

For Immediate Release

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When Mom Dates, Dad Stops Visiting His Kids

Kutztown, PA—August 3, 2009— New research from the *Journal of Marriage and Family* shows that children born outside of marriage are less likely to be visited by their father when the mother is involved in a new romantic relationship. Many children born outside of marriage are born to parents in unstable relationships and often live apart from their fathers. The study finds that a mother's social decisions have a direct effect on the contact between a father and his child.

Fathers are likely to not visit their child at all when the child's mother forms a new relationship early in the child's life, especially if the new relationship is co-residential and the new partner is involved in childrearing activities. Additionally, fathers who initially visited their child at an earlier point are likely to stop visiting their child if the mother becomes romantically attached to someone. However, if the relationship ends, fathers have an opportunity to re-enter their child's life.

The study examines the interactions non-residential fathers have with their children when a non-paternal figure (or co-residential partner) enters the life of the child. The research suggests that non-residential fathers should continue visitation despite the more complicated parental roles and relationships that may arise when mothers enter new relationships. The study notes that biological fathers can still make a unique contribution to their children even when their children have a new potential father-figure. More generally, this research also shows that decisions concerning parental responsibility and involvement do not operate in a vacuum, so efforts to promote responsible fatherhood need to consider both mothers' and fathers' behaviors.

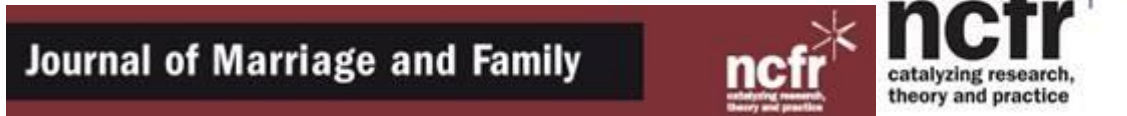
The research, conducted by Dr. Karen Benjamin Guzzo of Kutztown University, looks at the significant decisions made by both parents when raising a child outside of marriage. It uses data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, a nationally representative longitudinal study of nearly 5,000 children born in large U.S. cities between 1998 and 2000, the majority of whom are born outside of marriage.

The article was recently published in the August, 2009 *Journal of Marriage and Family*. Media wishing to receive a PDF of this article may contact scholarlynews@wiley.com.

To view the abstract for the articles, please click [here](#).

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Dr. Karen Benjamin Guzzo is an Assistant Professor at Kutztown University in Pennsylvania and has been involved with other research involving stepchildren and biological kids from new relationships, as well as the factors that influence paternity establishment for children born outside of marriage. She is currently researching whether having non-residential children and stepchildren influence men's interactions with co-residential children. She can be reached for questions at guzzo@kutztown.edu.



The Journal of Marriage and Family (JMF) has been a leading research journal in the family field for more than seventy years. *JMF* features original research and theory, research interpretation and reviews, and critical discussion concerning all aspects of marriage, other forms of close relationships, and families.

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