



**For Immediate Release**

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**Single Mothers Spend Less Time with their Children than Married Mothers**

*Similar education and employment status could eliminate the difference*

**College Park, MD – November 24, 2008** – A new study in the *Journal of Marriage and Family* examined differences in the amount and type of time that single, cohabiting, and married mothers spend with their children. Cohabiting and married mothers spend similar amounts of time caring for their children. Results show that single mothers spend less time with their children than married mothers. However, if single mothers had the same level of education and employment as married mothers, they would spend the same amount of time with their children.

Single mothers spent around 83 to 90 percent as much time with their children as married mothers. Single mothers spend less time with children, on average because as a group they are less educated than married mothers - and more highly educated mothers spend more time with children. As a group, single mothers have higher employment rates - and employed mothers spend less time caring for their children than mothers who are not employed.

“This suggests that if we want to equalize maternal investments in time with children, we could do so by encouraging policies that focus on improving educational and employment opportunities for single mothers,” the authors conclude.

Sarah Kendig and Suzanne Bianchi of the University of Maryland used data from the American Time Use Survey to study the relationship between family structure and maternal time with children among 4,309 married mothers and 1,821 single mothers with children less than 13 years of age.

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**This study is published in the December 2008 issue of the *Journal of Marriage and Family*.**

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## A Publication of the National Council on Family Relations

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For more than 70 years, *Journal of Marriage and Family (JMF)* has been a leading research journal in the family field. *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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