1.89	.169
Below \$11,000	3	27.3	13	52.0		
\$11,000 or More	8	72.7	12	48.0		

Table 9

*Frequencies and Percentages of Reasons for Non-Residential Status, Child Support Status and Income by Relationship with Mother*

	Romantic / Married		Separated / Divorced		Friends		No Relationship		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Main Reason why Child Does Not Live with You									107.62	.000
Father Incarcerated	45	54.9	12	10.2	57	21.7	14	9.3		
Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along	19	23.2	79	66.9	112	42.60	70	46.4		
Lost Custody / Court Removal	7	8.5	16	13.6	36	13.7	27	17.9		
One Parent Moved	9	11.0	5	4.2	34	12.9	15	9.9		
Other	2	2.4	6	5.1	24	9.1	25	16.6		

Table 9, continued

	Romantic / Married		Separated / Divorced		Friends		No Relationship		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Legal agreement/child support order required provide financial support?									3.80	.284
Yes	7	33.3	1	100.0	2	18.2	7	43.8		
No	14	66.7	0	0.0	9	81.8	9	56.3		
Income 2 Levels									21.14	.000
Below \$11,000	41	51.2	24	22.6	125	41.8	50	31.6		
\$11,000 or More	39	48.8	82	77.4	174	58.2	108	68.4		



## **Income Levels**

A crosstab analysis using Pearson's chi-square and Cramer's  $V$  tests was conducted to examine the associations between income and reason for non-residential status, child support status and relationship with mother. As shown in Table 10, the results revealed that there are associations between income level and the reason for non-residential status,  $\chi^2(4) = 104.67, p < .001$ , Cramer's  $V = .484$ , and income level and relationship with mother,  $\chi^2(3) = 21.15, p < .001$ , Cramer's  $V = .181$  are significant, further indicating that the majority of the fathers in this sample had an income level of \$11,000 or more.

## **Dependent Variables**

Tests were conducted to examine the relationships of the categorical dependent variables on the continuous variables (e.g. perception of child subscales and quantity of time). The results from these tests will predict whether or not they will be combined for the primary analysis. A multivariate analysis (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of type of father (i.e. excellent, very good, good, and not very good) on the perception of child subscales. Participants who reported that they were "not very good" fathers were excluded from this analysis due to the small sample size of this group ( $n = 11$ ). As seen in Table 11, type of father did not have an overall effect on the perception of child subscales  $F(10, 1084) = 1.48, p = .143, \eta^2 = .013$ . Additionally, there were no univariate effects of type of fathers on any perception of child subscale scores all  $ps, ns$ .

Table 10

*Frequencies and Percentages of Reason for Non-Residential Status, Child Support Status and Relationship with Mother by Income*

	Below \$11,000		\$11,000 or More		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
	n	%	n	%		
Main Reason why Child Does Not Live with You					104.67	.000
Father Incarcerated	73	40.3	8	3.00		
Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along	56	30.9	158	59.2		
Lost Custody / Court Removal	22	12.2	46	17.2		
One Parent Moved	15	8.3	33	12.4		
Other	15	8.3	22	8.2		
Mandated Child Support?					1.89	.169
Yes	3	18.8	8	40.0		
No	13	81.3	12	60.0		
What is your relationship with mother now?					21.15	.000
Romantic / Married	41	17.1	39	9.7		
Separated / Divorced	24	10.0	82	20.3		
Friends	125	52.1	174	43.2		
No Relationship	50	20.8	108	26.8		

Table 11

*Means and Standard Deviations of Perception of Child Subscale Scores by Type of Father*

	n	Mean	SD	F	p
Behavior Subscale				1.28	.278
Excellent	172	8.54	2.39		
Very good	174	8.84	2.25		
Good	203	8.93	2.59		
Affect Subscale				.48	.620
Excellent	172	5.63	1.65		
Very good	174	5.67	1.51		
Good	203	5.78	1.66		
Social Subscale				1.85	.158
Excellent	172	3.34	.74		
Very good	174	3.37	.78		
Good	203	3.50	1.01		
Developmental Subscale				1.13	.323
Excellent	172	2.31	.72		
Very good	174	2.25	.66		
Good	203	2.35	.70		

*Note.* Multivariate Effect:  $F(10, 1084) = 1.48, p = .143, \eta^2 = .013$

A crosstab analysis using Pearson’s chi-square and Cramer’s  $V$  tests was conducted to examine the associations between father perception of role item: “what kind of father are you” and the quantity of time items. As before, fathers who viewed themselves as “not very good” fathers were excluded from the analysis due to small sample size. As seen in Table 12, there was a significant association between father

perception of role and nights spent with child per year,  $\chi^2(4) = 25.08, p < .001$ , Cramer's  $V = .149$ . Fathers who believe they were a good father reported spending between one and thirty nights per year with their child (48.0%). Furthermore, the associations between father perception of role and days spent with child per month was significant  $\chi^2(4) = 47.07, p < .001$ , Cramer's  $V = .164$ . Another example of this significance is the greater proportion of fathers who believed they were good fathers reported spending no days per month with their child (38.4%). Results show the associations between how fathers rate themselves as fathers will be used as predictors for days spent with child per month: a quantity of time items.

Table 12

*Frequencies and Percentages of Nights Spent with Child in Past Year, Days See Child in Past Month, and Quality of Time Variables by Type of Father*

	Excellent		Very good		Good		$\chi^2$	$p$
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Nights Spent with Child per Year							25.08	.000
Between 1 and 30 Nights per Year	53	30.8	56	32.4	107	48.0		
Between 31 and 60 Nights per Year	32	18.6	36	20.8	53	23.8		
Over 61 Nights per Year	87	50.6	81	46.8	63	28.3		

A multivariate of analysis (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of type of father (i.e., excellent, very good, and good) on the individual father's perception of role items. Participants who responded that they were "not very good" fathers were excluded from this analysis due to the small sample size ( $n = 11$ ). As seen Table 13, type of father had an overall significant effect on the perception of father's perception of role items,  $F(8, 1118) = 7.23, p < .001, \eta^2 = .049$ . This analysis was conducted to determine if there were relationships between the categorical perception of role item and the continuous perception of role items. These results demonstrate the importance of the relationship between how a father rates himself as a father and how he perceives his role. This result is an important predictor of the fathers' perception of role items has on each other. Also, this result determines if additional or supplemental analyses will need to be conducted in the primary analysis.

Pearson Product Moment correlations were also conducted to examine the relationships between the continuous variables of fathers' perceptions of role. As seen in Table 14, each of the fathers' perception of role items were positively significantly related to the other perception of role items ( $r$ s ranging from .280 to .393,  $ps < .001$ ), indicating that fathers who had higher scores on one of the perception of role items tended to have higher scores on the other perception of role items. These results indicate that the significant relationships between the fathers' perception of role items can be used as predictors in the primary analysis with regressions.

Table 13

*Means and Standard Deviations of Father's Perception of Role by Type of Father*

	n	Mean	SD	F	p
Being a parent is harder than I expected?				26.52	.000
Excellent	176	2.68 <sup>a</sup>	1.12		
Very good	181	2.21 <sup>b</sup>	1.05		
Good	208	1.91 <sup>c</sup>	.96		
I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent?				4.98	.007
Excellent	176	3.53 <sup>a</sup>	.88		
Very good	181	3.42 <sup>ab</sup>	.88		
Good	208	3.24 <sup>c</sup>	.96		
I find taking care of my children more work than pleasure?				9.12	.000
Excellent	176	3.35 <sup>a</sup>	1.04		
Very good	181	3.19 <sup>ab</sup>	1.04		
Good	208	2.88 <sup>c</sup>	1.15		
I often feel tired/exhausted from raising a family?				2.40	.092
Excellent	176	3.13	1.04		
Very good	181	2.98	1.00		
Good	208	2.90	1.08		

*Note.* Multivariate Effect:  $F(8, 1118) = 7.23, p < .001, \eta^2 = .049$ . Means with different superscripts are significantly different,  $p < .05$ .

Table 14

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Father's Perception of Role Variables*

	Being a parent is harder than I expected?	I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent?	I find taking care of my children more work than pleasure?
I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent?	.313**		
I find taking care of my children more work than pleasure?	.335**	.393**	
I often feel tired/exhausted from raising a family?	.304**	.280**	.311**

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Pearson Product Moment correlations were also conducted to examine the relationships between the continuous variables of perceptions of child subscales. As shown in Table 15, each of the perceptions of child subscale scores were significantly positively related to the other subscale scores, ( $r$ s ranging from .227 to .513,  $p$ s  $< .01$ ), indicating that participants who had higher scores on one of the child perceptions subscale scores tended to have higher scores on the other subscales. These results indicate that the significant relationships between the perceptions of child items can be used as predictors in the primary analysis with regressions.

Table 15

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations between Perceptions of Child Subscale Scores*

	Behavior Subscale	Affect Subscale	Social Subscale	Developmental Subscale
Affect Subscale	.513**			
Social Subscale	.352**	.394**		
Developmental Subscale	.338**	.227**	.329**	
Attention Seeking Subscale	.434**	.418**	.283**	.258**

Note. \*\*  $p < .01$ .

A Pearson Product Moment correlation was conducted to examine the relationships with the continuous variables of the perceptions of child and perception of father role. As shown in Table 16, the four continuous variables of the perception of child tended to be positively and negatively correlated with the perception of child subscale items. For example, “being a parent is harder than I expected” scores were significantly negatively correlated with Behavior Subscale scores, Affect Subscale scores, Social Subscale scores, and Attention Seeking Subscale scores ( $r$ s ranging from  $-.131$  to  $-.181$ ,  $p$ s  $< .01$ ), indicating that “being a parent is harder than I expected” scores tended to have lower Behavior Subscale scores, Affect Subscale scores, Social Subscale scores, and Attention Seeking Subscale scores. These results indicate that the significant relationships between the continuous variables of perception of role and perception of child items can be used as predictors in the primary analysis with regressions.



Table 16

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations of Perception of Child Subscale Scores with Father's Perception of Role*

	1	2	3	4
Behavior Subscale	-.181**	-.143**	-.142**	-.203**
Affect Subscale	-.156**	-.099*	-.160**	-.149**
Social Subscale	-.164**	-.144**	-.156**	-.162**
Developmental Subscale	-.078	-.148**	-.067	-.113**
Attention Seeking Subscale	-.131**	-.137**	-0.069	-.140**

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ ; 1 = Being a parent is harder than I expected?; 2 = I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent?; 3 = I find taking care of my children more work than pleasure?; 4 = I often feel tired/exhausted from raising a family?

### Research Questions and Subsequent Hypotheses

Analyses included crosstabulations with Pearson chi square analyses, multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs), multiple linear regressions and multinomial logistic regressions.

#### Research Question 1

Are there differences between the quantity of time spent with their children by non-residential fathers based on child support payment status, reason for non-residential status, relationship with child's mother, and income level?

**Hypothesis 1.** It was hypothesized that there would be a difference in the quantity of time fathers spent with their child based on whether child support is

**mandated or not.** To test this hypothesis a crosstabs analysis using Pearson's chi-square and Cramer's  $V$  tests was conducted to examine the frequencies and percentages of nights with child in the past year and days spent with child in last month by child support status. As seen in Table 17, the results revealed that the associations between quantity of time variables and child support status were non-significant, all  $ps$   $ns$ .

**Hypotheses 2 through 4.** It was hypothesized that there will be differences in the quantity of time fathers spent with their child based on their main reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother, and income status.

*Number of nights spent with child in the past year.* A multinomial regression predicting nights spent with child during the past year from reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother and income level was conducted. The reference category for this multinomial regression was fathers who spent more than 60 nights with their child during previous year. The results show that relationship with mother was a significant predictor of spending one to thirty nights per year with child (*Odds Ratio* = .370,  $p = .008$ ), indicating that fathers who were friends with the child's mothers had significantly lower odds of spending one to thirty nights per year with the child.

Furthermore for this multinomial regression, income level was a significant predictor of spending one to thirty nights per year with the child (*Odds Ratio* = 2.28,  $p = .013$ ), indicating that fathers who were earned below the poverty line had significantly greater odds of spending one to thirty nights per year with the child. Furthermore, main reason for non-custodial status was not a significant predictor of nights spent with child.

As also shown in Table 18, main reason for custodial status, relationship with mother, and father’s income did not significantly predict spending between 31 and 60 nights per year with child, all *ps ns*.

Table 17

*Frequencies and Percentages of Nights Spent with Child in Past Year and Days See Child in Past Month by Child Support Status*

	Yes		No		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
	n	%	n	%		
Days See Child Per Month					.92	.632
0 Days per Month	12	54.5	16	42.1		
Between 1 and 9 Days per Month	5	22.7	12	31.6		
10 Days or More per Month	5	22.7	10	26.3		
Nights Spent with Child per Year					1.80	.407
Between 1 and 30 Nights per Year	3	23.1	10	45.5		
Between 31 and 60 Nights per Year	2	15.4	2	9.1		
Over 61 Nights per Year	8	61.5	10	45.5		

**Hypotheses 2 through 4. It was hypothesized that there will be differences in the quantity of time fathers spent with their child based on their main reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother, and income status.**

*Number of Nights Spent with Child in the Past Year.* A multinomial regression predicting nights spent with child during the past year from reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother and income level was conducted. The reference category for this multinomial regression was fathers who spent more than 60 nights with their child during previous year. The results show that relationship with mother was a significant predictor of spending one to thirty nights per year with child (*Odds Ratio* = .370,  $p = .008$ ), indicating that fathers who were friends with the child's mothers had significantly lower odds of spending one to thirty nights per year with the child. Furthermore, income level was a significant predictor of spending one to thirty nights per year with the child (*Odds Ratio* = 2.28,  $p = .013$ ), indicating that fathers who were earned below the poverty line had significantly greater odds of spending one to thirty nights per year with the child. Furthermore, main reason for non-custodial status was not a significant predictor of nights spent with child. As also shown in Table 18, main reason for custodial status, relationship with mother, and father's income did not significantly predict spending between 31 and 60 nights per year with child, all  $ps$  *ns*.

Table 18

*Multinomial Regular Regression Predicting Nights Spent with Child in Past Year from Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	B	SE	Wald	df	p	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
Between 1 and 30 Nights per Year								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	-1.489	.81	3.371		.066	.226	.046	1.106
Parents Broke Up/Parent's Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	-.755.58		1.671		.196	.470	.150	1.478
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	-.195.65		.09	1	.763	.823	.230	2.936
Parent Moved <sup>a</sup> Romantically	-.868.70		1.531		.217	.420	.106	1.664
Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	-1.023	.60	2.911		.088	.360	.111	1.164
Separated or Divorced <sup>b</sup>	-.605.42		2.111		.147	.546	.241	1.237
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-.994.37		7.091		.008	.370	.178	.770
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.824.33		6.101		.013	2.280	1.186	4.384
Between 31 and 60 Nights per Year								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	-.813.91		.80	1	.372	.444	.075	2.637
Parents Broke Up/Parent's Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	-.426.68		.39	1	.531	.653	.172	2.478
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	-.387.78		.25	1	.619	.679	.148	3.121
Parent Moved <sup>a</sup> Romantically	-.405.80		.26	1	.611	.667	.140	3.170
Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	-.383.67		.33	1	.565	.682	.185	2.518
Separated or Divorced <sup>b</sup>	-.079.49		.03	1	.873	.924	.353	2.422
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-.434.45		.93	1	.335	.648	.268	1.565
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.374.39		.93	1	.335	1.454	.679	3.114

Note. Multinomial Regular Regression Model:  $X^2(16) = 19.87, p = .226, \text{pseudo } R^2 = .075$ . <sup>a</sup>Compared to Other Relationship, <sup>b</sup>Compared to No Relationship, <sup>c</sup>Compared to \$11,000 or More

*Days Spent with Child in the Past Month.* A separate multinomial regression predicting days spent with child during the past month from main reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother and father's income was conducted. Regarding reason for non-residential status, the reference category for this multinomial regression was fathers who did not spend any time with their child during the month. As seen in Table 19, the overall model predicting number of days spent with child in the past month was significant,  $\chi^2(16) = 184.59$ ,  $pseudo R^2 = .342$ . Reason for non-residential status was a significant predictor of spending one to nine days per month with child. When compared to fathers who reported other reasons for their non-residential status, parents who broke up or did not get along was a significant predictor of spending one to nine days with the child (*Odds Ratio* = 5.30,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that fathers who broke up or did not get along with the child's mother were over five times more likely to spend between one and nine days per month with their child.

As seen in Table 19, relationship with mother was also a significant predictor of fathers spending one to nine days per month with the child (*Odds Ratio* = 3.71,  $p = .004$ ), indicating that fathers who were romantically involved or married, separated or divorced (*Odds Ratio* = 2.38,  $p = .015$ ), and those fathers who were friends (*Odds Ratio* = 3.34,  $p < .001$ ), all had greater odds of spending one to nine days with child when compared to fathers who had no relationship with mother.

Table 19

*Multinomial Regular Regression of Days Predicting See Child in Past Month from Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	B	SE	Wald	df	p	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
Between 1 and 9 Days per Month								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	-.187	.50	.14	1	.706	.829	.313	2.197
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>u</sup>	1.668	.42	15.74	1	.000	5.302	2.326	12.087
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	.772	.47	2.71	1	.099	2.163	.864	5.417
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	-.029	.53	.00	1	.957	.971	.343	2.751
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	1.313	.46	8.24	1	.004	3.716	1.517	9.102
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	.866	.36	5.88	1	.015	2.377	1.181	4.787
Friends <sup>b</sup>	1.205	.30	15.79	1	.000	3.337	1.842	6.045
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	-.443	.28	2.57	1	.109	.642	.374	1.103
10 Days or More per Month								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	-1.216	.59	4.26	1	.039	.296	.093	.941
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	1.949	.45	18.69	1	.000	7.020	2.902	16.985
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	.828	.50	2.74	1	.098	2.289	.859	6.104
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	-.142	.55	.07	1	.795	.868	.298	2.527
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	2.668	.51	27.20	1	.000	14.412	5.287	39.284
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	1.591	.39	16.30	1	.000	4.909	2.267	10.629
Friends <sup>b</sup>	2.577	.34	56.23	1	.000	13.153	6.707	25.792
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	-.936	.30	10.07	1	.002	.392	.220	.699

*Note.* Multinomial Regular Regression Model:  $X^2(16) = 184.59, p < .001, \text{pseudo } R^2 = .342$ . <sup>a</sup>Compared to Other Relationship, <sup>b</sup>Compared to No Relationship, <sup>c</sup>Compared to \$11,000 or More

As also seen in Table 19, reason for non-residential status was a significant predictor of fathers spending ten days or more with child per month (*Odds Ratio* = .296,  $p = .039$ ), indicating that fathers who were incarcerated, to fathers who reported their non-custodial status as other than incarceration, father lost custody/court removal, one parent moved, and parents do not get along had significantly lower odds of spending ten days or more per month with child. Fathers who broke up or do not get along with mother of child is a significant predictor of fathers spending ten or more days with child (*Odds Ratio* = 7.02,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that these fathers had significantly greater odds of spending ten days or more per month with child compared to fathers who reported their non-custodial status as other than incarceration, lost custody/court removal, one parent moved, or parents broke up or do not get along.

As also seen in Table 19, relationship with mother was a significant predictor of fathers spending ten days or more with child per month (*Odds Ratio* = 14.41,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that fathers who were romantically involved or married to mother of child, separated or divorced was a significant predictor of fathers spending ten days or more with child per month (*Odds Ratio* = 4.91,  $p < .001$ ), and fathers who were friends with mother was also a significant predictor of fathers spending ten days or more with child per month (*Odds Ratio* = 13.15,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that they all had significantly greater odds of spending ten days or more with child per month compared to fathers who had no relationship with mother. As seen in Table 19, income levels were a significant predictor of fathers spending ten days or more with child per month (*Odds Ratio* = .392.



$p = .002$ ), indicating that fathers who had an income below the poverty line had significantly lower odds of spending ten days or more with child, compared to fathers who had an income above the poverty line.

## **Research Question 2**

Are there differences between the quality of time fathers spent with their child of non-residential fathers, measured by types of activities engaged in when together based on child support status, main reason for non-residential status, relationship with child's mother, and income level?

**Hypothesis 1. It was hypothesized that there will be a difference in quality of time of the father-child relationship of non-residential fathers based on whether child support is mandated or not.** To test this hypothesis, a crosstabs analysis using Pearson's chi-square and Cramer's  $V$  tests was conducted to examine the frequencies and percentages of the eight categorical quality of time items (e.g., sing songs, read stories, play inside with child, go to outside events, watch television or videos, tell stories to child, tell child he or she is appreciated) and child support agreement. As seen in Table 20, the associations between the categorical items of quality of time (e.g., sing songs/nursery rhymes, read stories to child, play inside with child, etc.) and child support agreement were non significant, all  $ps$   $ns$ .

Table 20

*Frequencies and Percentages of Quality of Time Variables by Child Support Status*

	Yes		No		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
	n	%	n	%		
Sing Songs to Child					1.31	.521
0 Days per Week	4	40.0	8	38.1		
Once a Week	2	20.0	8	38.1		
Two or More Times per Week	4	40.0	5	23.8		
Read Stories to Child					.62	.734
0 Days per Week	2	20.0	7	33.3		
Once a Week	2	20.0	4	19.0		
Two or more Time per Week	6	60.0	10	47.6		
Tell Stories to Child					.45	.800
0 Days per Week	3	30.0	7	33.3		
Once a Week	2	20.0	6	28.6		
Two or more Time per Week	5	50.0	8	38.1		
Play Inside with Child					1.10	.576
0 Days per Week	0	0.0	2	9.5		
Once a Week	2	20.0	3	14.3		
Two or more Time per Week	8	80.0	16	76.2		
Tell Child He/She is Appreciated					.15	.929
0 Days per Week	1	10.0	3	15.0		
Once a Week	1	10.0	2	10.0		
Two or more Time per Week	8	80.0	15	75.0		
Play Outside with Child					3.54	.170
0 Days per Week	0	0.0	5	23.8		
Once a Week	4	40.0	4	19.0		
Two or more Time per Week	6	60.0	12	57.1		
Watch TV or Videos with Child					2.78	.249
0 Days per Week	0	0.0	4	19.0		
Once a Week	3	30.0	3	14.3		
Two or More Times per Week	7	70.0	14	66.7		

Table 20, continued

	n	Yes %	n	No %	$\chi^2$	p
Take Child to Outside Events					1.39	.500
0 Days per Week	1	10.0	6	28.6		
Once a Week	4	40.0	6	28.6		
Two or More Times per Week	5	50.0	9	42.9		

**Hypothesis 2 through 4.** It was hypothesized that there will be a difference in the quality of time spent by fathers engaged in the nine activities with child based on reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother, and income level. To test these hypotheses, multinomial regressions were conducted to predict the quality of time spent with child engaged in activities from reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother and income level.

*Sing songs/nursery rhymes.* As seen in Table 21, a multinomial regression was predicting the quality of time a father spends engaged in singing songs or nursery rhymes to child from reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother, and income level was conducted. The reference category for this multinomial regression was fathers who spent two times or more per week engaged in singing songs or nursery rhymes to child. The overall model predicting quality of time spent singing songs to child was not significant, therefore non-residential status, relationship with mother and income level did not affect a father’s quality of time for singing songs or nursery rhymes to his child in this sample.

Table 21

*Multinomial Regular Regression Predicting of Sing Songs with Child from Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	B	SE	Wald	df	p	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
0 Days per Week								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	.066	.81	.01	1	.936	1.068	.218	5.238
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	-.198	.65	.09	1	.761	.821	.230	2.932
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	.181	.72	.06	1	.802	1.198	.291	4.942
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	.314	.82	.15	1	.702	1.369	.273	6.865
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	.418	.58	.52	1	.469	1.519	.490	4.712
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	.589	.46	1.65	1	.200	1.802	.733	4.433
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-.112	.42	.07	1	.788	.894	.396	2.021
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.407	.35	1.37	1	.241	1.503	.761	2.970
Once a Week								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	-1.067	.89	1.45	1	.229	.344	.060	1.960
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	-.484	.58	.70	1	.402	.616	.199	1.911
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	.184	.64	.08	1	.774	1.202	.342	4.230
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	.595	.72	.69	1	.406	1.813	.446	7.370
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	.114	.61	.04	1	.851	1.120	.342	3.672
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	-.165	.48	.12	1	.732	.848	.329	2.183
Friends <sup>b</sup>	.046	.39	.01	1	.907	1.047	.485	2.261
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.059	.35	.03	1	.864	1.061	.539	2.088

Note. Multinomial Regular Regression Model:  $X^2(16) = 17.51, p = .353, \text{pseudo } R^2 = .066$ . <sup>a</sup>Compared to Other Relationship, <sup>b</sup>Compared to No Relationship, <sup>c</sup>Compared to \$11,000 or More

***Read stories to child.*** A multinomial regression predicting the quality of time a father spend engaged in reading stories to child from non-residential status, relationship with mother, and income level was conducted. The reference category for this multinomial regression was fathers who spent two times or more per week engaged in reading stories to child. Results revealed that relationship with mother was a significant predictor of fathers spending no time reading to child. This indicates that fathers who were friends with mother of child had significantly lower odds of spending no days per week reading stories to child, compared to fathers who did not have a relationship with the child's mother. Please see Table 22 for further explanation of results.

***Tell stories to child.*** A separate multinomial regression predicting tells stories to child from reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother and income level were conducted. The reference category for this multinomial regression was fathers who spent two times or more per week telling stories to child. As seen in Table 23, the overall model predicting quality of time spent telling stories to child was not significant,  $\chi^2(16) = 16.14$ ,  $p = .443$ .  $pseudo R^2 = .063$ . Furthermore, there were no significant predictors of telling stories to child any days per week as well as telling stories to child one day per week, all  $ps$  *ns*.

Table 22

*Multinomial Regular Regression Predicting of Read Stories to Child from Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	B	SE	Wald	df	p	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
0 Days per Week								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	.305	.85	.13	1	.720	1.356	.256	7.187
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	-.442	.65	.47	1	.493	.643	.182	2.275
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	-.413	.74	.31	1	.575	.661	.156	2.807
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	.382	.79	.24	1	.627	1.465	.314	6.828
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	-.609	.63	.93	1	.335	.544	.158	1.876
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	-.169	.49	.12	1	.729	.845	.325	2.197
Friends <sup>b</sup>	1.032	.45	5.28	1	.022	.356	.148	.859
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.078	.40	.04	1	.847	1.081	.489	2.387
Once a Week								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	.660	.87	.58	1	.446	1.934	.354	10.558
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	.667	.68	.96	1	.328	1.948	.513	7.406
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	.614	.74	.69	1	.406	1.847	.434	7.860
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	.797	.81	.97	1	.326	2.220	.452	10.897
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	-.626	.58	1.18	1	.277	.535	.173	1.651
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	-.552	.45	1.51	1	.219	.576	.239	1.389
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-.523	.38	1.91	1	.167	.593	.283	1.245
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.201	.33	.38	1	.537	1.222	.647	2.310

*Note.* Multinomial Regular Regression Model:  $X^2(16) = 12.77, p = .690, \text{pseudo } R^2 = .050$ . <sup>a</sup>Compared to Other Relationship, <sup>b</sup>Compared to No Relationship, <sup>c</sup>Compared to \$11,000 or More

Table 23

*Multinomial Regular Regression Predicting of Tell Stories to Child from Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	B	SE	Wald	df		Odds p Ratio	Lower	Upper
0 Days per Week								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	.305	.85	.13	1	.720	1.356	.256	7.187
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	-.442	.65	.47	1	.493	.643	.182	2.275
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	-.413	.74	.31	1	.575	.661	.156	2.807
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	.382	.79	.24	1	.627	1.465	.314	6.828
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	-.609	.63	.93	1	.335	.544	.158	1.876
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	-.169	.49	.12	1	.729	.845	.325	2.197
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-1.032	.45	5.28	1	.022	.356	.148	.859
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.078	.40	.04	1	.847	1.081	.489	2.387
Once a Week								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	.660	.87	.58	1	.446	1.934	.354	10.558
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	.667	.68	.96	1	.328	1.948	.513	7.406
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	.614	.74	.69	1	.406	1.847	.434	7.860
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	.797	.81	.97	1	.326	2.220	.452	10.897
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	-.626	.58	1.18	1	.277	.535	.173	1.651
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	-.552	.45	1.51	1	.219	.576	.239	1.389
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-.523	.38	1.91	1	.167	.593	.283	1.245
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.201	.33	.38	1	.537	1.222	.647	2.310

Note. Multinomial Regular Regression Model:  $X^2(16) = 16.14, p = .443, \text{pseudo } R^2 = .063$ . <sup>a</sup>Compared to Other Relationship, <sup>b</sup>Compared to No Relationship, <sup>c</sup>Compared to \$11,000 or More

***Play inside with child.*** A separate multinomial regression predicting play inside with child from main reason for non-custodial status and father's income from past year were conducted. The predictor "relationship with mother" was excluded from this multinomial regression analysis due to the small father sample. The reference category for this multinomial regression was fathers who spent two times or more per week playing inside with child. Results revealed that the overall model predicting quality of time spent playing inside with child was not significant leaving reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother, and income level were no significant predictors of playing outside with child any days per week as well as one day per week. Please refer to Table 24 to more details.

***Tell child he or she is appreciated.*** A multinomial regression predicting tells child he or she is appreciated from reason for non-residential status and income level were conducted. The reference category for this multinomial regression was fathers who spent two times or more per week participating in singing songs to child. The sample size was too small for the relationship with mother variable; therefore, relationship with mother was excluded from this multinomial regression. The results show the overall model predicting quality of time spent tell child he/she is appreciated was non-significant, and reason for non-residential status and income level were not significant predictors of tell stories to child no times per week and no significant predictors once a week, all *ps ns*. Please review Table 25 for details of the results.



Table 24

*Multinomial Regular Regression Predicting of Play Inside with Child from Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	B	SE	Wald	p	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
0 Days per Week							
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	-1.076	1.33	.65	.420	.341	.025	4.649
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	-1.149	.85	1.83	.176	.317	.060	1.676
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	-.972	1.05	.86	.354	.378	.048	2.951
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	-1.151	1.27	.82	.367	.316	.026	3.846
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.044	.67	.00	.948	1.045	.283	3.861
Once a Week							
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	-.410	1.09	.14	.707	.664	.078	5.645
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	-.320	.80	.16	.690	.726	.151	3.490
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	.280	.86	.11	.745	1.324	.245	7.157
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	-.483	1.06	.19	.662	.629	.079	5.009
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.091	.46	.04	.842	1.095	.448	2.676

*Note.* Multinomial Regular Regression Model:  $\chi^2(10) = 3.21, p = .976, pseudo R^2 = .017$   
a= comparison group is Other Reason for Non-custodial Status; b = comparison group is \$11,000 or higher. It should be noted that relationship with mother was excluded from this analysis because of the low sample size of participants in the romantically involved group.

Table 25

*Multinomial Regular Regression Predicting of Tell Child He or She is Appreciated  
from Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	B	SE	Wald	p	Odds Ratio	C.I.	
						Lower	Upper
0 Days per Week							
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	.286	.90	.10	.751	1.331	.229	7.742
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	-.567	.69	.68	.411	.567	.147	2.192
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	-.326	.80	.17	.685	.722	.149	3.488
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	-.041	.85	.00	.962	.960	.182	5.059
Below \$11,000 <sup>b</sup>	-.440	.47	.86	.353	.644	.255	1.630
Once a Week							
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	-.316	1.09	.08	.772	.729	.086	6.163
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	.275	.79	.12	.727	1.317	.281	6.181
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	.869	.84	1.08	.300	2.384	.462	12.305
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	-.390	1.06	.13	.714	.667	.084	5.450
Below \$11,000 <sup>b</sup>	.082	.39	.05	.832	1.085	.510	2.310

*Note.* Multinomial Regular Regression Model:  $\chi^2(10) = 7.22, p = .705, \text{pseudo } R^2 = .031$   
 a= comparison group is Other Reason for Non-custodial Status; b = comparison group is \$11,000 or higher. It should be noted that relationship with mother was excluded from this analysis because of the low sample size of participants in the romantically involved group.

***Playing outside with child.*** A multinomial regression predicting play outside with child from reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother and income level were conducted. The reference category for this multinomial regression was fathers who spent two times or more per week playing outside with child. Results revealed reason for non-residential status was a significant predictor of fathers playing outside with child indicating that fathers who had broke up or did not get along with mother of child had significantly lower odds of spending time playing outside with child compared to fathers who did not have a relationship with the child's mother. See Table 26 for breakdown of the results.

Table 26

*Multinomial Regular Regression Predicting Play Outside with Child from Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	B	SE	Wald	df	p	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
0 Days per Week								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	-.245	.83	.09	1	.767	.782	.155	3.953
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	-1.792	.65	7.67	1	.006	.167	.047	.592
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	-.818	.70	1.39	1	.239	.441	.113	1.723
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	-1.313	.93	1.97	1	.160	.269	.043	1.680
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	-.190	.71	.07	1	.787	.827	.207	3.301
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	.109	.60	.03	1	.856	1.115	.344	3.618
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-.678	.54	1.61	1	.205	.508	.178	1.448
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.094	.48	.04	1	.844	1.099	.429	2.811

Table 26, continued

	B	SE	Wald	df	p	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
Once a Week								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	.295	1.04	.08	1	.776	1.343	.176	10.258
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	.479	.80	.36	1	.548	1.615	.338	7.708
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	.368	.87	.18	1	.671	1.445	.264	7.913
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	.779	.91	.73	1	.392	2.180	.366	12.974
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	-.621	.66	.88	1	.347	.537	.147	1.962
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	-.415	.48	.76	1	.384	.660	.259	1.682
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-.335	.40	.70	1	.404	.715	.325	1.573
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	-.026	.36	.01	1	.942	.974	.479	1.983

*Note.* Multinomial Regular Regression Model:  $X^2(16) = 17.75, p = .339, \text{pseudo } R^2 = .074$ . <sup>a</sup>Compared to Other Relationship, <sup>b</sup>Compared to No Relationship, <sup>c</sup>Compared to \$11,000 or More

**Take child to outside events.** A multinomial regression predicting take child to outside events from reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother and income level were conducted. The reference category for this multinomial regression was fathers who spent two times or more per week taking child to outside events. Results show the overall model predicting quality of time spent taking child to outside events was significant. Reason for non-residential status was a significant predictor of fathers taking child to outside events at no time during the week (*Odds Ratio* = .217,  $p = .031$ ), indicating that fathers who broke up or do not get along with child's mother, compared to fathers who did not have custodial status for Other reasons for non-custodial status had

significantly lower odds of not taking his child to an outdoor event. Additionally, relationship with mother was a significant predictor fathers take child to outside events (*Odds Ratio* = .724,  $p = .036$ ). Fathers who were friends with the child's mother, compared to having no relationship with the child's mother, had significantly lower odds of taking the child to an outdoor event. See Table 27 for further explanation.

Table 27

*Multinomial Regular Regression Predicting Take Child to Outdoor Event from Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	B	SE	Wald	df	p	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	Lower	Upper
0 Days per Week								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	.168	.85	.04	1	.844	1.182	.224	6.246
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	-1.530	.71	4.68	1	.031	.217	.054	.866
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	-.323	.74	.19	1	.661	.724	.171	3.067
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	-.810	.85	.91	1	.341	.445	.084	2.353
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	-.724	.72	1.02	1	.312	.485	.119	1.973
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	-.103	.57	.03	1	.858	.902	.293	2.776
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-1.000	.48	4.40	1	.036	.368	.144	.937
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.729	.43	2.93	1	.087	2.073	.900	4.778

Table 27 continued

	B	SE	Wald	df	p	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
Once a Week								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	-.998	.86	1.35	1	.245	.369	.068	1.984
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	-.347	.57	.37	1	.546	.707	.229	2.177
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	-.658	.66	1.00	1	.317	.518	.143	1.880
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	-1.248	.78	2.53	1	.112	.287	.062	1.335
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	.654	.55	1.40	1	.236	1.923	.652	5.672
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	.429	.43	1.00	1	.319	1.535	.661	3.566
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-.237	.39	.37	1	.541	.789	.369	1.687
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.057	.33	.03	1	.863	1.059	.554	2.025

Note. Multinomial Regular Regression Model:  $\chi^2(16) = 37.51, p = .002, \text{pseudo } R^2 = .142$ . <sup>a</sup>Compared to Other Relationship, <sup>b</sup>Compared to No Relationship, <sup>c</sup>Compared to \$11,000 or More

**Watch TV/videos with child.** A multinomial regression predicting watch TV or videos with child from main reason for non-custodial status, relationship with mother and father's income from past year were conducted. The reference category for this multinomial regression was fathers who spent two times or more watching TV or videos with child. As seen in Table 28, the overall model predicting quality of time spent watching TV or videos with child was a significant,  $\chi^2(16) = 35.46, p = .003, \text{pseudo } R^2 = .148$ . Main reason for non-custodial status was a significant predictor of fathers who spent time watching TV or videos with child (*Odds Ratio* = .154,  $p = .009$ ). Fathers who

did not have custodial status of their child because they had broken up with or did not get along with the child's mother had significantly lower odds of not spending time with the child, compared to those who had other reason for non-custodial status. There were no other significant predictors of fathers not spending any time during the week watching television or a video with their child, all *ps ns*. As seen in Table 28, relationship with mother, main reason for non-custodial status, and father's income from past year were not significant predictors of fathers watching TV or videos with child once a week, all *ps ns*.

Table 28

*Multinomial Regular Regression Predicting Watch TV or Videos with Child from Reason For Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	B	SE	Wald	df	p	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
0 Days per Week								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	-.236	.85	.08	1	.782	.790	.148	4.206
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	-1.868	.71	6.87	1	.009	.154	.038	.624
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	-1.388	.85	2.65	1	.104	.250	.047	1.328
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	-.369	.79	.22	1	.640	.691	.147	3.245
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	-.888	.83	1.14	1	.285	.412	.081	2.095
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	-.168	.73	.05	1	.818	.845	.201	3.550
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-.526	.56	.87	1	.350	.591	.196	1.780
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.724	.49	2.16	1	.141	2.062	.786	5.407

Table 28, continued

	B	SE	Wald	df	p	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
Once a Week								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	-1.153	1.26	.83	1	.362	.316	.026	3.764
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	-.288	.69	.17	1	.678	.750	.192	2.921
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	.199	.75	.07	1	.790	1.220	.281	5.292
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup> Romantically	-1.589	1.22	1.69	1	.194	.204	.019	2.243
Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	-1.775	1.09	2.63	1	.105	.170	.020	1.448
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	.379	.47	.66	1	.417	1.461	.585	3.647
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-.339	.44	.61	1	.435	.712	.304	1.671
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	-.013	.40	.00	1	.975	.988	.449	2.174

Note. Multinomial Regular Regression Model:  $X^2(16) = 35.46, p = .003, \text{pseudo } R^2 = .148$ . <sup>a</sup>Compared to Other Relationship, <sup>b</sup>Compared to No Relationship, <sup>c</sup>Compared to \$11,000 or More

### Research Question 3

Are there differences in father's perception of their child based on child support status, main reason for non-residential status, relationship with child's mother, and income level?

**Hypothesis 1. It was hypothesized that there would be a difference in perceptions of their child between fathers based on whether child support is mandated or not.** To test this hypothesis, a Multivariate of Analysis (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of legal agreement on the individual father's perception of child subscale items. It should be noted that for this analysis marginally significantly



results will be discussed due to low sample size ( $n = 28$ ). As seen in Table 29, results revealed that fathers without mandated child support had significant effects on the Affect Subscale Scores  $F(5, 22) = 6.24, p = .019, \eta^2 = .194$  and Attention Seeking Subscale Scores  $F(5, 22) = 5.36, p = .029, \eta^2 = .171$ . These results indicate that fathers without mandated child support had higher agreement scores with the behaviors associated with the Affect and Attention Seeking Subscales. For example, fathers in this sample were likely to report their child as being too dependent or clingy to adults.

Table 29

*Means and Standard Deviations of Father Perception of Child's Subscales by Child Support Status*

	n	Mean	SD	F	p
Behavior Subscale				.83	.370
Yes	10	8.50	2.07		
No	18	9.39	2.66		
Affect Subscale				6.24	.019
Yes	10	5.20	1.23		
No	18	6.67	1.61		
Social Subscale				1.90	.180
Yes	10	3.30	.48		
No	18	3.72	.89		
Developmental Subscale				1.02	.321
Yes	10	2.10	.32		
No	18	2.33	.69		
Attention Seeking Subscale				5.36	.029
Yes	10	3.90	.99		
No	18	4.78	.94		

*Note.* Multivariate effect:  $F(5, 22) = 2.37, p = .073, \eta^2 = .350$

**Hypothesis 2. It was hypothesized that there will be a difference in perceptions of child between fathers based on reason for non-residential status.** To test this hypothesis, a Multivariate of Analysis (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of main reason for non-custodial status and fathers' perception of child subscales. As seen in Table 30, the main reason for non-custodial status had a marginally significant overall effect on fathers' perception of child subscales,  $F(20, 1182) = 1.51, p = .069, \eta^2 = .021$ . There were no univariate effects on the individual subscales, all  $ps$  *ns*.

Table 30

*Means and Standard Deviations of Father Perception of Child's Subscales by Reason for Non-Residential Status*

	n	Mean	SD	F	p
Behavior Subscale				1.45	.217
Father Incarcerated	30	9.70	2.58		
Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along	230	8.83	2.18		
Lost Custody / Court Removal	49	8.45	2.33		
One Parent Moved	27	8.96	2.70		
Other	29	8.66	2.70		
Affect Subscale				1.71	.148
Father Incarcerated	30	6.10	2.02		
Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along	230	5.82	1.61		
Lost Custody / Court Removal	49	5.47	1.26		
One Parent Moved	27	5.19	1.08		
Other	29	5.66	1.93		

Table 30, continued

	n	Mean	SD	F	p
Social Subscale				1.22	.301
Father Incarcerated	30	3.33	.55		
Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along	230	3.38	.80		
Lost Custody / Court Removal	49	3.35	.69		
One Parent Moved	27	3.63	1.42		
Other	29	3.66	1.14		
Developmental Subscale				.62	.648
Father Incarcerated	30	2.43	.57		
Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along	230	2.33	.71		
Lost Custody / Court Removal	49	2.37	.83		
One Parent Moved	27	2.15	.53		
Other	29	2.31	.85		
Attention Seeking Subscale				1.51	.199
Father Incarcerated	30	4.77	1.04		
Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along	230	4.43	1.00		
Lost Custody / Court Removal	49	4.43	1.00		
One Parent Moved	27	4.15	.77		
Other	29	4.31	1.07		

Note. Multivariate effect:  $F(20, 1182) = 1.51, p = .069, \eta^2 = .021$

**Hypothesis 3. It was hypothesized that there will be a difference in perceptions of child between fathers based on their relationship with mother.** a Multivariate of Analysis (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of relationship with mother and father's perception of child subscales. As seen in Table 31, the relationship with mother did not have an overall effect on father's perception of child subscales,  $F(15, 1530) = .99, p = .464, \eta^2 = .009$ . A deeper examination revealed, however, that relationship with mother had a significant effect on Developmental Subscale. Fathers who were either separated or divorced are in higher agreement ( $M = 2.47, SD = .76$ ) than those that are friends with mother of child ( $M = 2.24, SD = .62$ ).

**Hypothesis 4. It was hypothesized that there will be a difference in perceptions of their child between fathers based on their income level.** To test this hypothesis, a Multivariate of Analysis (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of father's income level and father's perception of child subscales. The results revealed that although there was no significant overall effect, there were significant effects of a father's income level on the perception of child Affect and Behavioral Subscale scores. Fathers with an income below \$11,000 had higher agreement scores within these subscales, or they were more likely to perceive their children as having emotional or behavioral problems. Based on the Behavior and Affect Subscales, fathers perceived their children as being too dependent or clingy, hyperactive, etc. Please refer to Table 32, to view descriptive information about these results.

Table 31

*Means and Standard Deviations of Father Perception of Child's Subscales by Relationship with Mother*

	n	Mean	SD	F	p
Behavior Subscale				.29	.829
Romantic / Married	65	8.98	2.63		
Separated / Divorced	95	8.95	2.53		
Friends	297	8.75	2.41		
No Relationship	105	8.74	2.35		
Affect Subscale				.80	.492
Romantic / Married	65	5.80	1.79		
Separated / Divorced	95	5.86	1.78		
Friends	297	5.63	1.53		
No Relationship	105	5.84	1.68		
Social Subscale				.48	.695
Romantic / Married	65	3.40	.72		
Separated / Divorced	95	3.46	.94		
Friends	297	3.38	.85		
No Relationship	105	3.49	.98		
Developmental Subscale				3.17	.024
Romantic / Married	65	2.37 <sup>ab</sup>	.74		
Separated / Divorced	95	2.47 <sup>a</sup>	.76		
Friends	297	2.24 <sup>b</sup>	.62		
No Relationship	105	2.36 <sup>ab</sup>	.83		
Attention Seeking Subscale				.36	.783
Romantic / Married	65	4.51	.87		
Separated / Divorced	95	4.41	1.10		
Friends	297	4.42	1.03		
No Relationship	105	4.34	.98		

*Note.* Multivariate effect:  $F(15, 1530) = .99, p = .464, \eta^2 = .009$ . Means with different superscripts are significantly different,  $p < .05$ .

Table 32

*Means and Standard Deviations of Father Perception of Child's Subscales by*

*Father Income*

	n	Mean	SD	F	p
Behavior Subscale				6.33	.012
Below \$11,000	129	9.29	2.66		
\$11,000 or More	307	8.65	2.33		
Affect Subscale				4.30	.039
Below \$11,000	129	5.95	1.67		
\$11,000 or More	307	5.60	1.54		
Social Subscale				2.36	.125
Below \$11,000	129	3.51	1.05		
\$11,000 or More	307	3.36	.85		
Developmental Subscale				.31	.579
Below \$11,000	129	2.35	.77		
\$11,000 or More	307	2.31	.72		
Attention Seeking Subscale				.38	.536
Below \$11,000	129	4.45	1.05		
\$11,000 or More	307	4.38	.98		

*Note.* Multivariate effect:  $F(5, 430) = 1.69, p = .137, \eta^2 = .019$

**Additional analysis.** Multiple linear regressions were conducted based on relationships between Relationship with Mother, Reason for Non-Residential Status, and Income Level. As seen in Table 33, the overall model predicting father's perception of child Behavior Subscale Scores from main reason for non-custodial status, relationship with mother, and father's income were not significant  $F(8, 437) = 1.56, p = .136$ ,

adjusted  $R^2 = .010$ . Furthermore, there were no significant predictors of father's perception of child item Behavior Subscale Scores, all *ps ns*.

Table 33

*Multiple Linear Regular Regression Predicting Behavior Subscale Scores from Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	Unstandardized B	SE	Beta	t	p
Incarceration <sup>a</sup>	1.095	.56	.099	1.96	.050
Lost Custody <sup>a</sup>	-.072	.39	-.009	-.18	.854
Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	.038	.51	.004	.08	.940
Other <sup>a</sup>	-.403	.59	-.033	-.68	.495
Romantic or Married <sup>b</sup>	-.078	.44	-.010	-.18	.860
Separated or Divorced <sup>b</sup>	.371	.39	.057	.96	.336
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-.046	.31	-.009	-.15	.883
Below \$11,000 per year <sup>c</sup>	.508	.27	.095	1.90	.059

*Note.* Multiple Linear Regression Model:  $F(8, 437) = 1.56, p = .136, R^2 = .010$ . a = compared to parents' broke up or do not get along, b = no relationship with mother; c = compared to \$11,000 per year

A separate multiple linear regression was conducted to predict affect subscale scores from main reason for non-custodial status, relationship with mother, and income levels. As seen in Table 34, the overall model predicting father's perception of child item Affect Subscale Scores from main reason for non-custodial status, relationship with

mother, and father's income were not significant  $F(8, 434) = 1.52, p = .148$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .009$ . However, fathers who had an income level below the poverty line is a significant predictor of father's perception of child's emotional state ( $Beta = .108, p = .031$ ), indicating that fathers who had an income level below the poverty line are significantly more likely to perceive their child's emotional state in a negative way compared to fathers who had an income level above the poverty line. There were, however, no significant predictors of father's perception of child item Affect Subscale Scores, all  $ps$  *ns*.

Table 34

*Multiple Linear Regular Regression Predicting Affect Subscale Scores from Reason for Non-Residential Status. Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	Unstandardized				
	B	SE	Beta	t	p
Incarceration <sup>a</sup>	.080	.37	.011	.22	.830
Lost Custody <sup>a</sup>	-.135	.25	-.026	-.54	.589
Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	-.649	.35	-.089	-1.84	.067
Other <sup>a</sup>	-.394	.40	-.048	-1.00	.320
Romantic or Married <sup>b</sup>	-.205	.29	-.041	-.72	.475
Separated or Divorced <sup>b</sup>	-.020	.25	-.005	-.08	.938
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-.278	.20	-.087	-1.36	.175
Below \$11,000 per year <sup>c</sup>	.379	.18	.108	2.16	.031

*Note.* Multiple Linear Regression Model:  $F(8, 434) = 1.52, p = .148, R^2 = .009$ . a = compared to parents' broke up or do not get along, b = no relationship with mother; c = compared to \$11,000 per year



A separate multiple linear regression predicting Social subscale scores from relationship with mother, reason for non-residential status, and father's income levels was conducted. As seen in Table 35, the overall model predicting father's perception of child item Social Subscale Scores from main reason for non-custodial status, relationship with mother, and father's income were not significant  $F(8, 437) = .989, p = .444$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .000$ .

Table 35

*Multiple Linear Regular Regression Predicting Social Subscale Scores from Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	Unstandardized				
	B	SE	Beta	t	p
Incarceration <sup>a</sup>	-.207	.21	-.050	-.99	.322
Lost Custody <sup>a</sup>	-.044	.15	-.015	-.31	.760
Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	.272	.19	.069	1.44	.151
Other <sup>a</sup>	.000	.22	.000	.00	.999
Romantic or Married <sup>b</sup>	-.060	.16	-.021	-.37	.714
Separated or Divorced <sup>b</sup>	.066	.14	.027	.46	.648
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-.114	.12	-.063	-.98	.328
Below \$11,000 per year <sup>c</sup>	.183	.10	.092	1.83	.068

*Note.* Multiple Linear Regression Model:  $F(8, 437) = .99, p = .444, R^2 = .000$  a = compared to parents' broke up or do not get along, b = no relationship with mother; c = compared to \$11,000 per year

A separate multiple linear regression predicting developmental subscale scores from relationship with mother, main reason for non-custodial status, and father's income levels. As seen in Table 36, the overall model predicting father's perception of child item Development Subscale Scores from main reason for non-custodial status, relationship with mother, and father's income were not significant  $F(8, 440) = 1.46, p = .171$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .008$ . Furthermore, there were no significant predictors of father's perception of child item Development Subscale Scores, all  $ps$  *ns*.

Table 36

*Multiple Linear Regular Regression Predicting Developmental Subscale Scores from Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	Unstandardized				
	B	SE	Beta	t	p
Incarceration <sup>a</sup>	.051	.17	.016	.31	.758
Lost Custody <sup>a</sup>	.011	.11	.005	.10	.921
Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	-.089	.15	-.028	-.59	.554
Other <sup>a</sup>	-.001	.18	.000	-.01	.994
Romantic or Married <sup>b</sup>	.039	.13	.017	.30	.766
Separated or Divorced <sup>b</sup>	.080	.11	.041	.70	.486
Friends <sup>b</sup>	-.177	.09	-.122	-1.92	.056
Below \$11,000 per year <sup>c</sup>	.068	.08	.043	.85	.395

*Note.* Multiple Linear Regression Model:  $F(8, 440) = 1.46, p = .171, R^2 = .008$ . a = compared to parents' broke up or do not get along, b = no relationship with mother: c = compared to \$11,000 per year

Finally, a separate multiple linear regression predicting social subscale scores from relationship with mother, main reason for non-custodial status, and father's income levels. As seen in Table 37, the overall model predicting father's perception of child item Attention Seeking Subscale Scores from main reason for non-custodial status, relationship with mother, and father's income were not significant  $F(8, 437) = 1.45, p = .172$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .008$ . Furthermore, there were no significant predictors of father's perception of child item Attention Seeking Subscale Scores all *ps ns*.

Table 37

*Multiple Linear Regular Regression Predicting Attention Seeking Subscale Scores from Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother and Father's Income*

	Unstandardized		Beta	t	p
	B	SE			
Incarceration <sup>a</sup>	.407	.23	.090	1.78	.076
Lost Custody <sup>a</sup>	.141	.16	.042	.89	.374
Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	-.327	.21	-.075	-1.57	.116
Other <sup>a</sup>	-.393	.24	-.078	-1.63	.104
Romantic or Married <sup>b</sup>	.155	.18	.050	.87	.387
Separated or Divorced <sup>b</sup>	.057	.16	.022	.36	.719
Friends <sup>b</sup>	.114	.13	.057	.89	.375
Below \$11,000 per year <sup>c</sup>	.005	.11	.002	.05	.961

*Note.* Multiple Linear Regression Model:  $F(8, 437) = 1.45, p = .172, R^2 = .008$ . a = compared to parents' broke up or do not get along, b = no relationship with mother; c = compared to \$11,000 per year

#### Research Question 4

Are there differences between father perceptions of their father role based on their child support payment status, main reason for non-residential status, relationship with child's mother, and income level?

**Hypothesis 1. It was hypothesized that there will be a difference between fathers' perception of their role based on whether child support is mandated or not.**

To test this hypothesis, a Crosstabulation Analysis using Pearson's chi-square and Cramer's  $V$  tests was conducted to examine the frequencies and percentages of type of father by child support agreement. As seen in Table 38, the associations between type of father (i.e. excellent, very good and good) and child support agreement variables were non-significant,  $X^2 (3) = .82, p = .844$ , Cramer's  $V = .119$ .

Table 38

*Frequencies and Percentages of Type of Father by Child Support Status*

	Yes		No		$\chi^2$	$p$
	n		n			
What kind of father do you think you are?					.82	.844
Excellent	7	35.0	10	26.3		
Very good	3	15.0	9	23.7		
Good	7	35.0	13	34.2		
Not very good	3	15.0	6	15.8		

A multivariate of analysis (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of legal agreement on the individual father's perception of role. It should be noted that for this analysis marginally significant results will be discussed due to low sample size ( $n = 31$ ). As seen in Table 39, child support agreement did not have a significant overall effect on father's perception of role  $F(4, 26) = .81, p = .525, \eta^2 = .112$ . Furthermore, child support agreement did not have a significant effect on any of the father perception of role items all  $ps, ns$ .

Table 39

*Means and Standard Deviations of Father's Perceptions of Role by Child Support*

*Status*

	n	Mean	SD	F	p
Being a parent is harder than I expected?				1.18	.286
Yes	10	2.40	1.27		
No	21	1.95	.97		
I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent?				.01	.942
Yes	10	3.60	.70		
No	21	3.62	.67		
I find taking care of my children more work than pleasure?				.69	.413
Yes	10	3.40	.97		
No	21	3.05	1.16		
I often feel tired/exhausted from raising a family?				.22	.646
Yes	10	2.90	1.29		
No	21	3.10	1.00		

Note. Multivariate effect:  $F(4, 26) = .82, p = .525, \eta^2 = .112$

**Hypothesis 2. It was hypothesized that there will be a difference between fathers' perception of their role based on non-residential status.** To test this hypothesis, a Multivariate of Analysis (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of reason for non-residential status on the individual father's perception of role items. Results revealed that there was no significant difference of connection between fathers' perception of his role and child support status. This indicates non-residential fathers' perception of role is determined by other significant factors. Please see Table 40 for further details of the analysis.

**Hypothesis 3. It was hypothesized that there will be a difference between fathers' perception of their role based on relationship with mother.** To test this hypothesis, a Multivariate of Analysis (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of relationship with mother on the individual father's perception of role items. Results revealed that there were no significance differences between fathers' perception of role and his relationship with mother. Please refer to Table 41 for further detailed information.

**Hypothesis 4. It was hypothesized that there will be a difference between fathers' perception of their role based on income level.** To test this hypothesis, a Multivariate of Analysis (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of income level on father's perception of role items. As shown in Table 42, results revealed that fathers who had an income level of \$11,000 or more effected a father's perception of role. Fathers in this sample demonstrated that they enjoyed their role as a father by disagreeing with the statement "I find taking care of my child more work than pleasure".

Table 40

*Means and Standard Deviations of Father's Perceptions of Role by Reason for Non-Residential Status*

	n	Mean	SD	F	p
Being a parent is harder than I expected?				1.44	.221
Father Incarcerated	32	1.88	1.10		
Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along	233	2.29	1.09		
Lost Custody / Court Removal	54	2.22	1.11		
One Parent Moved	30	2.30	.95		
Other	31	2.00	1.03		
I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent?				.40	.811
Father Incarcerated	32	3.47	.84		
Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along	233	3.35	.86		
Lost Custody / Court Removal	54	3.37	1.00		
One Parent Moved	30	3.53	.90		
Other	31	3.42	.96		
I find taking care of my children more work than pleasure?				.43	.788
Father Incarcerated	32	2.97	1.18		
Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along	233	3.18	1.06		
Lost Custody / Court Removal	54	3.11	1.08		
One Parent Moved	30	3.00	1.17		
Other	31	3.16	1.21		
I often feel tired/exhausted from raising a family?				1.30	.270
Father Incarcerated	32	2.75	1.11		
Parent's Broke Up / Don't Get Along	233	2.95	1.06		
Lost Custody / Court Removal	54	3.00	1.06		
One Parent Moved	30	3.27	1.02		
Other	31	3.19	.98		

Note. Multivariate effect:  $F(16, 1137) = 1.09, p = .359, \eta^2 = .012$

Table 41

*Means and Standard Deviations of Father's Perception of Role by Relationship with Mother*

	n	Mean	SD	F	p
Being a parent is harder than I expected?				1.08	.359
Romantic / Married	67	2.27	1.10		
Separated / Divorced	98	2.31	1.08		
Friends	305	2.14	1.08		
No Relationship	112	2.32	1.08		
I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent?				.58	.628
Romantic / Married	67	3.46	.89		
Separated / Divorced	98	3.32	.92		
Friends	305	3.40	.92		
No Relationship	112	3.31	.95		
I find taking care of my children more work than pleasure?				2.35	.072
Romantic / Married	67	3.00	1.13		
Separated / Divorced	98	3.23	1.04		
Friends	305	3.03	1.13		
No Relationship	112	3.30	1.05		
I often feel tired/exhausted from raising a family?				.09	.966
Romantic / Married	67	3.04	.98		
Separated / Divorced	98	3.00	1.04		
Friends	305	2.98	1.04		
No Relationship	112	2.96	1.13		

*Note.* Multivariate effect:  $F(12, 1521) = 1.39, p = .161, \eta^2 = .010$



Table 42

*Means and Standard Deviations of Father's Perception of Role by Father's Income*

	n	Mean	SD	F	p
Harder than expected				2.10	.148
Below \$11,000	132	2.14	1.12		
\$11,000 or More	318	2.31	1.06		
Feel trapped by responsibilities				.60	.598
Below \$11,000	132	3.36	.96		
\$11,000 or More	318	3.41	.89		
More work than pleasure				18.83	<.001
Below \$11,000	132	2.80	1.24		
\$11,000 or More	318	3.28	.99		
Feel tired/exhausted				3.58	.059
Below \$11,000	132	2.81	1.08		
\$11,000 or More	318	3.02	1.03		
I find taking care of my children more work than pleasure?				2.35	.072
Romantic / Married	67	3.00	1.13		
Separated / Divorced	98	3.23	1.04		
Friends	305	3.03	1.13		
No Relationship	112	3.30	1.05		
I often feel tired/exhausted from raising a family?				.09	.966
Romantic / Married	67	3.04	.98		
Separated / Divorced	98	3.00	1.04		
Friends	305	2.98	1.04		
No Relationship	112	2.96	1.13		

Note. Multivariate effect:  $F(4, 445) = 5.16, p < .001, \eta^2 = .044$

## Supplemental Analyses for Hypothesis 4

Supplemental analyses for Hypothesis 4 were conducted to test for associations between fathers' perception of role and the type of father he believes he is. A multinomial regression was conducted to predict father's perception of what type of father the participants thought they were. As seen in Table 43, the overall model predicting perception of type of father was significant,  $\chi^2(24) = 83.33, p < .001, p < .001, pseudo R^2 = .165$ . The reference group for the multinomial regression is fathers who rated themselves as poor. Fathers who did not have custody of their child because they were either broken up with the child's mother or did not get along with the child's mother had significantly greater odds of rating themselves as an excellent father (*Odds Ratio* = 7.03,  $p < .001$ ), compared to fathers who did not have custody of their child because of other reasons (e.g., own health problems, child was kidnapped by other parent, child is deceased).

Additionally, fathers who were romantically involved or married to their child's mother had significantly greater odds of rating themselves as excellent fathers (*Odds Ratio* = 29.25,  $p = .002$ ), fathers who were separated or divorced from the child's mother (*Odds Ratio* = 5.80,  $p = .004$ ), and finally fathers who had a friendship with their child's mother (*Odds Ratio* = 4.65,  $p < .001$ ), all had significantly greater odds of rating themselves as an excellent father compared to those who did not have a romantic relationship with the child's mother.

Table 43

*Multinomial Regular Regression Predicting Type of Father by Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother, and Father's Income*

							C.I.	
	B	SE	Wald	df	<i>p</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	Lower	Upper
Excellent								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	.494	.64	.61	1	.436	1.640	.472	5.693
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	1.950	.55	12.48	1	.000	7.026	2.382	20.726
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	1.197	.61	3.80	1	.051	3.311	.994	11.032
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	1.019	.84	1.47	1	.225	2.770	.534	14.363
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	3.376	1.10	9.40	1	.002	29.245	3.378	253.181
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	1.759	.61	8.36	1	.004	5.804	1.762	19.120
Friends <sup>b</sup>	1.536	.41	14.26	1	.000	4.646	2.093	10.312
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	-.355	.41	.76	1	.383	.701	.316	1.556
Very good								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	.425	.66	.42	1	.518	1.529	.422	5.541
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	1.935	.57	11.43	1	.001	6.924	2.255	21.256
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	1.350	.63	4.59	1	.032	3.858	1.122	13.262
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup>	1.721	.81	4.47	1	.034	5.590	1.134	27.549
Romantically Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	3.765	1.10	11.72	1	.001	43.169	5.003	372.528
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	1.978	.61	10.46	1	.001	7.228	2.179	23.972
Friends <sup>b</sup>	1.617	.41	15.23	1	.000	5.037	2.236	11.343
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	-.313	.41	.58	1	.445	.731	.328	1.632

Table 43, continued

	B	SE	Wald	df	p	Odds Ratio	C.I. Lower Upper	
Good								
Father Incarcerated <sup>a</sup>	-.425	.54	.62	1	.433	.654	.226	1.893
Parent's Broke up/Don't Get Along <sup>a</sup>	1.178	.47	6.24	1	.012	3.248	1.289	8.185
Lost Custody/Court Removal <sup>a</sup>	.609	.53	1.33	1	.250	1.839	.652	5.191
One Parent Moved <sup>a</sup> Romantically	1.583	.71	4.92	1	.027	4.869	1.203	19.712
Involved/Married <sup>b</sup>	2.955	1.09	7.37	1	.007	19.194	2.273	162.056
Separated/Divorced <sup>b</sup>	1.511	.59	6.50	1	.011	4.529	1.418	14.463
Friends <sup>b</sup>	1.316	.38	12.13	1	.000	3.727	1.778	7.816
Below \$11,000 <sup>c</sup>	.304	.38	.65	1	.419	1.355	.649	2.827

Note. Multinomial Regular Regression Model:  $X^2(24) = 83.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\text{pseudo } R^2 = .165$ . <sup>a</sup>Compared to Other Relationship, <sup>b</sup>Compared to No Relationship, <sup>c</sup>Compared to \$11,000 or More

As also shown in Table 43, fathers who did not have custody of their child because they were either broken up or did not get along with the child's mother had (*Odds Ratio* = 6.92,  $p = .001$ ), and fathers who did not have custody of their child because they had lost custody or the courts removed the child (*Odds Ratio* = 3.86,  $p = .032$ ), and those fathers who did not have custody of their child because the other parent moved (*Odds Ratio* = 5.59,  $p = .034$ ) all had significantly greater odds of rating themselves as very good fathers when compared to fathers who did not have custody for

other reasons (e.g., own health problems, child was kidnapped by other parent, child is deceased).

Furthermore, fathers who were romantically involved or married to their child's mother had significantly greater odds of rating themselves as very good fathers (*Odds Ratio* = 43.17,  $p = .001$ ), separated or divorced from the child's mother (*Odds Ratio* = 7.23,  $p = .001$ ), and fathers who were friends with the child's mother (*Odds Ratio* = 5.04,  $p < .001$ ) all had significantly greater odds of rating themselves as very good fathers compared to fathers who did not have a relationship with the child's mothers. As also shown in Table 43, fathers who did not have custody of their child because they had broken up or did not get along with the child's mother (*Odds Ratio* = 3.25,  $p = .012$ ), fathers who did not have custody of their child because the other parent moved (*Odds Ratio* = 4.87,  $p = .027$ ), both had significantly greater odds of rating themselves as good fathers when compared to fathers who did not have custody because of other reasons.

As also shown in Table 43, fathers who were romantically involved or married to their child's mother (*Odds Ratio* = 19.19,  $p = .007$ ), fathers who were either separated or divorced from the child's mother (*Odds Ratio* = 4.53,  $p = .011$ ), and fathers who were friends with the child's mother (*Odds Ratio* = 3.73,  $p < .001$ ) all had significantly greater odds of rating themselves as good fathers when compared to fathers who did not have a relationship with the child's mothers.

As seen in Table 44, the overall model predicting father's perception of role item, "I feel trapped by my responsibilities" from main reason for non-custodial status,

relationship with mother, and father's income were not significant  $F(8, 442) = .567, p = .805$ , adjusted  $R^2 = -.008$ . Furthermore, there were no significant predictors of father's perception of role item "I feel trapped by my responsibilities" from reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother, and father's income, all *ps ns*.

Finally, a series of multiple linear regressions were conducted to predict perceptions of father's roles from reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother, and father's annual income. As shown in Table 44, the overall model predicting "parenting was harder than I expected" was not significant,  $F(8, 441) = .89, p = .528, R^2 = -.016$ . A deeper examination of the results indicated that there were no significant predictors of "parenting was harder than I expected," all *ps ns*. A separate multiple linear regression was conducted to predict the father's perception of "I feel trapped by my responsibilities" from reason for non-residential status, relationship with mother, and father's income, As also shown in Table 45, the overall model predicting this perception of father's role was also not significant,  $F(8, 442) = .857, p = .805, R^2 = -.008$ . There were also no significant predictors of "I feel trapped by my responsibilities," all *ps ns*.

A separate multiple linear regression was conducted to predict the father's perception of role "I find taking care of my children more work than pleasure." As seen in Table 44, the overall model predicting this item from non-residential status, relationship with mother, and father's yearly income was significant,  $F(8, 442) = 3.42, p = .001, R^2 = .041$ , which explains 4.1% of the variance. A deeper examination of the results demonstrated that relationship with mother was a significant predictor,

specifically being friends with the mother of the child ( $Beta = -.154, p = .014$ ). The fathers who had friendships with the mother were significantly more likely to agree with this statement. Additionally, father's income was also a significant predictor of this statement ( $Beta = -.197, p < .001$ ), indicating that fathers who have incomes above the poverty line are more likely to agree with the statement "I find taking care of my children more work than pleasure." Finally, the overall model predicting "parenting was harder than I expected" was not significant,  $F(8, 441) = 1.01, p = .428, R^2 = .000$ . A deeper examination of the results indicated that there were no significant predictors of "parenting was harder than I expected," all  $ps$  *ns*.

Table 44

*Multiple Linear Regular Regression Predicting Perceptions of Father's Role by Reason for Non-Residential Status, Relationship with Mother, and Father's Income*

	1		2		3		4	
	<i>Beta</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>p</i>
Incarceration	-.058		-.009		.003		-.032	
Lost Custody	-.026		.011		-.009		.026	
Parent Moved	-.025		.022		-.041		.054	
Other	-.066		.036		.031		.065	
Romantic/Married	-.036		.070		-.056		.035	
Separated/Divorced	-.056		-.030		-.112 <sup>M</sup>		-.016	
Friends	-.082		.047		-.154 <sup>*</sup>		-.001	
Low Income	-.048		-.039		-.197 <sup>***</sup>		-.089 <sup>M</sup>	

*Note.* Summary of multiple linear regressions: (1) Harder than expected:  $F(8, 441) = .89, p = .528, adjusted R^2 = -.016$ ; (2) I feel trapped by my responsibilities:  $F(8, 442) = .857, p = .805, R^2 = -.008$ ; (3) More work than pleasure:  $F(8, 442) = 3.42, p = .001, R^2 = .041$ ; (4) Feel tired or exhausted:  $F(8, 441) = 1.01, p = .428, R^2 = .000$ .

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The present study conducted a secondary analysis for determining if child support agreement, relationship with mother, reason for non-custodial status and income affected non-residential father involvement based on the dataset of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study. Although many of the results had insignificant findings, deducted from the significant findings, the researcher found that relationship with mother and father's income level often determined the level of the non-residential father involvement with his child. In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the findings, limitations of this study, future recommendations, and provide a conclusion.

#### **Findings**

##### **Child Support Status**

Overall, child support status results revealed insignificant findings with reference to quantity and quality of time, fathers' perception of child, and father's perception of role. However, fathers without mandated child support perceived their children as having behavioral and emotional problems. These results are astonishingly the opposite of what was expected, especially since the frequencies and percentages of the perception of child items reflected the fathers' responses as mostly "not true", meaning the majority of the fathers believed that the behaviors listed in the survey do not describe their children. Nonetheless, this is an implication of the fathers' relationship with mother, and this has



one major implication: fathers' projection of feelings help shape his perception of his fathering role.

Ryan, Kalil, and Ziol-Guest (2007) wrote "hostility or conflict in the parents' relationship also may spill over into the father's feelings about the child, decreasing his motivation to maintain close ties" (p. 967). Spruijt, de Goede, and Vanderwalk (2004) go on to further clarify that when contact between parents is negative, contact with the child will be negative as well. Therefore, the result of his perception of his child having behavioral and emotional problems (e.g. child is too dependent, nervous, high strung, etc.) may reveal his projection of how he views his relationship with the child's mother, and his limit involvement (if any). Future research should investigate this further to see if support for this hypothesis exists.

Due to the small sample size, only the marginally significant results were reported, and many of the responses for this test had to be removed, which was not enough to reveal significant findings between child support status and the other independent variables as well as the dependent variables. Though it appears that the presence of mandated child support has no bearing on the father's inclination to maintain a meaningful relationship with his child, it is evident from the results of other analyses in this study that an association may exist between child support status and relationship with mother. Future research should address this possibility. This could help illustrate the connection between child support status and the relationship with mother, or the other variables.

## **Reason for Non-Residential Status**

Results within this sample revealed that reason for non-residential status had significant effects on father involvement especially for those fathers who were incarcerated and fathers who broke up or do not get along with mother. Overall, the reason for non-residential status affected the fathers' of this sample in terms of quantity and quality of time with child, and his perception of his child and his role as a father. Additionally, the preliminary analyses revealed associations between non-residential status and the other independent variables: relationship with mother and income level. The results of this sample reflect these associations especially the connection between non-residential status and relationship with mother. For example, fathers who broke up or do not get along with mother suggests there was a relationship with mother; however, at the time of the study the fathers' relationship with mother might have been a contentious one. Research shows that a father's relationship with mother is a critical component to father involvement, particularly non-residential fathers (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Carlson, McLanahan, Brooks-Gunn, 2008). It is no surprise that a father's reason for non-residential status has an effect on his involvement with his child.

**Incarcerated fathers.** In this study, incarcerated fathers are reported to spend at least ten or more days with their child. Due to the nature of the incarcerated fathers' residence, he and his family experience limited contact with each other. Those limitations include proximity and visitation regulations (Day, Lewis, O'Brien & Lamb, 2005; Roy & Dyson, 2005). Yet despite these limitations, this result indicated some type of cooperative

co-parenting initiative between the mothers and the fathers. Within this sample there is a mixture of residential and non-residential fathers. According to McHale (1995) cooperative co-parenting is the understanding between parents to “cooperate in carrying out shared objective and demonstrate mutual support and commitment in rearing their child” (as cited in Carlson, et al, 2008, p. 461). In this case, it seems as though the parents agreed and notwithstanding the fathers’ incarceration, they will keep them involved with their child.

Though his incarceration prevents him from having daily contact with his child, the co-parenting initiative to keep the father-child bond strong is evident in his quantity of time spent with his child per month. This outcome can be utilized by professionals to promote the importance of cooperative co-parenting, and to support families through providing additional resources (i.e. community programs or classes about incarceration) , and also shape future research in determining how incarcerated fathers spend quality of time with their children, how they perceive their children, and how they perceive their fathering roles while incarcerated.

Although, there insignificant findings for incarcerated fathers and their quality of times based on the types of activities engaged with their children, perhaps for future examination, professionals can explore other activities incarcerated fathers engage in with their children. For example, do they write letters to their children, and how often do they receive letters from their children? Also, depending on the age of the child, do the letters entail details about their daily interactions with their families, school and personal

life? This might help shape future research and understanding of incarcerated fathers and father involvement. Additionally, professionals can use this information to encourage cooperative co-parenting between fathers and mothers who have amiable relationships. Fathers and mothers coming together to create ways in which fathers can stay involved until he is released shapes their ability to maintain a strong relationship with their children and families. If the fathers were highly involved with the children before his incarceration, the mothers or families should continue to include them in the decision making of their children. Moreover, families should consider receiving education through community programs that offers them support and encourages them to keep a positive outlook of the incarcerated fathers' involvement with them and the children. As long as there is cooperative co-parenting and additional support from families and the community, incarcerated fathers have the potential to develop and maintain relationships with their children.

**Fathers who broke up or do not get along with mother.** Results from this sample of fathers revealed significant findings with regards to quantity of time, quality of time, and father's perception of role. When compared to fathers who reported that they moved away from child, or lost custody of their child, fathers who broke up or do not get along with mother had lower odds of spending ten or more days per month child, spending time engaged in activities with child (e.g. watching TV or videos, playing outside with child), yet had higher odds of rating themselves as excellent fathers. These

outcomes suggest that these fathers' relationship with mother influences their time spent with their children as well as their perception of their role, and has several implications.

Results revealed that fathers who broke up or do not get along with mother had lower odds of spending time engaged in activities such as playing outside with child, taking child to outside events, and watching TV or videos. The fathers who broke up or do not get along with mother were less likely to be engaged in outdoor activities or events during the week with child might be the result of his preference of activity. Stewart (1999) wrote that non-resident fathers prefer to engage in leisure activities with their children, and if they were not able to engage in the activity due to visitation limitations, proximity or income, the fathers would rather forfeit any opportunity to spend time with their child engaged in any activity, which includes watching TV or videos (as cited in Swinton, Freeman, Zabriskie, & Fields, 2008). The fathers of this sample may believe that there are other forms of entertainment to do rather than watch TV or videos with his child.

As mentioned earlier, there is significant association between non-residential status and relationship with mother. The findings of this group of fathers implies that fathers who broke up or do not get along with mother perceive themselves as being excellent fathers despite the termination of their romantic relationship with their child's mother. Although the original study did not entail descriptive information of reasons why fathers broke up or do not get along with mother, an apparent association with their friendships with the mothers is confidence in their roles as fathers. For example, Ryan,

Kalil, and Ziol-Guest (2008) summarized that “parents’ relationship quality predicts father involvement over time” (p. 965). The fathers’ perception of role as being an excellent father illustrates his certainty in his ability to execute his fathering responsibilities with the support of the child’s mother.

Non-residential father involvement influenced by reason for non-residential status seems to be intertwined with a father’s relationship with mother. Unfortunately for non-residential fathers who broke up or do not get along with the child’s mother have difficulty spending quality time with their children, yet with the help of a supportive relationship with the mother father involvement can increase despite the reason for the ending of their romantic relationship.

### **Relationship with Mother**

A father’s relationship with his child’s mother often determined the amount of time and the caliber of activities fathers spent with their children, as well as how the fathers perceived their children and their fathering role. Furthermore, relationship with mother had associations with non-residential status and income level. Throughout the study, relationship with mother demonstrated being a crucial element to certain facets of non-residential father involvement.

**Romantically involved/married fathers.** Fathers of this relationship group are likely to have a healthy perception of role, and spent substantial quantities of time with their children. Surprisingly, there were no significant findings among quality of time and perception of child.

Quantity of time seemed to be affected by fathers' marital or relationship status with mothers. This group reported spending one to thirty nights per year, one to nine days, and ten or more days per month. This outcome is not a surprise considering fathers' accessibility to their children. Maurer, Pleck, and Rane (2001) wrote about father involvement being higher when mothers have high expectations of father involvement (as cited in Pleck & Hofferth, 2008). The high expectations among romantically involved or married couples are illustrated in the fathers' daily contact with their children. Moreover, his contribution to the decision-making and rearing of his child helps him to shape his perception of his role as being an excellent father (Harper & Fine, 2006).

**Separated or divorced fathers.** Similar to child support status, fathers of this group were likely to perceive their child as demonstrating behaviors associated with the Developmental Subscale items (i.e. child acts too young for age, and/or child has speech problems. It appears to be that separated or divorced fathers are shaping their perceptions of their child based on their relationship with the mother. Harper and Fine (2006) write "fathers who are unable to separate their identities as a husband and father may displace ex-spousal conflict into the parenting realm" (p. 288). The fathers' perception of child as having developmental problems suggest that he is displacing his negative interaction with mother on to his child therefore any interaction the fathers have with their child could be seen as negative (Spruijt, de Goede, & Vandervalk, 2008). Again, while there was no descriptive information for the fathers' separation or divorce, it is implied that the

dissolution of the marriage has limited these fathers involvement because of their relationship with mother, thus, limiting their involvement with their child.

Fathers' perceiving their children as demonstrating behaviors associated with the Developmental Subscale is reflection of his lack of involvement. Since the fathers' residence has changed, his accessibility has been altered and limited. While married, fathers had daily involvement with their children, and this is said to influence their children's development in different ways from mothers (Pancsofar & Vernon-Feagans, 2006). Subsequently, the separation or divorce has eliminated his influence on the child's development. Additionally, fathers have unique ways of relating to their children through "social activities, play, and physical interactions with their children" (Shears & Robinson, 2005, p. 64). Their ability to connect with their child through these social aspects of development helps the children's language and emotional development. Empirical evidence presented by Menning (2002) states those non-residential fathers following a divorce can support their child's academic, social and emotional maturity (as cited in Swinton, et al, 2005). So, if the fathers perceive their children as having a speech problem or being immature, it is probably because of his limited involvement with the child since the separation or the divorce from the child's mother.

**Fathers who friends with mother.** Resembling their counterparts, separated or divorced fathers, fathers who reported being friends with the mothers of their child had significant findings associated with their quantity of time, quality of time spent with child



engaged in activities like reading to their child and taking child to outside events, and how the fathers perceive their role.

Results of the quantity of time measured by the amount of days per month and the amount of nights per year revealed that when compared to fathers who had no relationship with the mother, fathers who were friends with the mothers of their children had greater odds of spending one to nine days, and ten or more days per month with their child, but lower odds of spending on to thirty nights per year with child. Fathers of this sample appear to be spending more time with their children during the week than having their child visit overnight with them. This outcome is an implication of the association between relationship with mother and income level. Even though the fathers reported being friends with the mother, it seems as though his odds of have his children visit with him overnight might due to his income level. The participating fathers of this study were considered to have low-income levels. Their low-income statuses could be a reflection of their employment statuses. For example, low-income non-residential fathers are likely to have limited contact with their children because they are working to sustain a living (Huang, 2006; Lerman, 2010; Nepomnyaschy, 2007). This means that low-income fathers may spend more time working than they do with their child, and when they have time to see them they will probably do it on the days they off from work. Therefore resulting in more days with them during the month, but less nights during the year.

Quality of time measured by the type of activities fathers spent with child had a surprising outcome. The results revealed that fathers who were friends with the mother spent no time reading to their child and they were less likely to take them to outdoor events. This is an implication of fathers' preference to recreational activities, proximity and accessibility to their children's because of different residences, and possibly a limited source of income. In the literature review, the researcher outlined that fathers have many roles, and one of them is one who socializes his child (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Blatt, 2207; Burbach, Fox, & Nicholson, 2004). Maybe the fathers prefer to their time engaged in leisurely activities rather than ones involving reading. Taking a child to outside events, such as museums, carnivals, and theme parks implies detailed planning and plenty of money. Even though some fathers in this sample may be living above the poverty line, it still may be difficult to spend large amounts of money on their children for one event.

With respect to fathers' perception of role, fathers of this group had split perceptions of their fathering role. Though the majority of the findings within this sample were insignificant, fathers who had friendships with the mothers of their children not only rated themselves as excellent fathers, but also they were likely to agree that they found raising children to be more work than pleasure.

For fathers who rated themselves as excellent fathers suggest an established father-child bond through his involvement. Furstenburg (1988) wrote fathers that were viewed as a 'good dads' developed and sustained healthy emotional connections with their children as well as "fulfilling their responsibilities in childcare" (as cited in Forste,

Bartkowski, & Jackson, 2009, p. 50). Plus, their rating unequivocally mirrors a supportive friendship with the mother for his contributions. A supportive mother encourages increased father involvement and father-child relationships (Lerman, 2010; Pleck & Hofferth, 2008). Furthermore, as his involvement increases he is able to sustain positive relationships, that later shape his perception of his role.

In the aforementioned paragraph, fathers who were friends with the mother were likely to rate themselves as excellent fathers. However, the same group of fathers found raising a child more work than pleasure. A major factor is suggested here: his co-parenting relationship with mother. Being that this group of fathers perceived themselves as excellent fathers, it safe to suggest that based on societal standards, he is fulfilling his father responsibilities, and one of those is having a healthy relationship with the mother. In a study conducted by Summers, Boller, Schiffman, and Raikes (2006), they found that the participating fathers believed that providing a stable environment meant having a stable relationship with the child's mother. Also in that study, a father continues to say that "it's about having patience, sometimes it's difficult" (p. 15). Though he and the mother are friends, there are times in which they both need plenty of patience to execute positive communication with each other (Summers, et al. 2006). In cooperative co-parenting, both parents understand that they must keep their goal in mind: raising their child together.

It may seem as if this perception of his role is negative. However, from the perspective of executing cooperative co-parenting, raising a child can be more work than

pleasure if the underlining factor contributing to this perception is the if father's friendship with the mother is demonstrates challenging interactions.

### **Income Level**

The pressures and expectations of society could be overwhelming for the father because of his income level. The results of this variable suggest that his income level limits his quantity of time and perception of child.

**Income level below \$11,000.** Fathers are this group experienced limited quantity of time with their children per year, and these fathers perceived their children as having behavior problems. Time is important resource for low-income non-residential fathers because it is often limited due to their financial instability. Being subjected to fulfilling the traditional role as breadwinner, fathers in this group seem to limit their involvement based on their inability to provide the support necessary for their child. One implication of this result is that the fathers have difficulty balancing their work with their parental responsibilities. Summers, Boller, Schiffman, & Raikes (2004) reported that fathers employed low-income fathers have difficulty balancing work and parenting duties. Subsequently, this proposes that fathers sacrifice their time with their child in order to fulfill his financial responsibilities. This is behavior seen throughout the study, fathers placing constraints on themselves due to an inability to execute the fathering responsibilities necessary for supporting their children.

Another inference of these results is fathers' frustration of his inability to provide secure financial stability for self and child. Comparable to the fathers who do not have

mandated child support, fathers with an income level below \$11,000 experience their child having behavioral and emotional problems. Because of his economic status, he is likely to be subjected to the traditional sense of fathers being the breadwinner (Forste, Bartkowski, & Allen-Jackson, 2009). Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson (1998) wrote fathers who are better able to provide financially for children may feel more entitled than those who cannot, as a result spend more time parenting their children” (as cited in Ryan, Kalil, & Ziolo-Guest, 2008, p. 965). Fathers of this group feel that because of their financial situation do not have the confidence to spend more time with their child, thus limiting their contact to spending with them one to thirty nights per year with their child.

**Income level of \$11,000 or more.** Fathers in this sample had significantly high disagreement scores for the perception of role item: “I find taking care of my child more work than pleasure”. The disagreement scores implies that they enjoy they enjoy their job as a father. This outcome is not a surprise. If the father is able to fulfill his role as sole provider or breadwinner, he is likely to feel gratified and can rejoice in the fact that his succeeding in his fathering role (Forste, Bartkowski, & Allen, 2009; Ryan, Kalil, & Ziolo-Guest, 2008).

While it was predicted that income would have significant effects on a father’s involvement based on quantity of time spent with his child, and his perception of his fathering role, it is clear that the caliber of involvement a father engages with his child influences the amount of annual income earned in order to positively perceive his interactions with child.

## **Limitations**

The *Father's Five-Year Follow-Up Survey* was a well-developed questionnaire targeting many aspects of the original study, there were a few limitations to the present study dealing with sample and sample size. The first limitation dealt with the sample of the participating fathers. The dataset contained a mixture of resident and non-residential fathers, and often times the mixture of fathers often made it difficult to sift through the dataset for the purpose of this study. The second limitation was sample size. There were 4,789 father respondents, yet only 997 fathers responded to the five-year follow-up. Moreover, of the 997 participants, there were often times fathers skipped questions needed for the study, and the researcher removed vital information from the study to make the analysis run smoother and more efficiently. Both of these limitations had a tremendous impact on the execution of the analysis and of course, the results.

## **Future Research**

Based on the results of this study, there are a few recommendations for future research. The first recommendation is to address the connection between relationship with mother, reason for non-residential status, and income level. Throughout the study, it was revealed that relationship with mother seemed to be a component associated with reason for non-residential fathers with regards to their involvement with their children. In the sample of fathers broke up or do not get along with their child's mother, the statement alone provides enough for future investigation. This reason for non-residential status suggests that at one time there was a relationship but now there is nothing based on the

type of relationship with the mother. Examining the connection between these two variables would provide an in-depth understanding how the type of relationship with the mother not only affects a father's residential status but also contact with child. A look into why the parents broke up or do not get along could be help predict future father involvement. This method could be used for further investigation into reason for non-residential status and income level as well.

The second recommendation is to look at the possible connection between a father's preference for activity and income level. Research on this topic is limited and further exploration could identify why non-residential fathers prefer certain activities. By asking what kinds of activities fathers prefer to engage in with their children and whether or not they can afford it would highlight their intent and also their ability to provide recreational activities for their children while with them during visitation.

Finally, another recommendation is a deeper examination of incarcerated father involvement. Although this study only measured their involvement in terms of their reason for non-residential status, the results presented that incarcerated fathers are able to have a significant amount of quantity of time with their children. Also this result speaks profoundly to the cooperative co-parenting relationship that is an essential component to incarcerated father involvement. Future studies could sift through the incarcerated father information within the dataset to determine or predict the type of involvement they have with their children and how type of relationship with the child's mother influences their involvement.

## Summary

Several conclusions can be deduced about low-income non-residential fathers based on the results of this study. One of the major outcomes of this illustrates the importance of cooperative co-parenting. A stable co-parenting relationship increases father involvement and the father-child bond (Summers, Boller, Schiffman, & Raikes, 2006). While only marital status of the fathers of this study was measured, it can be surmised that the quality of the relationship between the parents (i.e. amicable or contentious) can be a predictor of the nature of the father's relationship with his child. Mothers and fathers, despite their relationship status must make a strong effort to have a cordial relationship for the healthy growth and development of their children.

Second, the overall results of the non-residential fathers' involvement with their children reveals limited interaction with their children. Despite no mandated child support, fathers still reported having limited contact with their children. Though research shows that fathers have different roles other than breadwinner (Jain, Belsky & Crnic, 1996; Lige, 2003), low-income non-residential fathers are often faced with the challenge of fulfilling the traditional father role as sole provider because of societal pressures of not being a deadbeat (Forste, Bartkowski, & Allen-Jackson, 2009). To take financial responsibility for the livelihood of their children, low-income fathers decide to take underground jobs in addition to their primary job to help provide for their children (Rich, Garfinkel, & Gao, 2007; Turetsky, V, 2007), thereby limiting his contact with his child to contribute informal support to his family. This highlights that the traditional role of being



breadwinner is still very necessary for the low-income non-residential fathers. As Ralph LaRossa (1988; 1995) writes that the culture of fatherhood is rapidly changing, yet the conduct of fatherhood is stagnate. Simply put, fathers' roles are multidimensional but how they are demonstrated are traditionally linked to fathers' major responsibility to his family as the financial epicenter.

The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study offers a view into low-income father involvement. As father involvement scholarship continues to grow and expand into the many dimensions of fatherhood, academic attention to non-residential fathers becomes more and more prominent. Awareness of how parents' ability develop and sustain their co-parenting relationship will help professionals such as educators and Family Scientists to create curriculums for parenting education classes to improve the family dynamic. Moreover creating opportunities for advocates and policymakers to support the benefits of non-residential father involvement through cooperative co-parenting by designing policies that encourage stable families through positive interaction and communication. This study is a great example of how the culture and the conduct of fatherhood are separate entities influencing one dynamic: father involvement.

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