

When Mom Dates, Dad Stops Visiting His Kids

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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](#).

Provided by Wiley ([news](#) : [web](#))

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