

## Parent-child relationships in stepfamilies.

By: Lawrence E. Sauer and Mark A. Fine

Sauer, L., & [Fine, M. A.](#) (1988). Parent-child relationships in stepfamilies. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *1*(4), 434-451.

**Made available courtesy of the American Psychological Association:**

<http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/fam/1/4/434/>

**\*\*\*Reprinted with permission. No further reproduction is authorized without written permission from the American Psychological Association. This article may not exactly replicate the final version published in the APA journal. It is not the copy of record. \*\*\***

### **Abstract:**

Compared college students' perceptions of parent-child relationships in stepfamilies with those in continuously intact families. 47 students from stepfamilies and 130 from intact families completed a parent-child relationship survey developed by M. A. Fine et al (see record 1984-01194-001). Results suggest that adult stepchildren perceived relationships with their noncustodial biological mothers and stepmothers less positively than adult children from intact families perceived relationships with their biological mothers. No significant differences were found between adult children's perceptions of father-child and stepfather-child relationships.

**Keywords:** parent-child relations | parenting | stepfamilies | family relations | psychology | family psychology

### **Article:**

Approximately half of first marriages are expected to end in divorce, and over 50% of these divorces will involve children (Furstenberg & Spanier, 1984). Of those who divorce, 83% of men and 76% of women eventually remarry (Glick, 1984). It is estimated that one in six children in the United States (10 million) live in stepfamilies (Cherlin & McCarthy, 1985).

Despite the large number of individuals involved in stepfamilies, there has been a noticeable lack of empirical research in this area. In Ganong and Coleman's (1984) review of the literature on the effects of remarriage in children, they were able to locate only 38 published articles of empirical research on the topic. The results of these studies have probably raised more questions than they have answered. There is a great deal of disagreement, little replication of results, and large areas of research left untouched by these studies (Ganong & Coleman, 1986).

With respect to the effects of living in stepfamilies on the quality of parent-child relationships, some earlier studies with divorced families are relevant. Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1978) found that mother-child and father-child interaction immediately after a divorce was more

conflictual than family interaction in either high- or low-discord intact families. Noncustodial fathers visited their children less and less over the 2-year study period and mother-child relationships, especially the mother-son dyad, were initially quite conflictual and only gradually improved. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980), in their 5-year longitudinal study, suggested that parent-child relations are negatively affected by divorce. Although mother-child relations gradually improved over time, those between noncustodial fathers and their children became more distant. Similarly, Parish and Kappes (1980) found that college students from divorced families rated their mothers, fathers, and stepfathers more negatively than did children from intact families or families in which the father was deceased. With respect to long-term effects, Fine, Moreland, and Schwebel (1983) found that, an average of 10 years following the divorce, college students from divorced families continued to perceive their relationships with their parents less positively than did those from intact families.

With respect to parent-child relationships in stepfamilies, Ganong and Coleman (1984) found that a majority of studies found no differences in perceived family relationships in stepfamilies compared with other types of families. Many stepchildren report liking and getting along with their stepparents ( Duberman, 1975; Langer & Michael, 1963; Palermo, 1980). Duberman (1975) also reported that 64% of stepparents rated their relationships with their stepchildren as "excellent" and that stepfathers achieve better relations with their stepchildren than do stepmothers.

Other studies have suggested that stepfamily status may have undesirable effects on parent-child relations. Bowerman and Irish (1962) found relationships between children and stepparents to be more negative and less effective than parent-child relationships in intact families. Similarly, Perkins and Kahan (1979) found that both parents and children in stepfamilies perceived the family unit as relatively ineffective and unsatisfying. Stepchildren in the Perkins and Kahan (1979) study rated their stepfathers as less "good" and less "powerful" than children from intact families rated their fathers. These stepchildren were also less likely to feel they understood their stepfathers and were less likely to go to them for help or guidance. In addition, stepfathers rated their stepchildren as less "good" than fathers from intact families rated their children. Finally, Halperin and Smith (1983) found that stepfathers and noncustodial biological fathers were rated more negatively by their children than were biological fathers from intact families. However, children in stepfamilies did not rate their stepfathers more negatively than their noncustodial biological fathers.

#### Purpose of Present Investigation

The purpose of the present investigation is to better understand the relationships between children and stepparents. This study assesses whether the perceived quality of parent-child relationships in stepfamilies differs from that in intact families. By using an already established measure of perceived quality of parent-child relationships (see below) and by controlling for a number of possible mediating variables ( Ganong & Coleman, 1984), this investigation is

designed to shed further light on the inconsistent findings surrounding the effects of living in stepfamilies on parent-child relations.

It is hypothesized that now-adult children from intact families will perceive their relationships with their biological parents more positively than now-adult children from stepfamilies will perceive their relationships with their custodial biological parents, noncustodial biological parents, and stepparents.

## METHOD

### Subjects

Subjects were 177 introductory psychology students at two large midwestern universities. Before they came to college, 31 lived with their biological mothers and stepfathers (stepfather group), 16 lived with their biological fathers and stepmothers (stepmother group), and 130 were from intact families. As opposed to parental death leading to remarriage, the vast majority of those in the two stepfamily groups had divorced parents. Subjects were not asked if they resided in joint or sole custody arrangements following divorce, but it is suspected that very few lived in joint custody situations due to the infrequency of this arrangement (Furstenberg & Spanier, 1984). College students were chosen because they are chronically close in age to the changes experienced in their families and old enough to reflect thoughtfully upon the quality of their parent-child relations. Additional demographic characteristics of the sample are described below.

### Instruments

Each subject completed several pencil-and-paper instruments, as described below.

#### Demographic Questionnaire

This instrument contained questions asking for the subject's age, sex, socioeconomic status, degree of religiosity, degree of family religiosity, and, for the two stepfamily groups, age at time of divorce, age at remarriage, and the amount of time since the remarriage. These latter three variables were used to assess whether there was an association between the perceived quality of stepfather- and stepmother-child relationships and these three dimensions. No correlations reached significance.

#### Parent-Child Relationship Survey

This self-report questionnaire (Fine et al., 1983) has two parallel scales, the mother scale and the father scale. Each scale contains 24 Likert-type items (see Table 1 for a listing of individual items), and each item is scored on a 1- to 7-point scale. According to Fine, Worley, and Schwebel (1985), both scales are internally consistent and tend to be unidimensional in nature, primarily tapping a positive affective component in perceived parent-child relationships. They also found evidence that the scales secondarily measure dimensions such as identification with

parents, lack of anger, respect, and trust. Fine et al. (1983, 1985) also found the scales to have discriminative validity due to their ability to discriminate between subjects from intact and divorced families. They suggested that researchers employ only total scores for each scale until further analyses support the factor structures of the scales. Subjects were asked to complete both scales of this survey. Total scores were obtained by summing the score for each of the 24 items on a scale. Three items (9,13, and 14) had their scores recoded before summing, as they are keyed in a direction opposite to the others. The range of possible total scores on each scale was from 24 to 168.

**Table 1 has been omitted from this formatted document.**

#### Modified Parent-Child Relationships Survey

This is basically the same survey as described above, with the exception that the questions were altered to refer to stepmothers and stepfathers. This survey was only given to subjects in the two stepfamily groups, and they were asked to complete only the scale that referred to the stepparent they were currently living with or had most recently lived with.

#### Procedure

Subjects were tested in separate and combined sessions of from 28 subjects to as few as 3. The testing took place in college classrooms or testing rooms. The subjects were told that this was a study attempting to better understand the relationships between children and parents in different types of families. Administration took approximately 15 minutes for the intact group and 25 minutes for the stepfamily groups. After the testing, subjects were given a written debriefing.

## RESULTS

The hypothesis was tested by computing four separate two-factor univariate analyses of variance. The dependent measures in these analyses were the total scores for the biological mother, biological father, stepmother, and stepfather scales of the Parent-Child Relationships Survey. As suggested by Fine et al. (1985), only total scale scores and not individual items were used as dependent measures. The two factors were family status (intact, stepfather, or stepmother family) and sex of subject. Separate analyses of variance were performed dependent upon the sex of the parent, as the literature suggests that mother-child and father-child relationships differ in significant ways ( Fine et al., 1983).

In an attempt to control for differences among groups, a number of possible mediating variables were analyzed for differences across levels of family status. These tests were performed by computing separate univariate analyses of variance with each of four possible covariates (age of subjects, socioeconomic status, parents' religiosity, and subjects' religiosity) as dependent measures and family status as the independent variable. Table 2 presents the means and standard

deviations for each of the possible covariates. Age of subject was not found to be significant and, therefore, was not used as a covariate in further analyses. The following variables were found to differ significantly or were near significance across levels of family status: socioeconomic status—  $F(2, 174) = 2.87, p = .060$ ; subject's religiosity—  $F(2, 174) = 2.64, p = .074$ ; and parents' religiosity—  $F(2, 174) = 10.95, p = .001$ ; they were, therefore, chosen as covariates for all future analyses. As shown in Table 2, subjects from intact families perceived themselves to have greater socioeconomic status, to have parents who were more religious, and to be more religious than their counterparts from the stepfamily groups.

**Table 2 has been omitted from this formatted document.**

#### Mother-child relationships

Two two-factor analyses of variance were computed. The dependent measure for the first two-factor analysis of variance was the total score on the biological mother scale of the Parent-Child Relationship Survey. The two factors were family status and sex of subject. Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations for subjects from intact, stepfather, and stepmother homes broken down by sex of subject. The main effect for family status was significant—  $F(2, 166) = 11.45, p < .001$ ; the main effect for sex of subject was not significant; and the interaction between family status and sex of subject approached significance—  $F(2, 166) = 2.40, p = .094$ .

**Table 3 has been omitted from this formatted document.**

Because the main effect for family status was significant, a Tukey HSD post hoc test of pairwise comparisons was performed to determine which means significantly differed from one another. Subjects from stepmother families had significantly ( $p^{fw} < .05$ ) lower total scores on the biological mother scale ( $x = 104.1$ ) than did subjects from intact ( $x = 132.5$ ) and stepfather families ( $x = 139.2$ ).

The dependent measure for the second two-factor analysis of variance was the total score on the mother most recently lived with scale of the Parent-Child Relationship Survey (biological mother scale for subjects from intact and stepfather families and stepmother scale for subjects from stepmother families). Again, the two factors were family status and sex of subject. Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations for subjects from intact, stepfather, and stepmother homes broken down by sex of subject. The main effect for family status was significant—  $F(2, 166) = 34.1, p < .001$ ; the main effect for sex of subject was not significant; and the interaction between family status and sex of subject was also not significant.

**Table 4 has been omitted from this formatted document.**

Because the main effect for family status was significant, a Tukey HSD test of pairwise comparisons was performed to determine which means significantly differed from one another. Subjects from stepmother families had significantly ( $p^{fw} < .05$ ) lower total scores on the mother

most recently lived with scale ( $x = 80.0$ ) than did those from intact ( $x = 132.5$ ) and stepfather families ( $x = 138.8$ ).

#### Father-child relationships

Two two-factor analyses of variance were computed. The dependent measure for the first two-factor analysis of variance was the total score on the biological father scale of the Parent-Child Relationship Survey. The two factors were family status and sex of subject. Table 5 presents the means and standard deviations for subjects from intact, stepfather, and stepmother families broken down by sex of subject. The main effect for family status, the main effect for sex of subject, and the interaction between family status and sex of subject were all nonsignificant.

**Table 5 has been omitted from this formatted document.**

The dependent measure for the second two-factor analysis of variance was the total score on the father most recently lived with scale of the Parent-Child Relationship Survey (biological father scale for subjects from intact and stepmother families and stepfather scale for subjects from stepfather families). Again, the two factors were family status and sex of subject. Table 6 presents the means and standard deviations for subjects from intact, stepfather, and stepmother families broken down by sex of subject. Once again, no significant effects for family status, for sex of subject, or for their interaction were found.

**Table 6 has been omitted from this formatted document.**

The results of these four analyses of variance and the Tukey HSD tests support the hypothesis with respect to mother-child, but not father-child relations. Now-adult children from stepmother families perceived their relationships with their noncustodial-biological mothers and stepmothers less positively than now-adult children from intact families or stepfather families perceived their relationships with their biological mothers. However, now-adult children from stepfather families did not perceive any of their relationships with biological parents or stepfathers significantly less positively than now-adult children from intact families perceived their relationships with their biological parents.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study show clear evidence of differences in now-adult children's perceptions of mother-child relationships between subjects from intact, stepfather, and stepmother families. However, significant differences in now-adult children's perceptions of father-child relationships between subjects from the same groups were not found.

#### Mother-Child Relationships

##### Biological mother-child relationships

The findings of this study suggest that the factor most likely to affect the perceived biological mother-child relationship is whether or not the mother is a custodial parent. Subjects living with their biological mothers, from both intact and stepfather families, had more positive perceptions of their motherchild relationships than did those from stepmother families.

There are several possible explanations for these results. On the one hand, it may be that the noncustodial status of these mothers contributes causally to the more negatively perceived mother-child relationships. Both Hetherington et al. (1978) and Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) report that the parent-child relationship that seems to suffer most following a divorce is that between the child and the noncustodial parent. Therefore, the finding that children from stepmother families had less positively perceived relationships with their biological mothers than did those from intact or stepfather families suggests that previous findings related to noncustodial fathers may generalize to noncustodial mothers.

On the other hand, it may be that those mothers who do not gain custody of their children had lower quality relations with their children before the divorce. Because the majority of mothers seek and obtain custody (Furstenberg & Spanier, 1984), those who do not may be more likely to be psychologically impaired and to have difficulties relating to their children. Thus it is also plausible that poorer predivorce maternal adjustment and mother-child relations contributed to the mother's noncustodial status. The present findings do not shed light on the direction of the causal relationship between noncustodial maternal status and more negatively perceived mother-child relationships.

An unexpected finding was that subjects from stepfather families did not perceive their relationships with their biological mothers less positively than subjects from intact families. These results seem to be inconsistent with the findings of Parish and Kappes (1980) and Fine et al. (1983). However, both of these studies treated subjects from divorced families as a group. They did not separate perceived mother-child relationships in single-parent families from those in remarried families. Consequently, it is not possible from these studies to determine if perceived mother-child relationships in the remarried families were more negative than those in intact families.

In addition, these results are consistent with a later study by Fine, Worley, and Schwebel (1986). In a replication of their earlier study, they found that children from single-parent families did not perceive their relationships with their custodial biological mothers less positively than did children from intact families perceived their relationships with their mothers. They concluded that the increased cultural acceptance of single-parent status over time may account for the lack of differences in perceived quality of mother-child relationships.

Mother most recently lived with-child relationships

It was found that now-adult children who lived with stepmothers perceived their stepmother-child relationships less positively than now-adult children who lived with their biological mothers perceived their biological mother-child relationships.

This finding was expected, as the literature suggests that relationships between stepmothers and children differ in significant ways from relationships between biological mothers and children. As Duberman (1975) and Perkins and Kahan (1979) suggest, the stepparent is not a replacement for the noncustodial biological parent, but instead creates a new role in the family. This new role may be perceived as a threat to already established roles adopted since the divorce (Lutz, 1983). The new stepparent is also likely to be seen as an intruder into the singleparent family, especially by children who maintain a sense of loyalty to the noncustodial parent (Visher & Visher, 1982).

Although not predicted, it was found that now-adult children from stepfather families perceived their relationships with their custodial biological mothers more positively than children from stepmother families perceived their relationships with their stepmothers. Although the family structure has been altered in the stepfather families, the children remain with their biological mothers. Therefore, the perceived quality of these mother-child relationships would be expected to be more similar to the biological mother-child relationships in intact families than to the stepmother-child relationships in stepmother families.

#### Father-Child Relationships

##### Biological father-child relationships

No significant differences were found in perceived quality of biological father-child relationships among subjects from stepfather, stepmother, and intact families. This finding, which was inconsistent with the prediction that those from intact and stepmother families would perceive their relationships with their fathers more positively than would those from stepfather families, is difficult to interpret. Several possible explanations may be posited.

First, as the majority of the studies showing poor relations with noncustodial fathers were conducted with single-parent families (Fine et al., 1983; Hetherington et al., 1978; Parish & Kappes, 1980; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980), it may be that the addition of stepfathers to singlemother families may result in improved parent-child relations with noncustodial fathers. The addition of a stepfather to a stable singleparent family may affect noncustodial parent-child relations in at least three alternative ways:

In a positive sense, children (particularly younger ones) may benefit from having another supportive adult accessible to them. In fact, there is some evidence that the presence of a stepfather can have positive effects on the cognitive development of boys (Ganong & Coleman, 1984). If the addition of the stepfather leads to improved child adjustment, the child may be more capable of positively relating to the noncustodial father than he or she was previously.

In a more negative sense, the addition of a stepfather may seriously disrupt the already stable and perhaps comfortable roles developed in the single-parent family. If the stepfather attempts to adopt the role of primary disciplinarian or expects to instantly love and be loved by stepchildren, even greater levels of family tension may develop ( Visher & Visher, 1982). In these cases, children may reach out to noncustodial fathers to compensate for the deficiencies in their home environments.

Noncustodial fathers may feel that their roles are being usurped by the new male addition to their children's families and may make more of an effort to relate to their children than they did before their ex-wives remarried.

Second, those studies demonstrating that children in stepfamilies perceived their biological father-child relations more negatively than did those from intact families typically employed younger subjects than those studied in the present investigation. Halperin and Smith (1983), for example, studied children aged 10 to 12. Therefore, it may be that the more negative perceptions of noncustodial father-child relations are primarily present in the short run and are reduced in magnitude by young adulthood.

Third, as the role of the noncustodial father has become more common in our society, it may be more culturally accepted. If this is the case, children and noncustodial fathers may not feel as ostracized and may be able to relate to each other more effectively.

#### Father most recently lived with-child relationships

No significant differences were found between perceived biological father-child relationships for subjects who lived with their biological fathers (whether with their biological mother or a stepmother) and perceived stepfather-child relationships for subjects who lived with their stepfathers. These findings were also not expected. Some of the same explanations posited to account for the lack of perceived differences in biological father relationships across stepfather, stepmother, and intact families may also apply to this finding. That is, studies suggesting negatively perceived stepfather-child relations ( Bowerman & Irish, 1962; Perkins & Kahan, 1979) studied school-age children in contrast to college-age subjects, and the stepfather role may be more socially accepted now than it has been in the past.

Related to this latter point is the notion that stepfather families, which are much more common than are their stepmother counterparts, have somewhat clearer and better defined institutionalized norms, roles, and expectations than do stepmother families. Cherlin (1978) has suggested that the degree of family conflict and strain in relationships is directly related to how clearly defined the roles and expectations are for individual family members. Parents and children in intact families have the clearest guidelines for how they should act in a variety of areas, including discipline, display of affection, and sharing time together. Single-parent families, partly because of the publicity this family structure has received in the media recently, have increasingly clear perceptions of the roles and expectations that are most adaptive for them. According to Cherlin

(1978), stepfamilies have the least clearly articulated guidelines to assist family members, particularly in the areas of discipline and expression of affection. Because of the relative infrequency of stepmother families, it is reasonable to expect that this type of family has the least amount of role clarity in these areas. Therefore, one would expect that family relations would be relatively more cohesive in stepfather families than in stepmother families (see Duberman, 1975), which was, in fact, found in the present study. Furthermore, one would predict that, over time, as stepfather families become more socially accepted and adaptive roles are identified and performed by members of such families, stepfather-child relations would progressively improve.

In addition, it is possible that stepfathers are seen as less of a threat to the roles children have adopted since the divorce because they are likely to have less contact with their children than stepmothers are likely to have ( Santrock & Sitterle, 1987). It is more likely that stepmothers will be home with the children during the day, whereas stepfathers are more likely to be working outside the home. Even if working, stepmothers are likely to have more day-to-day responsibilities related to the children than do stepfathers.

#### Implications for Clinicians

Although there were differences among subjects from stepmother, stepfather, and intact families in perceptions of the quality of motherchild relationships, the present investigation found no evidence that the mother-child relationships in stepfamilies were unhealthy. On an absolute basis, subjects from stepmother families rated their relationships with their mothers and stepmothers as essentially average in quality. By comparison, those from stepfather and intact families rated their relationships with their mothers, fathers, and stepfathers as above average in quality.

Consequently, it would be inappropriate to conclude that these findings indicate that stepmother families require intervention to improve the quality of family relationships. However, these results do suggest that relationships in stepmother families are more likely to be dysfunctional than are those in stepfather and intact families and that some stepmother families might benefit from psychotherapeutic intervention. As a result, clinicians should be especially sensitive to the potential difficulties facing members of stepmother families. We believe that clinicians engaged in individual psychotherapy with members of stepmother families should carefully assess for the possibility that at least some of the stressors encountered are the result of problems in the family system and that the level of individual functioning may improve if relationships within the stepfamily system can be improved.

Although a variety of approaches to treating stepfamilies have been reported ( Baptiste, 1983; Prosen & Farmer, 1982; Visher & Visher, 1982), there are some key elements that are common to a variety of methods. These include:

Assisting stepfamily members to recognize that they are not alone in their difficult experiences. Support groups, such as the Stepfamily Association of America, are extremely valuable resources.

Helping members to identify, clarify, and implement their roles in the stepfamily. Toward this end, it is often helpful to have each family member share what his or her perception is of his or her own roles and those of the other family members, as well as how these roles have changed over time. The notion that optimal role functioning in stepfamilies is likely to be different from that in intact families needs to be continually emphasized.

Improving stepparent-child relations by clarifying stepparents and stepchildren's expectations regarding the nature of their relationship. If the parties desire greater closeness and intimacy, joint activities with only stepparents and stepchildren participating might be suggested.

Identifying, discussing, and dispelling family "myths." Common myths are that stepfamily members can "instantly love" each other and that the stepparent can take the place of the noncustodial biological parent.

These findings also suggest that children in stepmother families perceive their relationships with their noncustodial mothers more negatively than do those children who live with their mothers. Consequently, efforts might be directed at improving this relationship. Once again, a number of approaches are possible, including the addition of the noncustodial mother into family therapy with the stepmother family and separate work with the child and noncustodial mother. Moreland, Schwebel, Fine, and Vess (1982) advocate "postdivorce family therapy" that attempts to increase ex-spouse cooperation in child-rearing activities and to improve the quality of parent-child communication. The authors caution that such an approach is not indicated when both spouses are not able or do not desire to cooperate or when one of the parents has severe psychopathology. This caution is particularly relevant with stepmother families, because, as described earlier, noncustodial mothers may be more likely to have adjustment difficulties than are custodial mothers and fathers.

#### Implications for Future Research

It is suggested that future research attempt to further explore the two primary findings in the present study—that relationships with mothers and stepmothers in stepmother families are perceived more negatively than are other parent-child dyads and that there were no differences in the perceived quality of father-child and stepfather-child relations across the three family types. There are several possible ways to expand our knowledge in this area: First, only now-adult children's perceptions of parent-child relationships were investigated in the present study. Because parents and children have differing perspectives on their relationships, it would be helpful to assess biological and stepparents' perceptions of the nature of their relations with their children. Second, a notable limitation in stepfamily research is the lack of longitudinal designs. It would be particularly useful to study parent-child relationships as families progress from intact

to single-parent and, finally, stepfamily status. Such designs would assist in clarifying the nature of the causal link between stepmother family status and more negatively perceived parent-child relations. Third, the college sample used in this study was fairly homogeneous, largely white, and middle-class. As subjects from different ages, educational levels, races, and socioeconomic status may have differing experiences in stepfamilies, it is suggested that samples from these populations be employed in future investigations. Fourth, there are few studies that have explored the relationship between the quality of parent-child relationships in step families and the quality of the adjustment of parents and children in such families. Such investigations, especially if longitudinal, would assist in identifying the long-term impact that parent-child relationships of varying quality and structure have on child and parental adjustment.

## REFERENCES

- Baptiste, D. A. ( 1983). Family therapy with reconstituted families: A crisis-induction approach. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 11, 5– 15.
- Bowerman, C., & Irish, D. ( 1962). Some relationships of stepchildren to their parents. *Marriage and Family Living*, 24, 113– 121.
- Cherlin, A. ( 1978). Remarriage as an incomplete institution. *American Journal of Sociology*, 84, 634– 650.
- Cherlin, A., & McCarthy, J. ( 1985). Remarried couple households: Data from the June, 1980 Current Population Survey. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 47, 23– 30.
- Duberman, L. ( 1975). *The reconstituted family*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Fine, M. A., Moreland, J. R., & Schwebel, A. I. ( 1983). Long-term effects of divorce on parent-child relationships. *Developmental Psychology*, 19( 5), 703– 713.
- Fine, M. A., Worley, S. M., & Schwebel, A. I. ( 1985). The Parent-Child Relationship Survey: An examination of its psychometric properties. *Psychological Reports*, 57, 151– 161.
- Fine, M. A., Worley, S. M., & Schwebel, A. I. ( 1986). The effects of divorce on parentchild relationships. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 1( 3), 451– 463.
- Furstenberg, F., & Spanier, G. ( 1984). *Recycling the family: Remarriage after divorce*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Ganong, L. H., & Coleman, M. ( 1984). The effects of marriage on children: A review of the empirical literature. *Family Relations*, 33, 389– 406.
- Ganong, L. H., & Coleman, M. ( 1986). Clinical and empirical literature on stepchildren. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48, 309– 318.

- Glick, P. ( 1984). Marriage, divorce and living arrangements: Prospective changes. *Journal of Family Issues*, 5, 7– 26.
- Halperin, S., & Smith, T. ( 1983). Differences in stepchildren's perceptions of their stepfathers and natural fathers: Implications for family therapy. *Journal of Divorce*, 7, 19– 30.
- Hetherington, E. M., Cox, M., & Cox, R. ( 1978). The aftermath of divorce. In J. H. Stevens Jr., & M. Matthews ( Eds. ) , *Mother/child, father/child relationships* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Langer, L., & Michael, S. ( 1963). *Life stress and mental health*. New York: Macmillan.
- Lutz, P. ( 1983). The stepfamily: An adolescent perspective. *Family Relations*, 32, 367– 375.
- Messinger, L. ( 1976). Remarriage between divorced people with children from previous marriages: A proposal for preparation for remarriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family Counseling*, 2, 193– 200.
- Moreland, J. R., Schwebel, A. I., Fine, M. A., & Vess, J. D. ( 1982). Postdivorce family therapy: Suggestions for professionals. *Professional Psychology*, 13, 639– 646.
- Palermo, E. ( 1980). Remarriage: Parental perceptions of steprelations with children and adolescents. *Journal of Psychiatric Nursing and Mental Health Services*, 18, 9– 13.
- Parish, T., & Kappes, B. ( 1980). Impact of father loss on the family. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 8, 107– 112.
- Perkins, T. F., & Kahan, J. P. ( 1979). An empirical comparison of natural father and stepfather family systems. *Family Process*, 18, 175– 183.
- Prosen, S. S., & Farmer, J. H. ( 1982). Understanding stepfamilies: Issues and implications for counselors. *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 60, 393– 397.
- Santrock, J. W., & Sitterle, K. A. ( 1987). Parent-child relationships in stepmother families. In K. Pasley & M. Ihinger-Tallman ( Eds. ) , *Remarriage and stepfamilies today: Theory and research* New York: Guilford.
- Visher, E. B., & Visher, J. J. ( 1982). Children in stepfamilies. *Psychiatric Annals*, 12( 9), 832– 841.
- Wallerstein, J. S., & Kelly, J. B. ( 1980). *Surviving the break-up: How children actually cope with divorce*. New York: Basic Books.