

In: Milinki, A.K. (ed.). (2000) A Cross Section of Psychological Research: Journal Articles for Discussion and Evaluation. Los Angeles, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

Article 18

The Influence of a Big Brothers Program on the Adjustment of Boys in Single-Parent Families

DOUGLAS A. ABBOTT
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

WILLIAM H. MEREDITH
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

ROLEE SELF-KELLY
Big Brothers-Big Sisters of the Midlands

M. ELIZABETH DAVIS
University of Nebraska at Omaha

ABSTRACT. This study is an evaluation of the self-competence, academic performance, behavioral problems, and parent-child relations of boys who had been raised in single-parent families headed by their mothers and who had weekly contact with an adult friend or companion through a midwestern affiliate of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America. Results indicated that participation in such a program was not related to changes in the areas investigated. These findings are not consistent with the social support literature suggesting that an adult companion or friend may benefit children in single-parent families. Further study with a larger sample, over a longer time frame, is recommended.
From *The Journal of Psychology*, 131, 143-156. Copyright © 1997 by Heldref Publications, 1319 Eighteenth St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036-1802. Reprinted with permission from the Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation.

Professionals in the field of marriage and the family are increasingly concerned about the fragmentation of the American family and its effects on children (Children's Defense Fund, 1988). The divorce rate remains high, and it is estimated that over 50% of the marriages of those now in their 20s will end in divorce (Norton & Moorman, 1987). Over 1,000,000 children will experience the trauma of their parents' divorce or separation each year (Spanier, 1989). The rate of out-of-wedlock pregnancy also continues to increase, and currently 27% of all live births are to unwed women, which leaves another 1,000,000 children per year in single-parent families (Edwards, 1987).

Children in single-parent families may be at greater risk than children of two-parent families (Amato & Keith, 1991a, 1991b; Bahr, 1989; Bilge & Kaufman, 1983; Booth, Brinkerhoff, & White, 1984; Booth & Edwards, 1989; Bumpass, 1990; McLanahan & Booth, 1989; Glenn & Kramer, 1985, 1987; Krein, 1986; Lauer & Lauer, 1991; Mackinnon, Brody, & Stoneman, 1982; Mueller & Cooper, 1986). Amato (1993) suggested that single parenthood is problematic for children's socialization because many children with one parent receive less economic and emotional support,

25 practical assistance, information, guidance, and supervision, and less role modeling for adult interpersonal interaction than children in two-parent families.

Wallerstein has studied children from families disrupted by divorce across three generations and concluded that such children "lose something fundamental to their development—family structure, the scaffolding upon which children mount successive developmental stages, which supports their psychological, physical and emotional ascent into maturity" (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1990, p. 64). Lamb (1987) concluded: "Suffice it to say the boys growing up without fathers seemed to have problems in the areas of sex-role and gender-identity development, school performance, psychological adjustment, and perhaps, in the control of aggression" (p. 14).

As a result of the increasing numbers of children in single-parent families, programs have been established that pair an adult volunteer with a child who may benefit from adult companionship. The largest and most prominent of these programs in America is the Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the influence of a Big Brothers program on the academic, psychological, and social development of boys. Knowledge acquired from this type of research may improve the effectiveness of intervention programs that seek to support children in single-parent families.

Potential Benefits of Social Support for Children of Single Parents

If we accept the premise that, on average, children in single-parent families are more likely to experience difficulties, then the question becomes, what can we do to assist and support these children? Amato (1993) presents some evidence that such children may experience a higher level of well-being if another adult is available to provide the role functions of the absent parent (see also Dornbusch et al., 1985). Santrock and Warshak (1979) found that contact with adult caretakers other than the custodial mother was associated with positive behavior among children of divorced parents. Cochran, Lamer, Riley, Gunnarsson, and Henderson

65 (1990) reported that among boys in families with only the mother as the parent, school success was associated with the amount of task-orientated interaction with adult male relatives.

70 Guidubaldi, Cleminshaw, Perry, and McLaughin (1983) found that a child's positive relationships with adult caretakers predicted positive social adjustment. Sandler, Miller, Short, and Wolchik (1989) suggested that positive interaction with caring adults can enhance the self-esteem of children experiencing stressful life events like divorce (see also Sandler, Wolchik, & Brower, 1987). These studies suggest that an adult friend or companion who provides some caretaking functions may have a beneficial impact on a child in a single-parent family. Thus, one therapeutic option is to provide the child with regular contact with an adult friend who shows a consistent interest and concern in the child's welfare.

85 Child-adult companion programs such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters are one type of intervention that may help to support a child in a single-parent family. The Big Brothers/Big Sisters program is a national, nonprofit organization that recruits adults who volunteer to spend some time each week with a child from a single-parent family whose custodial parent has requested this service. The organization was started in 1907 and now has 502 affiliate programs distributed in all 50 states. There are approximately 50,000 boys and girls being served by Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Volunteers are carefully screened and then matched with a same-sex child. The volunteer meets with the child each week for a visit and/or activity.

100 In spite of the growing number of volunteer programs, we found no published studies on the value of or effectiveness of adult companions on the emotional or social development of children from single-parent families. There is some research on how contact and involvement by the noncustodial father influences a child's adjustment to divorce, but these studies were not considered equivalent to the influence of a nonrelative adult companion on a child's development (Guidubaldi, 1986).

Theory and Hypothesis

110 An adult companion program such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters may provide a positive influence on a child's development. This assumption rests on two theoretical foundations: modeling theory and social support theory (Bandura, 1977; Lee, 1979; Wolchik, Ruchlman, Braver, & Sandler, 1989). Modeling theory stresses the importance of the relationship between the observer (e.g., the child) and the model (e.g., the Big Brother) in eliciting imitative behavior. The child is more likely to model adult action and personality if the adult is seen as important, powerful, warm and nurturant (Bandura & Walters, 1963). The Big Brother or Big Sister volunteer serves as a positive role model for the child in a variety of vocational, psychological, and

social ways.

125 One aspect of social support theory suggests that an individual or family is more likely to cope with stressful or difficult life circumstances (e.g., low-income single parenting) if supported by family, friends, and helping professionals or organizations (Boss, 1988; Milardo, 1988; Perlman & Rook, 1987; Unger & Powell, 1980). The Big Brothers/Big Sisters agency personnel provide institutional support to the single parent through frequent interviews (every 2 to 3 months), counseling, and referral to other community resources. This type of social support may buffer the child against the stressful life events so often experienced by poor children in single-parent families (Cohen & Willis, 1985).

135 Supported by these theoretical assumptions, our program evaluation was guided by the major goals of the local Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, which were to (a) improve the child's feelings of self-competence, (b) encourage the child's achievement in school, (c) monitor the child's psychosocial problems, and (d) encourage a positive parent-child relationship. Given these goals, we posited that regular adult companionship over many months could have many beneficial general effects on a child's development. A child's feelings of self-competence may be enhanced by regular, long-term contact with an adult companion. The special attention and the weekly activities with an attentive and interested adult may help the child feel better about himself or herself.

150 In addition, an adult volunteer who frequently shares facts and feelings about work and careers and helps the child with homework and school projects may encourage the child's school performance. Ideally, with enhanced self-competence and improved school performance, the child may be less likely to display behavioral problems. Finally, the parent-child relationship may be indirectly affected by the combined effect of all these factors. A child who is more self-competent, who is doing better in school, and who displays fewer behavior problems, may engender more positive relations with his mother. The Big Brother or Big Sister may also directly encourage the child to work out conflicts and problems with his mother.

165 Our major purpose in this study was to evaluate whether a child's participation in a companionship program was related to changes in the child's (a) self-competence, (b) school performance, (c) emotional and social problems, and (d) parent-child relationship. Based on the previous rationale, we hypothesized that boys with a Big Brother would evidence greater improvement over time in self-competence, in school performance, in reducing emotional and social problems, and in the quality of the parent-child relationship than boys without a Big Brother.

Method

Participants

We selected the children from single-parent families and the adult companions from a midwestern affiliate of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, a nationally known and well-respected adult-companion program. Because the great majority of clients at this chapter of Big Brothers/Big Sisters were boys, only boys 8–14 years of age were selected for the study. All children came from mother-headed, single-parent households. None of the boys had been diagnosed with any mental or physical disabilities.

About 120 boys began the study, approximately 40 in the intervention group (those who received a Big Brother) and 80 in the comparison group (those on the waiting list who had not yet received a Big Brother). Out of the comparison group (at the end of the study), those boys who matched most closely the demographics of the intervention groups were selected for the final sample. Over the 2-year span of the study, about 60% of the boys dropped out of the program because of relocation or loss of contact with the organization.

The final sample consisted of 44 boys: 22 in the intervention group, who had had at least weekly contact with a Big Brother for 12–18 months, and 22 in the comparison group, who had been on the waiting list for 12–18 months and had not yet received an adult companion. The boys were matched on several variables such as age, race, number of siblings, mother's education and income, reason for single-parent status (e.g., divorced/separated, widowed, or unwed motherhood), the child's age when the father left home, and the extent of the child's contact with the noncustodial father. No significant differences were found between the intervention and comparison groups on any of these variables (see Table 1).

Design and Procedure

A pretest–posttest longitudinal design was used. Boys with Big Brothers were compared with boys on the waiting list on the outcome measures at the beginning of the study and then 12–18 months later. We obtained permission from both parents and children by using adult and child consent forms. Big Brothers case managers administered the self-report questionnaires to the parents and children during a regularly scheduled visit required by the program. The surveys were administered to the intervention group when the children were matched with an adult volunteer and then 12–18 months after the match. The comparison group was surveyed when they were put on the waiting list and then 12–18 months later if they had not yet been assigned a Big Brother.

Instruments and Measures

To measure the child's level of self-competence and personal competence, we administered Harter's (1985) Self-Perception Profile. This scale measures six

domains of competence: scholastic, social, athletic, physical, behavioral conduct, and global self-competence. Harter's scale is generally accepted as a valid and reliable measure of various components of self-competence (Stigler, Smith, & Mao, 1985).

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Boys with and without a Big Brother

Characteristic	With a Big Brother (n = 22)		Without a Big Brother (n = 22)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Child's age	9.7	3.5	10.7	1.6
Mother's age	36.3	4.5	36.1	5.1
Mother's education	14 yrs	3.5	13 yrs	3.1
Siblings	1.3	0.7	1.6	1.2
Age when father left home	4.5	3.7	3.6	3.3
Mother's average income	\$11,000–20,000		\$11,000–20,000	
Father living	75%		76%	
Reason for single parent				
Divorce	71%		80%	
Unmarried	19%		10%	
Widowed	10%		10%	
Father visitation	Once a year or less		Once a year or less	

The Harter instrument uses a structured alternative format. The child is first asked to decide which kind of child is most like him or her, and then whether this is *sort of true* or *really true* for him or her. Items are scored from 1 to 4, with 1 indicating low perceived competence. Each of the six subscales contained six items. Reliabilities for all subscales based on Cronbach's alpha ranged from .71 to .86 on four samples as reported by Harter (1985). Two test–retest evaluations were completed after 3 months and correlated at .80 and .83 (Harter, 1985). Cronbach's alpha reliability for this study was .85.

The children's school performance was evaluated by obtaining the child's school grades after receiving written permission from the parents. Grades were based on a 5-point scale with a 1 indicating superior performance or a grade of A.

To measure the child's relationship with his mother, we developed the Family Feelings scales, consisting of two forms, one for the child to complete and one for the mother to complete. The items on both scales were similar in content but worded for a child to evaluate his relationship with his mother (e.g., "Mom and I fight about the same things over and over"), or for the mother to evaluate her relationship with her son (e.g., "My son and I fight about the same things over and over"). We developed the scales after a review of items from the Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (Barnes & Olson, 1985), the Family Satisfaction Scale (Olson & Wilson, 1985), the Family Environ-

ment Scale (Moos & Moos, 1981), and the Inventory of Family Feelings (Lowman, 1981).

265 Our scale was evaluated for content validity and age appropriateness by 15 family professionals in child development, social work, psychology, and sociology. Two professors in teacher education determined that the reading level of the scale was suitable for young children. The scale was composed of 28 items. A high score on the Family Feelings Scale indicates more positive parent-child relations. For this study, the mean on the child version of family feelings was 63.4 ($SD = 8.0$) and Cronbach's alpha was .78. For the parent version, the mean was 63.3 ($SD = 7.9$) and Cronbach's alpha was .85.

To measure the child's social and emotional problems, we had the mothers complete the Revised Behavior Problem Checklist (Quay & Peterson, 1987). The RBPC consists of 89 items scored on a 3-point scale: *no problem* (0), *mild problem* (1), *severe problem* (2). It is appropriate to use the total score of all 89 items and/or the individual subscale scores.

The checklist is divided into six subscales: Conduct Disorder (e.g., gets into fights); Socialized Aggression (e.g. belongs to a gang); Immaturity (e.g., is irresponsible and undependable); Anxiety-Withdrawal (e.g., feels inferior); Psychotic Behavior (e.g., expresses strange ideas); Motor Excess (e.g., is restless, unable to sit still). The instrument is rated at the fifth-grade reading level and takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Quay and Peterson (1987) provide substantial reliability and validity information, including 2-month test-retest correlations of .61-.83 with various samples of children. The RBPC has strong correlations with measures of similar content including the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983) and Conner's Revised Parent Rating Scale (Conners, 1970). For this sample, the mean score for behavior problems was 46.6 ($SD = 29.9$) and Cronbach's alpha was .96.

Results

Significant correlations among dependent variables would indicate that multivariate statistics should be used, whereas a lack of significant associations would indicate multiple ANOVAs should be computed (Huberty & Morris, 1989). Because there were no significant correlations between grade point average or quality of parent-child relationship as perceived by the parent and the child, we computed three 2 (group: boys with Big Brothers vs. boys without) \times 2 (time: Time 1, Time 2) repeated measures ANOVAs on each of these three dependent variables.

The other two dependent measures were Harter's Self-Competence subscales and Quay's Behavior Problem subscales. Because the Harter subscales are interrelated, and Quay's subscales are interrelated, two 2 (group) \times 2 (time) MANOVAs were done to assess differences on these measures between boys with and

without Big Brothers. Because of the exploratory nature of these analyses, an alpha level of $p < .10$ was used.

The major research question of this study was whether the boys, who over a sustained period of time, had regular companionship of a Big Brother differed from a matched sample of boys without a Big Brother in the areas of self-concept, school grades, emotional relationships with their mothers, and frequency of behavioral problems. The *t* tests revealed no pretest group differences between the boys with Big Brothers and the boys without Big Brothers on any dependent measures.

The results of the overall MANOVA revealed no significant Group \times Time interaction and no group or time main effects on the set of self-competence subscales between boys with and without Big Brothers. There were no significant Group \times Time interactions and no group or time main effects on any of the behavior problem subscales between boys with and without Big Brothers.

There was a significant Group \times Time interaction related to grade point average, $F(1, 39) = 3.6, p < .07$; contrary to our hypothesis, analysis of simple effects indicated that performance in school of boys with a Big Brother *decreased* from Time 1 ($M = 2.13$) to Time 2 ($M = 2.43$), $F(1, 39) = 3.0, p < .09$ (1 = high GPA, 5 = low GPA). The boys *without* a Big Brother showed no significant change in grade point average from Time 1 ($M = 2.71$) to Time 2 ($M = 2.56$).

There was a significant Group \times Time interaction on parent's perceptions of the parent-child relationship, $F(1, 42) = 3.3, p < .08$. Analysis of simple effects indicated that the mothers of boys without a Big Brother reported improvement in the parent-child relationship from Time 1 ($M = 62.5$) to Time 2 ($M = 67.1$), $F(1, 42) = 5.53, p < .02$. Mothers of boys with Big Brothers reported no significant change in their parent-child relationship from Time 1 ($M = 64.0$) to Time 2 ($M = 63.5$).

With regard to the children's perceptions of the parent-child relationship, there was no Group \times Time interaction, and there was no group main effect. A time main effect, $F(1, 42) = 2.7, p < .06$, indicated that all the boys in both groups reported improved parent-child relationships from Time 1 ($M = 63.3$) to Time 2 ($M = 65.6$).

Table 2 contains the statistics related to a comparison of boys with and without a Big Brother on the major dependent variables.

Discussion

In general, the results of this research indicate that the weekly companionship of an adult volunteer was not related to positive changes in certain developmental outcomes for boys participating in the Big Brothers program. These findings are not consistent with the social support literature that suggests that children in nonnuclear families often benefit from the companion-

Table 2
A Comparison of Boys with and without a Big Brother on Major Dependent Variables

Variable	With a Big Brother (n = 22)				Without a Big Brother (n = 22)			
	Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Child feeling	64.7	8.2	65.5	5.6	62.0	8.2	65.6	5.6
Parent feeling	64.0	7.6	63.5	9.4	62.5	8.1	67.1	9.7
Grade point average	2.13	1.0	2.43	1.1	2.71	1.1	2.56	1.2
Self-perceived competence								
Scholastic	18.5	3.8	17.6	4.2	16.5	4.9	16.4	3.0
Social	16.4	4.5	17.5	4.1	16.7	5.1	17.1	4.1
Athletic	16.4	4.4	18.5	3.8	17.1	5.7	16.9	3.9
Appearance	17.6	4.3	17.5	3.2	16.2	3.8	16.1	5.4
Behavior	18.5	2.6	17.8	5.4	16.9	5.1	15.9	3.9
Global	19.3	3.7	18.7	4.3	18.1	4.3	18.3	3.1
Behavior problems								
Conduct	16.7	11.0	17.3	11.1	21.0	11.6	20.4	11.8
Aggression	3.2	3.7	2.6	3.6	3.6	4.3	3.2	5.0
Immaturity	8.6	5.9	8.5	6.2	10.6	7.3	11.0	9.6
Anxiety	8.5	4.4	7.4	4.6	9.1	5.0	8.0	5.1
Psychotic	1.5	1.9	2.0	2.8	1.6	2.3	1.8	2.6
Motor	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.5	3.5	3.1	2.8	2.9

375 ship and active involvement of an adult friend (Coch-
 ran et al., 1990; Ihinger-Tallman, 1986; Lamb, 1982).
 380 Other researchers have also suggested that adult com-
 panions/friends may help children buffer stressful life
 events, enhance their self-esteem, and reduce deviant
 behaviors (Dornbush et al., 1985; Sandler et al., 1989).

Our results, however, should be viewed with cau-
 385 tion. One year may not be long enough to register
 changes in our particular dependent measures, espe-
 cially with our small sample. Our measures (grade
 point average, behavioral problems, self-competence,
 and the quality of parent-child relations) may have
 shown changes if the study had been extended over a
 longer period of time.

We were surprised that the school grades of boys
 390 with a Big Brother showed no improvement over the
 boys without a Big Brother. This result was unexpected
 because the case workers at Big Brothers told us re-
 peatedly that an adult companion frequently asks ques-
 395 tions about the child's school performance and encour-
 ages the child's attendance and achievement in school.
 Many volunteers help with the child's homework and
 school projects. Some Big Brothers go to the child's
 school open house, or may accompany the child's par-
 400 ent to parent-teacher conferences. Furthermore, the
 Big Brother, who is usually college educated and em-
 ployed, may serve as a school/work role model for the
 male child, thus indirectly encouraging the child to
 succeed in school.

There were no significant changes in behavioral
 405 problems for the boys with and without a Big Brother
 across the time period of this study. One explanation
 for this may be that their scores at the beginning and
 end of this study were already high. The subscale

means on conduct disorder, socialized aggression, and
 410 anxiety withdrawal for boys with and without Big
 Brothers were one to two standard deviations above
 Quay's norms for normal children, and similar to
 Quay's norms for his clinical samples of inpatients and
 415 outpatients at psychiatric facilities (Quay & Peterson,
 1983).

Modest gains in the quality of the parent-child re-
 lationship, as reported by all the boys, are difficult to
 explain. Improvement may be the natural result of time
 and the continued adjustment of the child and parent to
 420 a single-parent family situation. On the other hand,
 gains may be related to the mother and child's in-
 volvement in the Big Brothers organization.

Again, caution is warranted in evaluating these
 findings. The results could be an artifact of the small
 425 sample. In addition, the magnitude of the differences
 on the dependent measures between the boys with and
 without a Big Brother are small. This may indicate that
 the intervention of a volunteer companion, in and of
 itself, has only a limited impact on the development of
 430 boys in single-parent households. On the other hand, it
 may also indicate that the mothers of the control boys,
 motivated to have their sons placed with a Big Brother,
 may have attempted to accomplish this goal in other
 ways, that is, by giving more personal attention to their
 435 sons or finding other adult friends for them. A third
 explanation for these findings may suggest that the
 variables we studied and the method of measuring
 these concepts were less than adequate to identify
 change in development over a 1-year period.

Given these limitations, suggestions for improve-
 440 ments of this study are warranted. The impact of such a
 program might have been more readily assessed if a

larger pool of boys had been evaluated. Multisite samples could be pooled together from several cities across the country. Also, the time frame of the project could have been extended to 2 or 3 years if more resources had been available. However, given the mobility of Big Brothers/Big Sisters clients and volunteers, the evaluation of a larger sample over a longer time period may be difficult to accomplish. One solution might be to use different developmental measures that are more sensitive to change over a shorter period of time. In addition, any child on a waiting list may need more regular contact with the organization to prevent dropouts. Program staff could provide occasional activities, such as a field trip, a swimming party, or a parent-child activity for the families on the waiting list.

Arrangements with the various Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs could be worked out so that the researchers have more direct access to the participants. For this study, we were not allowed to contact the participants directly. We could only remind the case managers of when to do the assessments and hope they would follow through and collect the data on time. On several occasions, however, because of staff turnover or work overload, data were not collected or were obtained too late to be of use in the study.

Implications for Practice

In this study, program goals were not clearly and concisely articulated and we (the research team) may have missed some of the important outcomes or benefits of this program. Thus, the first implication of this study is a pragmatic one. When doing program evaluation, program staff, and the external evaluation team if one is used, should make a concerted effort to identify and specify as concretely as possible the program goals and expected behavioral outcomes (Posavac & Carey, 1985; Rutman, 1977). Research methods could then be more easily designed and used to evaluate performance objectives. For example, if the goal of the program is improved parent-child communication, then specific assessments of communication, using a variety of instruments, can be done.

A second advantage to ongoing evaluation is that it may remind program staff of program goals, and this may encourage accomplishment of those goals. Ongoing evaluation may also serve to motivate program staff to carry out their responsibilities by providing them with periodic progress reports on the children and adults they serve (Theobald, 1985).

Another suggestion for improving program evaluation would be the use of some qualitative measures in the evaluation (Gilgun, 1992; Rossi & Freeman, 1989). The results of our quantitative study may have limited our understanding of how such programs benefit children. In this study, structured interviews with mothers and sons, asking them directly to talk about any perceived effects of participation in the program, may have yielded relevant data that are not easily obtained

through quantitative global variables such as our measures of self-competence or grade point average.

In programs like Big Brothers/Big Sisters, where an adult has direct and intensive interaction with a child, the quality of that child-adult relationship may be a key variable in predicting improvement in child outcomes. This relationship variable should be evaluated and monitored closely. If practitioners examined specific aspects of the child-adult relationship and the processes of relationship development, it may be possible to understand how or why the relationship flourishes or fails and how this is related to program goals.

Another implication of this study is that children who have chosen to participate in such adult-helper programs may be at high risk for social and emotional difficulties. Program staff may want to administer more thorough intake evaluations of these children to gain a better understanding of the nature of their clients. If some children are rated as high risk, then more selective matching with adult helpers could be done. An adult volunteer could be chosen (or recruited) who has the knowledge and skills to deal with a more disturbed or difficult child. These adults could also be provided with special training by the sponsoring organization.

Although this study does not provide evidence that a volunteer program like Big Brothers/Big Sisters has a significant positive influence on the development of male children in homes headed by the mother, this does not mean that such programs are not effective. Additional research is needed in order to understand how such a program may benefit a child and what can be done to improve the effectiveness of such programs. If current trends in divorce and unwed parenthood continue, the numbers of children from single-parent homes will only increase, and understanding their challenges and developing strategies to assist them should be a high priority for social service professionals.

References

- Achenbach, T. M., & Edelbrock, C. (1983). *Manual for the Child Behavior Checklist*. Burlington, VT: Dept. of Psychiatry, University of Vermont.
- Amato, P. R. (1993). Children's adjustment to divorce: Theories, hypotheses, and empirical support. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 55, 23-38.
- Amato, P., & Keith, B. (1991a). Parental divorce and adult well-being: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 53, 43-58.
- Amato, P., & Keith, B. (1991b). Parental divorce and the well-being of children: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 110, 26-46.
- Bahr, S. (1989). *Family interaction* (pp. 178-180). New York: Macmillan.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A., & Walters, R. (1963). *Social learning and personality development*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Barnes, H., & Olson, D. H. (1985). Parent-adolescent communication. In D. H. Olson & Associates (Eds.), *Family inventories*. St. Paul, MN: Family Social Science, University of Minnesota.
- Bilge, B., & Kaufman, G. (1983). Children of divorce and one-parent families: Cross-cultural perspectives. *Family Relations*, 32, 59-71.
- Booth, A., Brinkerhoff, D., & White, L. (1984). The impact of parental divorce on courtship. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 46, 85-94.
- Booth, A., & Edwards, J. (1989). Transmission of marital and family quality over the generations: The effect of parental divorce and unhappiness. *Journal of Divorce*, 14, 41-58.
- Boss, P. (1988). *Family stress management*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Bumpass, L. (1990). Children's experience in single-parent families: Implications of cohabitation and marital transitions. *Family Planning Perspectives*,