

**An Economic Framework and Selected  
Proposals for Demonstrations Aimed At  
Strengthening Marriage, Employment,  
and Family Functioning Outcomes**

ROBERT LERMAN

WITH

GREGORY ACS  
ANUPA BIR



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Prepared by

Robert I. Lerman  
Urban Institute and American University

With

Gregory Acs, Urban Institute  
Anupa Bir, RTI International

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Mark Fucello  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
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## I. INTRODUCTION

Over the last 50 years, the United States and other western countries have experienced dramatic and long-term changes in family and household formation, and in the ways individuals and families support themselves economically. The changes are well-known: people are deferring marriage to later ages and choosing not to marry at all; divorce rates are at high levels after rising dramatically and stabilizing; more children are born outside marriage and growing up with only one parent; and the sources of family income have shifted, as the role of men's earnings has declined while the roles of women's earnings and government transfer benefits have increased.<sup>1</sup> The trends and patterns vary sharply by educational attainment. More educated women are becoming less likely to divorce and still are very unlikely to bear a child outside marriage, while among less-educated women, the propensity to marry is declining, divorce rates are high and increasing, and nonmarital births have been rising and now account for over half of their births (Ellwood and Jencks 2004; Martin 2006; Raley and Bumpass 2003).<sup>2</sup> Although it is difficult to quantify the impacts of the complex interactions among marriage, employment, fertility, and the functioning of families, the consensus view is that on balance these demographic and economic trends have contributed to child poverty and economic inequality, harmed the health and well-being of adults, and diminished the ability of children to grow into productive and well-functioning adults.<sup>3</sup>

Delays in marriage and the increased share of children not living with two biological or adoptive parents have many potential causes (Ellwood and Jencks 2004). The rising acceptability of premarital sex, the increased effectiveness of birth control, and the expansion of female labor force participation are among the social, economic, and technical

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<sup>1</sup> For a thoughtful analysis of similar trends in the United Kingdom, see Social Justice Policy Group (2006).

<sup>2</sup> Comparing marital dissolution rates within 10 years of marriage by year of first marriage (1975-1979 to 1990-1994), Martin (2006) finds divorce increased from 38.3 to 46.3 percent among women with less than a high school degree but declined from 29.0 to 16.5 percent among women with a high school diploma. Unpublished tables drawn from the Centers for Disease Control web site show that in 2005, nonmarital births constituted 7.6 percent of all births to women college graduates and 54.9 percent of all births to women with a high school diploma or less education. See <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/VitalStats.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Blanchflower and Oswald (2004), Carlson and Corcoran (2001), Lerman (1996), McLanahan and Sandefur (1994), Thomas and Sawhill (2002), and Wilson and Oswald (2005).

factors that have played a role (see, for example, Akerlof Yellen, and Katz 1996; Goldin and Katz 2002). Financial disincentives to marry built into government tax and transfer programs may have played some role in reducing marriage among low-income parents (Carasso and Steuerle 2005). Whether or not government policies and programs bear some responsibility for these family outcomes, especially among low-income individuals, the problems are too serious for governments to ignore. Within the United States, several initiatives have aimed at preventing divorce and nonmarital births and at mitigating their consequences. The list includes an array of programs and demonstration projects testing such approaches as teen pregnancy prevention (Quint et al. 1997) and other early youth interventions (Maxfield, Schirm, and Rodriguez-Planas 2003), enhanced work incentives and work requirements for single mothers (Michalopoulos et al. 2002), increases in the affordability and availability of child care (Crosby, Gennetian, and Huston 2001), stronger enforcement of child support obligations of noncustodial parents (Miller and Knox 2001), and the provision of employment and training services to low-income individuals.

Recently, policymakers began a new set of initiatives to strengthen and increase healthy marriages. This effort recognizes the importance of marriage to adult and child well-being, the impact of marriage on employment outcomes and living standards, the desire by many couples to have healthy marriages, the disincentives to marry built into the nation's tax and transfer programs, and the need to respond to the decline of marriage, especially in the African American and low-income communities. The strategy focuses on improving the skills of individuals to communicate effectively with partners and spouses, to solve problems together, to parent well as a couple, to deal with financial conflicts and financial management, and to understand the long-term benefits of marriage. Developed under the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), the Healthy Marriage Initiative (HMI) is sponsoring a mix of demonstrations to test their effectiveness in strengthening marriage in the United States (Dion 2005). In 2006, the U.S. Congress included a five-year program of healthy marriage and father-involvement activities as part of the reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. So far, in addition to marriage education classes, healthy-marriage programs are using a range of approaches. Among them are mentoring couples, training individuals to deliver marriage education, employing family case managers; declaring celebration days for marriages; delivering media messages about

marriage; and sponsoring seminars and classes dealing with healthy relationships for high school and community college students. Other program features include referrals to services to address potential barriers to healthy marriage, such as employment, substance abuse, or mental health problems; and the formation of local coalitions to encourage government, nonprofit, clergy, and other local organizations to raise the consciousness of community members about the importance of marriage and the availability of marriage-strengthening services.

A commonly expressed concern about the HMI is that it lacks focus on what many regard as the primary barrier to marriage: the employment and career problems faced by a high share of low-skilled men. Men's labor market problems do affect whether couples enter marriage and remain married (Ahituv and Lerman 2007; Oppenheimer 2003), but the size of the effect is too small to explain the declining marriage rates among blacks (Wood 1995). Some recent evidence indicates that gains in employment and earnings that were experimentally induced among young people in the Job Corps demonstration had no impact on men's marriage outcomes but did raise the likelihood of marriage among women (Mamun 2007). At the same time, marriage itself significantly increases men's hours of work and wage rates (Ahituv and Lerman 2007). In addition, a growing body of evidence shows that marriage reduces crime and health problems, thereby indirectly improving men's job market outcomes (Sampson, Laub, and Wimer 2006). Thus, given these favorable impacts of marriage on men's employment, the HMI is likely to stimulate men's employment and earnings, albeit indirectly. Evidence on labor market gains for women from marriage is less clear, though married women generally report higher levels of well-being than unmarried women (Waite and Gallagher 2000).

Marriage also interacts with other significant aspects of social and economic life. Marriage is associated with increased wealth accumulation and reduced material hardship, even among individuals who have similar levels of education and earnings capacity (Lerman 2002; Lupton and Smith 1999). Parenting can strain couples' relationships, but the presence of children generally increases the likelihood of marrying and remaining married.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See section III.E in the appendix.

Maintaining a healthy marriage and a well-functioning family can be difficult in the face of such employment problems as unemployment and irregular or nonstandard work schedules.

Policy can drive interactions that lead to unproductive outcomes. For example, large financial disincentives to marry can reduce the likelihood of marriage, thus lowering men's earnings and increasing the likelihood of single parenthood. Strict child support policies that generate large arrearages (especially when men are unemployed or in prison) can discourage noncustodial fathers from working in mainstream jobs and lessen contact with their children.

Ethnographers and journalists have attempted to understand the social, economic, personal, and cultural mechanisms underlying these complex interactions. Particularly vexing is the question—if marriage exerts so many positive impacts, why has marriage been declining, especially among less-educated women bearing and parenting children? Finding the answers is not merely an academic exercise, but critical for efforts to halt and ultimately reverse the worsening trends in marriage and in the rates at which children grow up with just one parent.

The primary purpose of this project is to bring evidence and policy development together by using theories, quantitative evidence, and ethnographic findings about the interactions between marriage, employment, and family functioning to formulate new approaches for programs and policies—approaches that can be tested with rigorously evaluated demonstrations. The focus of the analysis and proposed demonstrations is on improving employment and family outcomes for disadvantaged populations and people at risk of poverty. In the appendix, we review an extensive body of research linking aspects of marriage, employment, and family functioning to determine the significance of specific relationships. The goal of this paper is to move to the next stage—to conceive promising strategies that take direct account of the mix of interactions uncovered in research.

The first step is to provide a theoretical framework that lays out the major factors influencing marriage and its interaction with other important outcomes. The second step is to use the framework to identify targets of opportunity to influence marriage, employment, and family functioning.

## **II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS**

This section presents a conceptual framework dealing with the major causes of marriage and its interaction with employment and family functioning. Although the framework applies broadly, of particular interest are the relationships between marriage and employment in the low-income population. These outcomes depend on the motivations of individuals, the external constraints they face, the choices individuals make as they convert their motivations into actions, and the cumulative impact of actions of others on the constraints and preferences of individuals. The pooled actions of other parties exert impacts via the labor market, the marriage market, and the norms of the individual's community, friends, peers, and family.

Well-developed theories in economics, sociology, and psychology offer a starting point for our conceptual framework. With a focus on labor and marriage markets, we present a framework that considers the interplay of (1) preferences, (2) incentives and constraints, (3) uncertainty and information, (4) skills, and (5) context. In addition to the five main causal factors in our framework identified above, we take account of theories of behavior and self-control in contexts of uncertainty.<sup>5</sup>

### **A. PREFERENCES AND VALUES**

Economists focus on how individuals maximize their satisfaction under constraints, where the satisfaction of individuals depends on their preferences. Although some economists, for example Veblen (1899) and Galbraith (1958), have long recognized the role of outside forces in influencing preferences, only recently have mainstream economists joined sociologists in focusing on the role of social interactions (Durlauf and Young 2001; Manski 2000), social norms (Kooreman 2007; Sliwka 2007), neighborhoods (Calvo-Armengol, Verdier, and Zenou, 2007; Vartanian and Buck 2005) and other institutions. In labor force decisions,

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<sup>5</sup> The early contributions by Thomas Schelling (1978) and by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman (1974) helped create the new and growing field of behavioral economics. They examined why people often make choices—such as smoking, staying overweight, taking drugs, and betting—that do not square with their welfare, as judged by themselves at another point in time.

individuals make choices based on their preferences not only for income and leisure, but also for job satisfaction, job comfort and safety, time spent with children, and work at home.

Preferences vary in the context of marriage and couple relationships as well. Not everyone places the same priority on marriage or long-lasting couple relationships. Preferences for marriage often interact with preferences about whether and when to have children. Although women commonly prefer to marry prior to having children, some women attach a higher priority to having children, even if childbearing takes place outside of marriage (Edin and Kefalas 2005).

Preferences can affect decisions about parental roles in housework, market work, and child care, about parenting styles, and about interactions with other family and friends. Individuals may value raising their partner's satisfaction, but they may place a higher priority on their own. Economists have developed bargaining theories to capture the way couples negotiate the sharing of income, housework, child care, and leisure (see Lundberg and Pollak 2003 for a recent example).

Preferences can arise from personal or group values that may be influenced by religion, by an internal sense of right and wrong, and by other influential people, including family members, mentors, teachers, and peers. The choice of how much to work and what jobs to accept depends not only on the desire for the income to buy goods and services, but also on preferences for family and leisure time, and on the satisfaction from having a job and performing job-related tasks. Some see work as a way of fulfilling a higher value. Values play an especially significant role in marriage and family preferences. People may prefer marriage before childbearing because they believe it is morally wrong to have sex before marriage or to have a child outside of marriage. People may prefer staying in a less than ideal marriage because they place a higher priority on the outcomes for their children than on their own gratification. Again, the source of such preferences may lie in personal values influenced by religion, community norms, upbringing within a family, or other sources.

One preference that exerts a major impact on work, career choice, and family behaviors is the individual's relative willingness to delay gratification for some larger benefit in the future (Banfield 1970; Laibson 1997). Individuals with a preference for immediate

gratification are typically less willing to study, work at a low wage, or accept unpleasant work conditions today in return for a higher wage and more satisfying job in the future. Some couples take a short-run perspective, pay little attention to building a healthy relationship, and have unintended pregnancies. Others develop their interactions in ways that offer a better chance for marriage and a healthy, long-term relationship.

Uncertainty is inextricably linked to current and future preferences. One reason for short versus long time horizons is different perceptions of future outcomes. Some individuals have little confidence that future gains will materialize in return for delaying gratification today. No doubt the perception and reality of future gains differ widely across individuals. In fact, it is hard to know whether observed choices reflect differences in preferences, in knowledge about the future, or in real uncertainties. Women may avoid marriage because they prefer independence or because of uncertainty over both the economic future and social behavior of their partner. Decisions about careers, marriage, and family functioning all depend on this confluence of preferences, knowledge, and genuine uncertainties. Choosing an education and training strategy depends not only on preferences for current versus future satisfaction, but also on one's knowledge about the future career outcomes in pursuing each strategy and on the actual variability in outcomes for various occupations.

The stability of preferences affects our understanding of what people choose and which policies can be effective. Preferences typically form within a context of family background, cultural traditions, peer groups, media messages, and the social norms of one's community. Although changing an individual's preferences may be difficult, programs often attempt to do so by appealing to an individual's sense of higher values, and by emphasizing the long-term satisfaction and pride one gains from constructive activities in work, parenting, and helping others. Where preferences are stable, purposeful, and reflective of individuality, shifts in individual decisions will take place mainly as a result of changing incentives and constraints, including skills. Although many argue for designing programs for low-income populations with respect for each person's preferences and without imposing middle-class values, others see changing preferences as critical to changing behavior. One expert on ex-offender programs argues that job-oriented interventions for young ex-

offenders will succeed only by motivating them to choose to exit from a life of crime (Bloom 2006; Bushway 2003). Another perspective emphasizes problems of self-control and ambivalence in people's desires. For example, an individual may want to leave the life of crime, but may lack sufficient self-control and may give in to a desire for excitement, revenge, or quick money.

Behavioral economists recognize that people may fail to save money, to stop smoking, or to meet work schedules because of short-term decisions that run counter to deeper preferences for their economic welfare and their health. The policy implications that behavioral economists promote often involve limiting choices and steering people to constructive alternatives that better reflect their long-term objectives and choices. Information may be necessary to reshape preferences and choices toward more constructive choices, but it is rarely sufficient. For example, men may engage in less casual sex after learning about the risks of sexually transmitted infections and about the risks of having to pay high levels of child support. But, altering the opportunities and changing community norms may be required as well. Thus, while preferences matter, the context within which preferences are formed, as well as other factors, will interact to determine the choices individuals make and their consequences.

## **B. INCENTIVES AND CONSTRAINTS**

In addition to preferences and values, choices clearly depend on incentives and constraints. In economic models, individuals maximize their satisfaction (which depends on their preferences) subject to constraints. Nonwage income and the net wage level are key variables affecting the choice about whether and how much to work. For any given set of preferences for work versus leisure, more nonwage income makes people wealthier, possibly reducing their hours of work, while higher net wages exert two offsetting effects. A higher wage rate increases income, lessening the need to work long hours; the higher wage also raises the gain from working extra hours, thus encouraging more hours working on the job. Empirical evidence shows that the expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) increased the net wage of many workers and led to increased work effort on the part of low-income single parents (Meyer and Rosenbaum 2001). Becker (1981) played a major role in extending standard economic models to marriage, viewing individuals as maximizing satisfaction on the

basis of full income (including household production) and as recognizing the benefits from jointly producing income and other outputs of value to each member of a couple.<sup>6</sup>

Tax and transfer programs can also affect marriage incentives and choices. Policies that strengthen the economic position of single parents relative to married parents can lead some couples to delay marriage. Some aspects of the tax system are favorable for married couples, especially for those with only one worker. However, in parts of the system with a single-family filing unit, a family definition of income, and progressive tax and transfer schedules, financial disincentives to marry are inevitable. The impact is particularly large for couples earning similar amounts of money. Disincentives to marry are especially high among couples that receive means-tested transfer income and live together without reporting their coresidence. Consider a mother with two children earning \$8 per hour and working 25 hours per week who receives food stamps, a housing subsidy, child care, and Medicaid benefits, and cohabits with a man working full-time at \$10 hour but not reporting his coresidence. If the average couple in the United States married, they would lose about 30 percent of their total income (about \$820 per month).<sup>7</sup> At the same time, low-income couples with substantially different incomes and little or no transfer income can be financially better off if they marry. Rigorous enforcement of child-support obligations strengthens disincentives to father children outside marriage and to divorce and become a noncustodial parent. But, added child support improves financial outcomes for custodial parents, reducing the financial constraints against unwed motherhood and maintaining a single-parent family. Overall, however, aggressive child support appears to reduce the share of low-income children in single-parent families (Acs and Nelson 2004). In addition, high child-support obligations and payment rates can reduce a father's incentive to work in the mainstream economy (Holzer, Offner, and Sorensen 2005).

The economic and social health of a family interacts in ways affected by incentives and constraints. Parents may resort to poor-quality child care because they lack resources for high-quality care. Conversely, the lack of decent backup child care forces some parents to be

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<sup>6</sup> For a recent discussion clarifying Becker's model and extensions, see Grossbard (2006).

<sup>7</sup> These calculations are drawn from tabulations specified using the ACF-sponsored Marriage Calculator. See <http://marriagecalculator.acf.hhs.gov/marriage/index.php>.

absent from work and can lead to the loss of a job. Some people face difficulties in credit markets that limit their borrowing and investment opportunities, putting homeownership out of reach. For low-income families, the inability to buy a car on credit can hamper their job search and job stability. On the positive side, legal constraints can improve family functioning, as in the case of strong enforcement of domestic-violence laws that limit a family member's ability to hurt another family member.

Sometimes, unnoticed institutional factors or seemingly minor transaction costs affect behavior in surprisingly significant ways. The availability of the Internet to reduce job-search costs may increase the return to employment. The presence of a nearby office may affect whether families apply for food stamps. In another context, the Congress recently recognized the potential importance of simple features of the institutional environment for encouraging enrollment in private pensions. It allowed employers to enroll new employees automatically unless they take an active step to withdraw. Research suggests this change in the "default" provision is likely to increase participation, despite having no effect on the economic returns to taking part in the program.

Changing incentives to alter outcomes is a common policy recommendation. Often, however, altering a policy instrument to encourage one objective (say, encouraging work by reducing the duration or benefit replacement rate of unemployment insurance) can negatively affect other outcomes, such as material hardship or family stability. Resolving such conflicts requires balancing among competing objectives or using additional policy instruments. For example, reducing benefits encourages single mothers to seek work but might leave them and their children worse off if no job is found. Instead, the government can leave benefits constant while imposing work requirements as a way to encourage people to take jobs without worsening their children's economic position of children. To help people overcome educational and other constraints that limit access to good-paying jobs, we can turn to other elements of our framework, particularly information and skills.

### **C. INFORMATION**

Insufficient information, an issue that economists have addressed rigorously in the last few decades, is clearly relevant to discussions about marriage, employment, and family functioning. Individuals base their decisions about work, marriage, and family functioning

partly on their interpretation of current and future realities. Unfortunately, their information is often incomplete and inaccurate. Too often, this misinformation or misperception contributes to bad life-course decisions. For example, lacking good information on the availability and requirements for good jobs and careers, young people spend too little time and effort concentrating on learning in school and outside of school. Some young men may be unaware of the impact of early and unwed fatherhood on their child-support obligations, their children's future, their ability to sustain an adequate living standard, and their ability to become effective fathers. Others apparently overestimate the economic gains from working in illicit and criminal activities, such as the drug trade (Leavitt and Dubner 2005).

Misinformation is widespread about the general effects of marriage on health, sexual satisfaction, living standards, and happiness. Many low-income and minority young people may base their beliefs about marriage on limited observations in their families and communities, or on media portrayals of marriage (Edin and Kefalas 2005). Often, these sources distort the realities of marriage as well as the requirements for and the advantages of healthy marriages. The distinction between cohabitation and marriage patterns is another area in which misinformation is widespread. Many are unaware that cohabitation typically involves much higher breakup rates and that longer-term cohabiting unions are more prone to domestic violence than marriages (Waite and Gallagher 2000).

Sound parenting and other aspects of family functioning require accurate information. Many parents are unaware of the profound impacts of reading to children at very young ages and of mixing warmth and discipline appropriately. Again, when information comes entirely from poor role models, from unsuccessful families in neighborhoods, or from media, parents may choose unconstructive ways to raise their children. Other critical pieces of information include knowing where to go for help in dealing with unemployment, other financial crises, and child misbehavior.

By itself, accurate information may not lead people to make wise decisions. But, inaccurate or distorted information can certainly contribute to unsound choices. Generally, accurate information is necessary but must be combined with a supportive context and with skills for people to achieve healthy employment, marriage, and family-functioning outcomes.

#### **D. SKILLS**

Skills are central as well to wage determination, to healthy marriages, to wise parenting, and to other family functions. The role of skills in determining wages, employment, and careers is well known. Indeed, researchers, policymakers, and the public all recognize that people must invest in learning appropriate skills before they can become a computer technician, nurse, welder, or carpenter, or enter most other professions. Having a preference for a profession and general knowledge about the profession are not enough: individuals must undergo education and training and then practice the skills they absorb to demonstrate their abilities to perform the relevant tasks. Adequate preparation for many careers involves not only learning what is pertinent to a particular occupation but also skills that apply to a range of jobs and careers. Among them are academic capabilities (reading, writing, basic math), interpersonal skills, and problem-solving skills.

Less widely recognized is the critical role of skills in achieving healthy marriages and healthy couple relationships. Again, the preference for and information about a healthy marriage may not be enough. Couples must also have or develop the skills to communicate constructively, to solve problems together, and to deal with financial issues, including limited budgets. Many of these skills apply not only to the couple and marriage setting but also to the work setting. One example of a skill that affects many facets of life is the ability to deal with interpersonal conflicts and solve other problems.<sup>8</sup> How individuals handle conflicts and solve problems can have repercussions for their educational outcomes, careers, relationships, and family formation.

#### **E. CONTEXT**

Individuals develop preferences for work and marriage in the context of peers, neighbors, and the community setting. Current perceptions and future goals concerning living standards depend on the living standards attained by others. Context plays a central role in shaping what is acceptable and what constitutes success in work arrangements, couple relationships, sexual activities, and child-rearing. The specific mechanisms may be peers who dismiss

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<sup>8</sup> The evidence for this point comes from demonstrations showing that providing couples with relationship and other marriage-related skills improves marital outcomes. For meta-analyses of several demonstrations, see Butler and Wampler (1999) and Carroll and Doherty (2003).

working at a low-wage job as toiling for “chump change,” who attach high status to men who have many sexual partners, or who see young women having children outside marriage as normal and even something to celebrate.<sup>9</sup>

Context has market, institutional, and interactive dimensions as well. If most potential partners in one’s community place little value on marriage before bearing children, on fidelity to one’s partner, and on formalizing a couple relationship into marriage, individuals trying to choose a healthy marriage may find few takers. If few men are seeking marriage or willing to forego various temptations in return for a stable marriage, then women may be unable to exercise their preferences for a stable, healthy marriage. Another barrier to healthy marriages may be the limited venues in which men and women committed to marriage and raising children within marriage can meet. In the employment context, if individuals see few opportunities to invest in career-oriented skills or to enter rewarding careers, even those with long-term horizons may choose not to study hard in school or to avoid jobs in the illegal economy.

In some cases, the actions of individual agents interact in unexpected ways, leading to an environment that works ineffectively for the group as a whole. As Schelling (1971) demonstrated, despite individual preferences for living in an integrated neighborhood (but one in which they are in the majority), the micro decisions of individuals can easily lead to complete segregation—a macro outcome that no one prefers. Similarly, neighborhood men in search of good-paying jobs may turn down a few low-wage opportunities and thereby lead employers to believe that men in the neighborhood do not want to work. In the context of a modest shortage of available men, a few women may bid for partners by becoming more willing to accept infidelity or a submissive role. In turn, more men may come to expect this behavior, resulting in a cascade of actions that lead to high rates of unstable relationships and unwed childbearing.

The linkages between context and other elements of the framework may run in both directions. Without changes in individuals’ context, their constructive preferences may be undermined, their information may be questioned or dismissed, and their skills may go

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<sup>9</sup> For some revealing examples based ethnographic studies, see Anderson (1999) and Young (2006).

unused. On the other hand, policies that alter the preferences, constraints, information, and skills of a large share of a group may change the context significantly and set off self-perpetuating and reinforcing changes in preferences, constraints, information, and skills. The impacts may be highly nonlinear (Gladwell 2000). Initially, the effect on individuals may be overcome by the labor- and marriage-market context. However, reaching a critical mass of individuals may achieve a tipping point that ultimately changes the context in a new direction, one especially favorable to employment, healthy marriage, and beneficial family functioning.

## **F. NEXT STEPS**

The five elements of our conceptual framework encompass the main influences on the motivations and actions of individuals and couples relating to marriage, employment, and family functioning. We believe they offer a guide for policy and potential government initiatives and for learning about the key forces affecting each outcome and the interactions among outcomes. Improving employment and marriage outcomes may require steps relating to all elements of our framework. Alternatively, changes in a few elements—say, financial constraints affecting work and marriage or improving marriage-related skills—may help turn around the nation’s current predicament, particularly among the low-income and less-educated populations, of high proportions of nonmarital births, weak employment and career outcomes for less-educated men, high divorce rates, and unhealthy practices in family functioning.<sup>10</sup>

The next sections review the experience with demonstrations and programs based on the five elements of our framework and then propose demonstration ideas that draw on this experience along with elements of the framework.

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<sup>10</sup> For evidence of more negative parenting practices of single parents, see Astone and McLanahan (1991). Also see Conger and Donnellan (2007).

### **III. THE NEXT WAVE OF DEMONSTRATIONS**

#### **A. CRITERIA FOR JUDGING NEW DEMONSTRATION APPROACHES**

Demonstration projects and social experiments are important mechanisms for learning about the relative effectiveness of alternative social strategies and innovative program services, and about expanding their scope. At the same time, demonstrations often are costly and sometimes take many years to yield reliable results. Given these realities, it is critical to test the most promising interventions in ways that can be rigorously evaluated. In developing ideas for the next wave of demonstrations on marriage, employment, and family functioning, we will draw on the conceptual framework, experience with prior demonstrations, and observational research on the interactions between marriage, employment, and family functioning.

Proposed demonstrations should meet several criteria. They should (1) have a solid theoretical rationale linked to a conceptual framework, (2) build on successful elements of past demonstrations and not replicate approaches that have proved ineffective in other demonstrations, (3) have attributes that are consistent with policy implications of the empirical literature, (4) have the potential of significantly improving outcomes along more than one domain—such as marriage and employment or marriage and family functioning, (5) be subject to rigorous evaluation, and (6) have the potential to be replicated and implemented on a large scale, if successful. We favor focusing resources on groups for whom gains in marriage, employment, and family functioning are most urgently needed so long as interventions have a reasonable chance of positively influencing the groups' outcomes. We see advantages in using current operational venues—such as local programs, providers, community activities, and existing demonstrations—to minimize start-up time, to limit costs, and to reach significant numbers of people. However, we recognize the possibility that new, stand-alone demonstrations may sometimes be appropriate.

Demonstrations can meet these criteria using a vast number and mixture of interventions. Even among strategies focusing on employment and earnings, there are wide differences in approach, intensity, duration, scale, delivery mechanisms, involvement of partners, and target groups. Program goals often differ as well, for example, over such issues as the relative emphasis placed on current employment versus long-term careers, or the

emphasis on gender equity versus earnings gains. The employment area offers examples that try to influence outcomes through various aspects of the framework described above.

Interventions can be found that emphasize incentives (wage subsidies), skills (classroom and on-the-job training, job-search skills), information (job openings and the career outlooks for various occupations), attitudes (work experience and work-readiness programs), or context (programs that try to alter the participant's peer group or change the hiring and training practices of a local industry sector). Often, programs use a combination of these strategies.

## **B. SOME RELEVANT EXPERIENCE FROM SELECTED DEMONSTRATIONS**

### **1. Employment-Related Demonstrations**

The evidence from social experiments and program experience is mixed. Wage subsidies exert positive impacts on employment, hours worked, and total income, especially for single parents and where the subsidy increases the returns to workers above their wage rate (EITC, Minnesota Family Investment Program, Self-Sufficiency Project, and New Hope). It is hazardous to generalize about classroom training, since the intensity and duration of programs vary from a few months to a few years. Evaluations of randomized experiments typically show modest gains from programs targeted at low-income workers. One comprehensive evaluation—based on operational programs under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)—found that earnings increased about 15 percent for adult women and 8 percent among adult men, enough to justify the program's costs (Orr et al. 1996). Especially effective were the gains to those expected to use on-the-job and job-search training. Unfortunately, the programs did nothing to raise the earnings of young men and women. Moreover, more comprehensive reviews of government-funded training programs for the disadvantaged show limited gains. A meta-analysis of 31 evaluations of these programs found that annual earnings gains were about \$1,400 (1999 dollars) for adult women, \$300 for adult men, and zero or negative for youth (Greenberg, Michalopoulos, and Robins 2003).

Although gains from training programs are uneven, nonexperimental evidence shows substantial increases in earnings associated with years of general and vocational education. In addition, intensive job-search programs, especially those that teach people how to find their own jobs, have shown positive impacts. Like the JTPA effects on adults, these gains from

job-search programs are small but sufficient enough to offset their modest costs. Subsidized jobs and work-experience programs, often involving jobs that gradually increase in difficulty and stress, raise earnings, especially during the period when these jobs are available. The gains beyond the subsidized job period have varied, depending on the target group and combination of activities.

Many training programs for low-income individuals begin with life-skills training aimed at changing attitudes about the importance of work and about the habits necessary to succeed in the workplace. Although we should attach some weight to the consensus of practitioners about the importance of these aspects of pre-employment training, we know of no studies that have documented the impact of this program component. One initiative that attempts to alter the context of at-risk youth is Job Corps. Individuals receive housing, education, training, health care, and other services, mostly at residential Job Corps centers (Johnson et al. 1999). Although the targeting of the program puts at-risk youth into an environment populated mainly by other economically disadvantaged youth, the centers attempt to positively alter the context within which participants learn, work, and interact. For the first few years after entering the program, the impacts on earnings were positive (Schochet, Burghardt, and Glazerman. 2001). Job Corps exerted favorable impacts on obtaining a GED and occupational certification, and on curbing criminal activity. But, the combination of earnings and other gains were insufficient in offsetting the social costs of the program (Schochet, McConnell, and Burghardt 2003). Moreover, while there is some indication that the Job Corps context matters, there were no statistically significant differences in impacts between those in a residential center (away from neighborhood peers) and those in a nonresidential setting.<sup>11</sup>

Using an industry context for employment interventions is the emphasis of sectoral strategies. Under this approach, workforce programs target an industry (or subset of an industry), become a strategic partner of the industry by learning about the factors shaping the industry's workforce policies, reach out to low-income job seekers, and work with other

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<sup>11</sup> The JOBSTART demonstration provided another test of the Job Corps model placed in the setting where youth normally live and not in residential centers. It did not exert statistically significant impacts employment and earnings (Cave et al. 1993).

labor-market groups, such as community colleges, community nonprofits, employer groups, and policymakers. The Aspen Institute and the Urban Institute have conducted studies of the operations of sectoral projects along with some analysis of data on the earnings of workers before and two years after participating (Blair 2002; Pindus et al. 2004). The goal is to link the training and career strategies for low-income job seekers to the industry's needs. By design, the programs deal with a particular industry and thus generalizations are hazardous. But, the nonexperimental evidence indicates that the six sectoral programs taking part in the Sectoral Employment Development Learning Project (SEDLP) have yielded impressive results (Blair 2002). Earnings jumped by 73 percent in two years for the 95 percent of participants employed two years. These results must be interpreted with caution because the project lacked a control group. However, the increases between the year before and the two years after participation were much higher in the SEDLP than in demonstrations with comparable groups of workers. Although most of the gains came from higher work levels, wage rates increased by 23 percent. Moreover, two years after training, 69 percent of participants were employed in occupations related to their training. The focused nature of the training, the links with employers, the development of pathways for entry-level workers, and the expertise gained by the training organizations probably all have contributed to the apparent success of the sectoral strategy approach.

A traditional sector-based approach with a long-term track record of success in raising earnings through targeted training is the apprenticeship system. Apprenticeships involve intensive work-based learning and classroom courses. Employers are central to the process, setting up the programs and paying the apprentices during their work-based learning. Although formal, registered apprenticeships are most common in the construction and manufacturing industries, the role of apprenticeship is expanding in other occupations and industries, including metalworking, nursing, information technology, and geospatial occupations.<sup>12</sup> One recent nonexperimental study found that apprenticeship training generated substantial gains in earnings, especially for those completing the program

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<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.doleta.gov/atels/%5Fbat/cael.cfm>, which describes the apprenticeship-related initiative for certified nursing assistants and licensed practical nurses, with clinical training linked to an associate's degree in nursing. Geospatial occupations deal with the application of global information and global-positioning skills.

(Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board 2004). Relative to a statistically matched comparison group that registered for services with the state employment service, those participating in apprenticeships raised their employment rate by 5 percent.<sup>13</sup> Employed workers who were in apprenticeships earned nearly \$2,000 more a quarter than this primary comparison group. These earnings gains are nearly double the comparably estimated gains for participating in a vocational degree program from community colleges.

Another program linked to specific industry sectors is the Career Academy. While operating within schools and as part of a local school system, career academies are high schools organized around an occupational or industry focus, such as health care, finance, and tourism. They try to weave related occupational or industrial themes into a college preparatory curriculum. An experimental evaluation using random assignment has documented some striking gains (Kemple 2004). Although career academy participation did not increase the earnings of women, young men assigned to career academies achieved an extraordinary 18 percent average gain in earnings compared with the control group over the four years after scheduled high school graduation. The career academy group earned an average of \$1,373 a month, \$212 more than the \$1,161 a month earned by the control group. The earnings gains were concentrated among students with a high or medium risk of dropping out of high school.

One small but innovative employment demonstration tested the impact of providing job-search and job-readiness services to help both members of 17–24-year-old couples obtain a job or a better job (Gordon and Heinrich 2007). The Jobs for Youth (JFY)/Chicago's Full Family Partnership (FFP) project operated in the Chicago area, mostly with low-income African American couples, beginning in 1998. The couples had to be in stable relationships, in which at least one partner was a parent and on TANF. The program enhanced the standard set of JFY services (job-readiness workshops of 10–15 days, GED instruction, and job-search assistance) to include one-on-one counseling. The idea is that the partners can support each other, recognize the challenges faced by their partners, offer

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<sup>13</sup> The matching variables included race, ethnicity, sex, disability status, age, education, region of the state and preprogram employment and earnings histories.

specific supports like driving or watching a child, and provide appreciation, encouragement, and monitoring of skills. Although enhanced services were received by both parents in the couple only 60 percent of the time, mothers who participated in the FFP achieved higher employment and earnings gains at exit than mothers in the standard JFY approach or in the JTPA program. However, their earnings advantage eroded over time, partly due to more new pregnancies and higher child care burdens. Fathers showed less robust but still positive gains from participating in FFP instead of only JFY. The researchers also found that the couples approach was linked to completion rates 20 to 30 percent higher than among parents with similar characteristics who participated in the JFY program. But much of the advantage in completing the program was the result of higher levels of services provided through the FFP. When both parents completed the FFP, their earnings jumped by over \$4,000. Some evidence indicates a feedback between use of program completion, increases in earnings, and marital stability. Among parents who both completed the program, nearly 90 percent remained together at least a year later. Gains in earnings were associated with relationship stability, but the causation may run from earnings to couple stability or the other way around.

## **2. Demonstrations Linked to Marriage and Family Functioning**

Several demonstrations have tested or are testing ways of improving the health of marriages and the broader functioning of families. In the marriage area, programs providing premarital education, premarital counseling, and marriage preparation for couples have been subject to extensive research. Carroll and Doherty (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 13 experimental studies and concluded that, “premarital prevention programs are generally effective in producing immediate gains in communication processes, conflict management skills, and overall relationship quality and that these gains appear to hold for at least 6 months to three years.” One of the studies reviewed (Markman et al. 1993) indicated that premarital prevention could reduce the likelihood of divorce. While these studies generally had small samples and short follow-ups, and rarely included low-income populations, the results from

the broader literature on healthy marriage interventions have been sufficiently compelling to influence policy in the United States and other countries.<sup>14</sup>

Under the Healthy Marriage Initiative (HMI), the ACF is currently sponsoring demonstration projects with large samples and long follow-ups targeted at low-income populations.<sup>15</sup> Two involve random assignment (Building Strong Families and Supporting Healthy Marriage) and one is focusing on community impacts (Community Healthy Marriage Initiative). The HMI projects cover a wide scope: improving financial incentives to marry, marriage education classes, mentoring programs involving married couples, training clergy and others to deliver marriage education, and courses in high school about healthy dating practices and information about the advantages of marriage. The intensity and duration of the interventions vary, with some lasting only a total of 10–12 hours of instruction. However, others are expanding their scope and beginning to connect with employment-oriented services as well as financial-literacy and matched-savings programs (such as the Individual Development Account programs).

One relevant set of results comes from an experimental project aimed at increasing fathers' involvement and couple relationships. The Supporting Father Involvement program provided information, 16-week classes, and case management to 289 low-income families in four rural California counties (Cowan and Cowan 2007). The families were randomly assigned to a fathers group (where the classes and counseling tilted toward parenting), a couples group (where the classes and counseling tilted toward couple relationships), and a control group. The assessments of the treatment and control groups at 9 and 18 months after the baseline assignment revealed a number of significant positive impacts. Both the fathers and couples interventions increased father involvement and decreased parenting stress, anxiety, and conflict over the child. In addition, relative to the control group's income trend, the impact on household income for those assigned to the couples program was a \$3,770 gain per year (over an initial average of about \$28,000); those assigned to the fathers group experienced a \$2,505 additional gain over controls. The program developers view the

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<sup>14</sup> A recent example is the proposal for a large-scale effort to fund locally operating relationship- and parenting-education programs throughout Great Britain (Social Justice Policy Group 2007).

<sup>15</sup> For a list of ACF-funded demonstrations, see <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/healthymarriage/funding/index.html>.

central finding as showing that fathers are more likely to become involved with their children when they have a good relationship with the child's mother. From our perspective, the program is an example of a family-functioning intervention that not only improved couple and parent-child relationships but also raised earnings.

Other initiatives have aimed directly at improving parenting to strengthen families. The interventions include direct training and mentoring through regular advice, and observations through nurses' visits and classes at Head Start and other child care centers. In addition, some policies encourage parents to spend more time with their children, such as the mandate that employers offer family and medical leave and some programs to provide paid leave. Only some of these initiatives have blossomed into full-scale programs. Programs not primarily focusing on family functioning may nonetheless exert impacts for good or ill. New Hope offered low-income people in a set of zip codes in Milwaukee a package that included earnings subsidies to supplement the EITC, child allowances, a community service job at the minimum wage, subsidized health insurance, and subsidized child care. Eligibility for the benefit package extended to all types of households, including single individuals, childless couples, and families with children. Each participant had a project representative who helped them access benefits, served as an informal counselor, and encouraged participants. Wisconsin spent an additional \$3,300 per year for each New Hope household (in 2006 dollars), mostly on added child care. The job and income stability provided through New Hope apparently generated positive effects on boys (Huston et al. 2003), while the strict work requirements imposed on welfare recipients might have harmed adolescents, though not younger children (Zaslow, McGroder, and Moore. 2006).

The Parents' Fair Share (PFS) demonstration focused on one aspect of family functioning—increasing the financial and nonfinancial support of children by noncustodial fathers (Miller and Knox 2001). Given the likely links between work, support payments, and fathers' involvement, the program provided a range of services, including employment and training, peer support, voluntary mediation between parents, and help in modifying child-support orders. PFS generated substantial initial gains in employment and earnings for the most disadvantaged fathers, probably as a result of on-the-job training and earnings during this component, but no significant gains for the full sample of fathers. PFS stimulated

increases in child-support payments, but little additional father involvement. For another family-functioning outcome—communications between noncustodial fathers and custodial mothers—the level of disagreement increased, though this change may have resulted from more active interest by fathers who had not been closely connected with their children and the children’s mother.

The Nurse Home Visiting project has attracted wide attention for its ability to achieve significant gains in child and family functioning. The goals of these programs are to improve pregnancy outcomes, children’s health and development, and parents’ well-being. In a series of random-assignment demonstrations, Olds and his colleagues (1988) found several positive impacts of intensive nurse home-visiting services during pregnancy and through the child’s second birthday.<sup>16</sup> The Elmira, New York, demonstration raised schooling and employment and delayed the second child. In Denver, the nursing intervention program component was linked to a delay in second births and a reduction in domestic violence, but to no other favorable effects (Olds et al 2004). The Memphis demonstrations enrolled young pregnant women who had no chronic illness linked to fetal growth, but nearly all were unmarried, poor, and teenagers (Olds et al. 2007). The evaluation of children and their mothers around the child’s 9th birthday documented several statistically significant impacts, including fewer second births, less use of welfare programs, a higher likelihood of marriage or cohabitation or other partnering with the child’s father, more months with an employed partner, and better academic outcomes for children. The program led to an increase in the months spent with the mother’s current partner, although the program did not explicitly attempt to increase marriage and relationship skills.

Youth development is a part of the functioning of families. A number of projects have been undertaken to promote youth development in a variety of settings (Eccles and Gootman 2002). One interesting program with evidence-based effectiveness is the Carrera Program, an intensive, year-round, multiyear after-school program designed to promote positive youth development and positive reproductive health. The program employs a holistic approach involving school, family, supportive relationships, and social services and

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<sup>16</sup> On average, nurses visited 7 times during pregnancy and 26 times from birth to age 2.

provides employment and academic assistance, family life and sexuality education, performing arts experience, sports training, and mental and physical health care. According to an experimental evaluation, participation in Carrera increased sexual health knowledge, receipt of health care and health behaviors, life skills, academic skills, and work experience (Philliber, Kaye, and Herrling 2001; Philliber et al. 2002). Participation also lowered levels of pregnancies and births and the likelihood of marijuana use in males.

### **3. Benefit-Related Policies to Raise Employment and Marriage**

A major challenge of cash and in-kind benefit programs is to help low-income families without discouraging work and marriage. The EITC, subsidized jobs, and work requirements have achieved gains in employment, but structuring benefit programs that strengthen marriages is difficult. Until the income maintenance experiments of the 1960s and 1970s, the conventional view was that simply allowing low-income married-couple families to qualify for benefits on the same basis as one-parent families would eliminate marital disincentives. Helping couples with children achieve income stability was thought to reduce divorce and to increase marriage. However, evidence from the Seattle-Denver Income Maintenance Experiment showed that extending cash benefits to two-parent families did not increase, and may have even decreased, marriage (Cain and Wissoker 1990; Hannan and Tuma 1990). Helping single parents attain basic incomes was said to have increased their economic independence—they did not have to rely on a spouse or cohabiting partner for economic support.

Still, two recent demonstrations—New Hope and the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)—have shown that providing targeted benefits can sometimes increase marriage. The MFIP tested a welfare-to-work model with mandatory participation in work and training, consolidated and cashed out related benefit programs, enhanced child care subsidies, and reduced marriage penalties in the provision of transfer benefits.

New Hope achieved progress on several key goals, including gains in earnings of about \$700 per year during the eligibility period, increases in family income by over \$1,000 per year, declines in poverty rates by about 30 percent (from about 70 to about 50 percent), reduced reports of symptoms of depression, improvements in several dimensions of family

functioning, and better outcomes for children (Huston et al. 2003). Most strikingly, marriage rates increased as well (Gassman-Pines and Yoshikawa 2006). At the five-year follow-up, marriage rates of never-married mothers in the New Hope treatment group were almost double those of never-married mothers in the control group (21 percent to 12 percent). The study does not identify the mechanism by which marriage rates increased, but one possible explanation is that New Hope offered a degree of income security not available to control-group members. One possibility is that the availability of assured jobs and earnings subsidies can increase marriage rates. During the first three years after entering the MFIP, single parents raised their earnings and showed modest increases in the likelihood of marriage. Over the subsequent three years, both dissipated; no significant effects were evident in earnings or marriage at the six-year follow-up. A key element of the MFIP was the coverage of low-income two-parent families. Although the MFIP did not end up raising the incomes of these families (higher benefits were offset by lower earnings of women in two-parent families), it did lower the rate at which married couples divorced (Gennetian, Miller, and Smith 2005).

#### **4. A Mix of Strategies**

The experience of demonstrations and programs suggests a role for a mix of strategies, including changing incentives, skills, information, attitudes, and context. The programs that stand out in the employment arena assure the availability of a job and combine work incentives and work experience with learning, in the context of a well-articulated career structure. In addition, some research and demonstrations suggest genuine complementarities; specifically, enhancing marital stability increases men's employment, earnings, and family incomes, while improving the health of marriages yields measurable gains in child outcomes.

#### **C. SUGGESTED AREAS FOR MAJOR DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS**

Even with the experience of past demonstrations and programs and the knowledge of existing demonstrations, it is a complex task to devise a sensible mix of new demonstrations aimed at increasing healthy marriages, employment and earnings, and well-functioning families. There are three types of outcomes of primary interest, five components of a causal

framework, various target groups, and a multitude of program instruments and combinations of instruments. The primary question is, which combination of approaches is most likely to achieve more of our primary objectives?

This section presents several suggestions for types of demonstrations that widen the mix of service approaches, venues, target groups, motivations, and expected outcomes. The recommendations take account of common difficulties in recruitment of participants and in administering interventions. Underlying the proposals is the notion that interventions should become more holistic and deal with a broader mix of challenges faced by individuals, couples, and parents. Thus, the demonstration ideas entail incorporating effective employment services into marriage-oriented programs and for incorporating marriage education, relationship skills, and family-functioning interventions into employment programs. In this section, we offer five concrete proposals, providing a brief case for each and an outline of the way the demonstration could be evaluated—usually with an experimental design. These proposals are by no means an exhaustive list of possible program ideas. Rather, they illustrate how our conceptual framework may be applied to well-founded program models and how these models may be revised to address healthy marriage, employment, and family well-being outcomes.

### *1. Adding Effective Employment Services to Marriage-Oriented Programs*

Under this type of demonstration, sites offering marriage education and relationship-skills programs would expand the scope of the initiative to include employment-oriented services. The specifics of the services are important and several approaches are promising. We recommend two employment-oriented strategies. The first involves offering both members of a couple combinations of wage subsidies, counseling, and community service jobs. The concept builds partly on the experience of New Hope and the Full Family Partnership programs. We suggest using wage-rate subsidies partly to avoid imposing marriage penalties, incorporating community-service job models used in other programs, and including both partners in the provision of job-related assistance.<sup>17</sup> If the wage subsidy were available to

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<sup>17</sup> The specifics of the wage subsidies to reduce marriage penalties require further thought but clearly they will have to address the large penalties that arise when the two members of the couple each generate similar

both partners in a couple and only phased out with wage rates, then a low-wage working man or woman would not be penalized by marrying another worker.<sup>18</sup>

The second employment component would involve offering participants in the marriage programs access either to local sectoral industry programs or to apprenticeship programs. Nonexperimental evaluations indicate that both have a good record of improving the earnings of at-risk participants. In both cases, the interventions would integrate the topics in marriage education with the noncognitive employment-related skills, such as the those specified in SCANS, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (1992). These approaches respond to the concern that low-income women report wanting marriage to coincide with financial stability and a good living standard. Many low-income mothers want to marry a man who has a decent job but also want a job of their own to avoid excessive dependence on a man who may not be reliable (Edin and Kefalas 2005).

The demonstration would target individuals who sign up for marriage education classes and who are cohabiting, in a close romantic relationship, or married. The presence of children would not be an eligibility requirement for participation. If couples do have children, then parental job sharing, parenting education, and backup emergency child care provision could be made available. Offering the employment- and income-related services in the context of ongoing programs should ease recruitment. In fact, a number of the sites that are currently funded by the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) through Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grants would be ideal candidates for piloting this type of intervention.<sup>19</sup> They are currently offering marriage education in a variety of settings, often embedded in

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incomes. Good employment interventions include those by the Transitional Work Corporation (TWC) in Philadelphia and the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) in New York. Under both models, participants engage in pre-employment activities and counseling, in paid work through transitional community service jobs, and in vocational assessments, employment plans, and job search. They emphasize work first, but in combination with a continuing search for unsubsidized jobs. Participants work most of the week and conduct job search and receive training at other times. We would suggest the individual placement used by the TWC over the crew placements used by the CEO.

<sup>18</sup> Unlike the EITC, which begins to decline if a working woman near the EITC maximum marries a man earning moderate wages, the wage-rate subsidy (e.g., paying half the difference between \$11 and the woman's actual wage times the number of hours worked) would be unaffected by the marriage.

<sup>19</sup> For abstracts that provide brief descriptions of OFA Healthy Marriage and Promoting Responsible Fatherhood Demonstration Grants by region, see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/hmabstracts/index.htm>.

community organizations that already offer employment assistance. Some sites encourage asset building by low-income couples.

Ideally, the demonstrations would distinguish between impacts of the marriage component alone and impacts of the combined marriage-employment component. However, such a goal requires careful thought on the method of randomization, since contamination is likely if some couples within the same marriage class have access to employment services and the others do not. One possibility is to randomize individuals when they sign up for services to control status (no services), a marriage education class that offers the employment services and wage subsidies, and a class that does not offer employment services and wage subsidies.

In terms of our conceptual framework, this demonstration model focuses on enhancing marriage and job skills, but also aims to improve work and marriage incentives, deliver accurate information, influence preferences, and respond to preferences for near-term rewards. The model may affect the context of individuals and couples to the extent that marriage classes create a peer group for couples. With the employment component added, the group will have employment as well as relationship issues to discuss with each other. The demonstration is well grounded in theory and builds on successful elements of New Hope and other employment-related interventions. It meets the tests of influencing marriage, employment, and family-functioning outcomes, of evaluability, and of potential replication and scale.

The demonstration would test impacts on marital outcomes, relationship quality, and attitudes about marriage, employment, unemployment, wage rates, and earnings. Given the New Hope impacts, we might expect family-functioning benefits as well in improved parent-child relationships and child well-being (such as school-based and behavioral outcomes).

The comparisons of participants in a variety of settings will answer a variety of questions. By randomly assigning individuals to one of three groups, we can examine the relative impact of marriage education with or without the special employment services. Although comparisons between those only receiving marriage-related services (marriage only) and controls will take place in the Building Strong Families and Supporting Healthy

Marriages demonstrations, retaining this comparison makes sense to control for the geographic setting when making broader comparisons. The first comparisons will examine the impact of marriage education (relative to control status) on relationship skills, employment, marriage, and family functioning. The second comparisons will focus on differential impacts resulting from the combined marriage education and employment services models on the same set of outcomes.

The employment and subsidy components would substantially reduce the economic barriers and the financial disincentives to marry.<sup>20</sup> The combination package of marriage education and employment components would become increasingly attractive, given the expanded emphasis on jobs and income alongside marriage education and relationship skills. Unlike New Hope, the package would include marriage education and a somewhat more favorable schedule of wage subsidies. Still, based on the experience of New Hope, the program's help in achieving income stability for couples is likely to encourage entry into marriage, discourage divorce, and possibly improve some aspects of family functioning.

The demonstration evaluation should include a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether the combined program represents a good investment and specifically whether any gains from incorporating employment components are sufficient to offset the added costs. Unlike some partial assessments of programs that include subsidized jobs, the analysis would estimate the value of production generated by workers in subsidized jobs. Of course, valuing reductions in divorce and improvements in marriage quality and family functioning would be difficult.

## *2. Offering Marriage-Related Services to Targeted Unemployment Insurance Recipients*

Job loss is associated with a host of negative family functioning and marital outcomes. By helping those who lose jobs maintain healthy marriages, we can support marriage, improve family function, and improve long-term employment outcomes. The basic idea would be to offer marriage education classes to married men and women who claim unemployment insurance (UI) benefits and who are likely to experience long-term unemployment. Already,

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<sup>20</sup> The wage subsidy feature would supplement earnings in a way that does not decline with the added income from a married partner.

the state profiling systems within the UI system are able to identify UI claimants who are likely to exhaust their benefits and remain unemployed for over 26 weeks. In addition, the U.S. Department of Labor is sponsoring a Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) project in 20 states, which provides intensive job counseling and job-finding services to at-risk UI applicants.

Under the project, the Departments of Labor and of Health and Human Services would jointly sponsor another set of REA demonstrations that incorporate the offer (but not the requirement) to take a marriage education program. Even in the current REA demonstrations, some states are using random-assignment approaches to determine the relative effectiveness of alternative treatments. In the context of developing employment plans (sometimes about a month after applying for UI), REA staff would randomly assign claimants in the REA program to treatment or control status. Controls would go through the standard REA program. For those in the treatment group, REA staff would explain the availability of marriage education classes, their general rationale in strengthening marriages, their particular importance in the context of the strains that arise during unemployment, and how to access the marriage education program. Once claimants in the REA program are identified as in the experimental group, organizations providing the services would be encouraged to contact and to recruit them energetically. As in the case of other demonstrations in which participation of the treatment group is well under 100 percent, the experiment would be examining how access to marriage education affects outcomes. In addition, the demonstration would provide a rigorous test of the impact of recruitment on participation.

The demonstration focuses on improving the skills with which couples and families deal with unemployment and potential financial distress. It would offer information in a context in which individuals are primarily concerned with reemployment, but would have no direct effect on incentives. The venue (REA programs within UI programs) would simplify recruitment to the marriage education program. The demonstration deals with a concern about family functioning identified in the empirical literature. The intervention can potentially influence marriage, family functioning, and possibly employment outcomes, and can be readily evaluated and expanded to a large scale.

The key outcomes for the program would be the rate of participation by treatment group claimants, the reduction of risk of divorce, the reduction of family strains commonly associated with unemployment, the speed at which individuals return to work, and the effect on UI benefits. The study would measure various family-functioning outcomes, including marriage relationship-quality indicators and parent-child interactions. The demonstration would show the extent to which claimants will respond to the offer of marriage education classes and thus the desirability of offering marriage services to recruit from this pool at these times.

The evaluation would include a cost-benefit analysis that captures the additional resource costs, the impact on earnings, and the impact on marriage and family functioning. As in the prior proposal, it will be difficult to place a value on reductions in divorce and on improvements in marriage quality and family functioning.

### *3. Adding Marriage Education to Job Corps and Other Selected Out-of-School Youth Programs*

The Job Corps, which serves more than 60,000 new participants per year at a cost of about \$1.5 billion, is the nation's largest and most comprehensive job training program for disadvantaged youth. It is also one of the most expensive federally sponsored education and training programs. This group is at very high risk for having a nonmarital birth (over 25 percent of female participants already have children, nearly all outside marriage), becoming noncustodial parents, and not having a stable marriage. As noted above, despite generating significant gains in education and in earnings lasting up to four years after entering the program, the fade out of the earnings advantage for Job Corps meant that the benefits were not sufficient to offset the social costs of the program. One possible reason for its limited success may be the negative effect on earnings of unhealthy couple relationships. The Job Corps itself recognizes the behavioral challenges that arise in center residential halls and the limited training of residential hall staff to cope with these challenges.

This demonstration would add a marriage education component to the Job Corps experience. The intervention could take place center-wide or be offered randomly to individuals within centers. The random assignment might be most appropriate for Job Corps participants in nonresidential programs. A special curriculum would be tailored to those who

are not yet in couple relationships or parents. However, the program would also cover those already in couple relationships and parents. The initiative would complement the Career Success Standards launched by the Job Corps a few years ago to promote a “positive normative culture.” Programs have been revising the required employability skills to include communication, problem solving, conflict resolution, financial management, independent living, and career planning. However, the list does not deal directly with many elements commonly covered in relationship-skills programs.

The demonstration has several rationales. First, in the absence of any intervention relating to marriage, a very large share of participants will go on to have children outside marriage and either not marry or have an unstable marriage. Second, the program offers a setting in which individuals have time to learn marriage and relationship skills and a low-cost method for recruiting potential participants. Third, enhancing marriage and relationship skills is likely to complement efforts to improve job-market outcomes. Research indicates that marriage can contribute to improved employment outcomes for men, including minority and less-educated men. Fourth, the program can be evaluated rigorously through random assignment of participants. A second evaluation approach would deal with models that incorporate marriage education fully into the curriculum at some centers but not others. Difference-in-difference methods and analyses of peer effects would characterize this evaluation. Random assignment of Job Corps centers might be feasible as well, though such an approach might require a large number of participating centers (Schmidt Baltussen, and Sauerborn 2000). Job Corps is a federal program that has already conducted random-assignment activities that raise more sensitive issues regarding the exclusion of potential participants. Fifth, if the program were successful, it could be expanded nationally to all Job Corps programs and potentially to other youth programs such as YouthBuild, the National Guard Youth Challenge Academy, and the Youth Conservation Corps.

The one drawback is that several important impacts may not materialize for several years and may require a long-term follow-up. However, this problem will be present in any program that aims at the critically important task of preventing young people from becoming unwed parents and developing unhealthy couple relationships in the first place. As

with the other recommended interventions, the evaluation of this demonstration should include cost-benefit analyses as well as impact analyses.

This demonstration proposal relates to several aspects of the conceptual framework. It would attempt to affect participants' preferences, skills, and information about marriage and do so in two different contexts—one in which participants live away from their neighborhoods but in a supervised setting with other disadvantaged youth and one in which participants continue to live at home. It would have no direct effect on work or marriage incentives. Recruitment costs would be modest, given the ready identification of and easy access to applicants. The theory and empirical bases for the demonstration include the well-documented impacts of marriage on increasing men's earnings and on reducing criminal activity. Moreover, past Job Corps results suggest the importance of improving long-term impacts of the program. Thus, the intervention could potentially affect marriage, employment, and family functioning. Finally, the demonstration could be subject to rigorous evaluation and, if successful, readily expanded to scale.

#### *4. A Holistic Marriage-Employment-Family-Functioning Demonstration for Offenders and Ex-Offenders*

Given the high rates of imprisonment in the United States, especially for minority men, dealing effectively with the most serious family and employment problems requires improved outcomes for the offender and ex-offender populations. Offenders have low levels of education, do poorly in the job market after release, often lose contact with their children and become uninvolved fathers, and have low rates of marriages and low rates of stable marriages. On the other hand, the evidence suggests good jobs can reduce recidivism and that stable marriages can improve job outcomes as well as reduce recidivism. Moreover, the children of offenders and ex-offenders account for a sizable share of the children most at risk of educational and behavioral problems.

The Administration for Children and Families has already signaled its recognition of the critical importance of reaching this target group by funding the marriage and incarceration demonstrations as part of the OFA Healthy Marriage Demonstration program. Other demonstrations are moving forward as well—including the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative projects sponsored by the National Institutes of Justice and

some foundation-funded demonstrations testing supported work. This proposal recommends another demonstration targeted on these groups, but involving a comprehensive mix of marriage education, employment services (including preemployment training, wage subsidies and subsidized jobs), and family-related services to limit the disruption of family life when the offender enters prison or is released from prison. As in our other suggestions, the theory is that the mix of marriage, employment, and family services may be highly complementary—the presence of marriage education may enhance the impacts of employment-wage subsidy benefits and vice versa.

The potential target populations would be offenders who are romantically involved or married and who are entering prison for short-term stays (2 years or less), offenders entering work-release programs, and offenders reentering the community. Although some might favor focusing only on fathers, we believe that reaching men before they become fathers is desirable. Moreover, it may be of value to men who have not yet fathered a child to learn about the child-support obligations of noncustodial fathers.

Work-release programs offer an especially good target of opportunity. Offenders are near the end of their incarceration. The programs already have an employment component and perhaps others. The demonstration can substantially enhance the employment components by incorporating mentoring and wage subsidies as well as adding marriage education. As noted above, the topics covered in the marriageeducation program are likely to improve the individual's noncognitive, job-related skills.

In one possible variant, the program might incorporate a mandatory jobs component for individuals on parole. If only job search and training were available, reentering offenders might otherwise take too long to find a job and ultimately return to criminal activity. Under the approach suggested by Mead (forthcoming), not only would ex-offenders be provided with help in seeking jobs, but jobs would be guaranteed. This assured availability of jobs could be used to make work mandatory—those not accepting some job (including the guaranteed job) would be subject to sanctions such as more stringent parole or being returned to prison or jail. Mead quotes Christopher Jencks as arguing that if jobs were guaranteed to jobless adults of ghetto areas, community pressure would induce many to take work seriously and accept jobs, even if they are low-paying. Mead would include pre-

employment training and initial support services (health, housing, transportation) along with the job guarantee.

Mead would extend coverage of the approach to noncustodial parents who do not pay child support. Again, the assured job component would permit agencies to make work mandatory. Already, in some jurisdictions, judges require noncustodial parents to find some way to pay child support or face jail. Such policies are difficult to enforce because of uncertainties about an individual's ability to find and hold a job. The assured job provisions would increase the credibility of the sanctions, since judges would know that the obligor is choosing not to work and thus not to pay support even though a job is readily available.<sup>21</sup>

The programs are likely to prove easiest to evaluate if they take place before an individual is fully released into the community. In general, officials running programs for offenders and ex-offenders are receptive to incremental funding and willing to undertake experiments. In the case of the work-release centers, a random-assignment experiment would have to involve randomly assigning individuals to work-release centers with and without the combined mix of services. In some ways, this model would simultaneously capture the impact of services as well as the impact of the context of being in a work-release center with enhanced services for everyone. In this respect, the demonstration would resemble aspects of the Job Corps evaluation.

The demonstration's family-functioning components would incorporate best practices in helping families adjust to the individual's absence, to make it easier for families to remain closely connected to the offender, and in insuring a smooth transition from prison to civilian life. The project would include efforts to resolve past child-support arrearages and current obligations in ways that improve the work incentives of fathers while retaining their connections with and support for their children. Several initiatives are already taking place in this field, including demonstrations in Maryland and Minnesota and provisions in several

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<sup>21</sup> One worry about guaranteeing jobs to these groups is the potential inequities and perverse incentives that arise when people doing the wrong thing (committing a crime or not paying child support) are "rewarded" with a job while others in the community cannot find employment.

states in which debt forgiveness can take place as noncustodial parents establish a record of meeting current obligations (Ovwigbo, Saunders, and Born 2005; Pukstas et al. 2004). The problem of high arrearages deterring men from working in the mainstream economy is particularly important for ex-offenders, since very few states suspend the payment of child-support orders while individuals are in prison (Holzer et al. 2005). Thus, a holistic program should deal with this issue while individuals are learning job skills and gaining a foothold in the job market.

This demonstration attempts to modify preferences, change incentives, increase information, and enhance skills. The context for the program poses advantages and disadvantages. Some advantages are the ease of recruitment of a critical target group and the integration of marriage, employment, and family-functioning approaches that avoid major gaps which might prevent participants from leading constructive and productive lives. The disadvantage is that the venue is associated with the stigma of criminality and has a concentration of people at high risk of returning to crime and of influencing peers to do so as well.

In terms of demonstration criteria, the initiative has a solid theoretical basis and empirical data documenting the needs of ex-offenders and the value of marriage in increasing earnings and reducing crime. However, there is no good record (say, from past demonstrations) that these components will succeed for the target population. In principle, however, the intervention could have substantial effects on marriage, employment, and family functioning. The demonstration could be subject to rigorous evaluation and, if successful, readily expanded to scale. Current OFA demonstrations might provide opportunities for pilot testing these approaches and determining their feasibility.

##### *5. Strengthening the Functioning of Families for Parents Working Nonstandard or Irregular Hours*

About one in three employed individuals work on a weekend day and about 15 percent of full-time employees do not work on a daytime schedule.<sup>22</sup> Parents who work nonstandard or irregular hours face special challenges in maintaining a healthy marriage, parenting

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<sup>22</sup> These are data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/flex.t04.htm> and <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/flex.t06.htm>.

effectively, and dealing with child care requirements. Although the evidence is mixed and sometimes nonstandard hours can be helpful, some studies find that shift work, night shifts, and irregular hours raise the likelihood of separation or divorce (Presser 2000; Stradzins et al. 2006; White and Keith 1990). If family-functioning problems arise from these special circumstances for combining work and family, then family problems may spill over to the work place in the form of increased turnover and reduced productivity. Presumably, employers use nonstandard hours and irregular shifts to run their operations effectively, often to provide customers with services at night or to operate their plants and equipment at full capacity. Many pay a night-shift differential to compensate somewhat for requiring work during nonstandard hours. While workers voluntarily take these positions and about 8 percent report that nonstandard hours allows for better family and child care arrangements, about 8 percent report it is the only job available. Others may lack sound information for judging potentially negative family consequences or the skills to cope effectively with them.

Given legitimate concerns about potential harmful impacts of nonstandard work, there is a case for a demonstration to determine whether a well-designed set of services and incentives can prevent negative consequences on families and can benefit employers as well. One option is to work with multisite employers who use nonstandard and irregular schedules for many employees. The organization putting together the demonstration would approach these employers and offer to provide services and incentives to some workers but would require some financial participation by employers, such as paid time to attend classes. Another project component could involve training supervisors and managers about how to mitigate harmful impacts on workers and their families while maintaining high productivity. Initially, the demonstration would recruit only parents (including married, cohabiting, and single parents) and would provide such services as marriage education or relationship-skills classes, classes that offer referrals to services and other means of coping effectively with nonstandard hours, and possibly a modest stipend that parents can use to deal with special needs. Among the skills taught would be how to structure child care with friends, families, and neighbors. The demonstration would not use random assignment within the work site, in part because of the likelihood of contamination (treatment group parents receiving services would commonly interact with control group parents in the same work site) as well as likely employer opposition. Instead, the analysis would use a difference-in-difference

analysis to test whether family outcomes improved in the sites offering services relative to matched comparison sites. The follow-up data would cover not only those still with the organization, but also those who become unemployed, left the work force, or took other jobs. The evaluation would also attempt to determine whether employers experience any positive (or negative) impacts of the services. Ideally, if the demonstration proved sufficiently effective for families and employers, many employers might choose to sponsor similar services.

An alternative demonstration strategy would be to use a randomized encouragement approach to test the provision of services for parents working nonstandard hours. In a community with an organization funded to provide services, a survey firm would conduct a household survey to determine eligibility for services and, at random, to encourage some eligibles to take up the services and to provide no information or encouragement to others. The evaluators would follow both the encouraged households and eligible households not encouraged to participate for at least two years. This approach has advantages and disadvantages over the employer-based method. It offers the chance to obtain experimentally-based and unbiased estimates of the impact of encouragement and information on participation in the program and, assuming some positive encouragement effects, of the impact of services on family functioning. On the other hand, the approach requires a large sample, its effectiveness depends partly on the impact of encouragement, and it provides only partial evidence about potential impacts on employers. Further, the employer-based services might generate peer effects by linking participants with participating co-workers and might offer participants the assurance of employer support. Finally, since identifying gains for employers might be one way to generate long-term funding for the services, a demonstration not directly linked to employers may be disadvantageous.

The demonstration fits the framework by recognizing potential gaps in information and skills faced by parents working nonstandard hours. It draws on empirical evidence about one source of potential family-functioning problems.

*6. Adding Marriage Education and Relationship Skills to the Nurse Home Visiting Intervention*

The increasing evidence that the Nurse Home Visiting Program is highly cost-effective (Aos et al. 2004) has led to proposals for expanding the intervention nationwide (Isaacs 2007). Yet, although the program as constituted appears to yield some benefits for children and mothers, the gains might be enhanced significantly by combining the intensive visits with marriage education or relationship-skills classes. While less than 2 percent of participating mothers were married at the time of the intervention, 15 percent were married and over 75 percent had a partner at the time of the follow-up. It is well-known that tensions between partners rise soon after the birth of a child. Thus, it makes sense to combine advice on taking care of infants and toddlers with information and skill-building to sustain close partner relationships. Certainly, nurses should be sure to make mothers aware of the importance of marriage and father involvement for the long-term economic and social health of children. Any expansion of the Nurse Home Visiting approach should be informed by the potential effectiveness of high-priority, complementary services, such as marriage education and relationship-skills training.

A demonstration could test the existing Nurse Home Visiting Program against a Nurse Home Visiting Program enhanced by marriage education and relationship-skills components. Evidence from the Supporting Father Involvement Demonstration (Cowan and Cowan 2007) indicates that emphasizing relationship skills can have as positive or even more positive impacts on children than emphasizing parental skills alone. The additional components could work as follows: (1) train nurses to learn about and communicate the long-term benefits for children of marriage and healthy fathering for children, (2) attempt to engage fathers in the standard array of nurse home-visiting activities, (3) give participating mothers (and, where appropriate, fathers as well) formal invitations to participate in marriage education/relationship-skills training, (4) use existing marriage education/relationship-skills providers to contact and recruit participants in the enhanced program, (5) train nurses to learn about the programs and explain their value, and (6) insure that sufficient marriage education/relationship-skill classes are available for participants who choose to take advantage of these services. The demonstration would randomly assign potential participants to either the standard program or an enhanced set of services. In this case, the enhancement

would be a well-structured marriage education component. The follow-up interviews will take place in the context in which both groups will have been receiving services and thus should reach a high share of the sample.

The demonstration would yield answers to several important questions. Can the Nurse Visiting Program effectively encourage participation in marriage education/relationship-skills classes? To what extent do the offers and encouragement stimulate participation in these classes? If the enhanced component increases participation in these classes and related components, do these services increase relationship quality, stability between partners, cohabitation, and marriage? Are the gains for children higher in the enhanced Nurse Visiting Program than in the standard program? The proposal fits well into the conceptual framework. The program may alter a mother's preferences by raising the priority she places on a good relationship with her partner or husband, as well as provide her with the skills to be effective in the dual roles of mother and partner. The marriage component can also deliver information to mothers about the importance of stable families for childrearing.

### *7. Linking Marriage Education, Mentoring, and Expanded Work-Based Learning for Youth*

The decline in teen pregnancy is noteworthy but so is the continuing reality that 34 percent of girls become pregnant during their teenage years, almost always outside of marriage. Moreover, half of all first nonmarital births are to teenagers (Whitehead and Pearson 2006). These early actions complicate the route to a healthy, stable marriage and the raising of children in two-parent families. Once a woman has a nonmarital birth, her likelihood of having a long-term marriage declines substantially (Bennett, Bloom, and Miller 1993). If she marries a man who was not the father of her first child, child outcomes may suffer because of the poorer outcomes for children in stepparent families as opposed to biological or adoptive parent families. It is critical to increase the share of young people who recognize these realities, who do not engage in unhealthy relationships, and who delay childbearing until after marriage.

Any demonstration that attempts to address teen pregnancy and early unwed childbearing should recognize the lessons of youth-development programs. The best

strategies help young people achieve their own positive goals rather than simply suppressing problem behaviors (Moore and Zaff 2002). They try to use positive peer influences and long-term mentoring. The best programs for disadvantaged youth address several barriers and deal with the whole person. Although programs can focus on the disadvantaged, they should not involve a concentration of youth criminal offenders.

Young people are making important transitions that involve increased responsibility for their own decisions—in sex lives, couple relationships, living arrangements, marriage, career choices, postsecondary education, and financial independence. Educational institutions and families provide young people with only some preparation for these life events. Critical gaps exist, especially in preparing many youth for productive careers, healthy marriages, and healthy parenting.

This demonstration would test a multipronged strategy to help young people develop achievable pathways toward rewarding careers, see the value of delaying childbearing until marriage, and gain the job-related and relationship skills necessary for success in career and family pursuits. The components of the program would involve both employment-oriented and marriage/family education elements. One potential venue is Career Academies, noted above as a successful intervention raising the earnings of young men, especially students with a high or medium risk of dropping out of high school. However, the venues could vary from Career Academies, to other youth job-focused programs, to community colleges, or to family planning clinics dealing with teens. To ensure the demonstrations are well-targeted, they should operate in areas with a concentration of the target population.

The employment component would focus on expanding work-based learning, ideally in an apprenticeship context. All participants would be given access to a combined work-based and school-based program. Such a model will provide youth with productive experiences, natural mentors, and constructive interactions with adults. Learning in context will help students see the relevance and gain the self-confidence many at-risk students lack. Placing inner-city youth in jobs in fields that can lead to rewarding careers will reduce the disadvantage they may face with respect to information and informal channels to jobs and careers. Linking youth with employers will expose inner-city youth to constructive adult

peers who will often become informal mentors. The approach gives youth a try-out period with employers, many of whom will hire the youth once they graduate from high school.

Along with this employment component, participants would be exposed to an enhanced marriage and relationship curriculum that (1) teaches about healthy dating and uses experiential learning in the teaching of relationship skills, (2) offers abstinence or comprehensive sex education, and (3) teaches about love and marriage and about the importance of raising children in two-parent families. Several curricula are addressing these issues and more will emerge as many of the ACF Healthy Marriage grantees undertake programs within high schools. For example, Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America (OICA) is implementing an OFA grant to provide education in high schools on the value of marriage relationship skills and budgeting, and to provide marriage education, marriage skills, and relationship-skills programs for nonmarried pregnant women and nonmarried expectant fathers. OICA expects to serve 1,500 high school youth and 50 expectant women and unmarried fathers with instruction and support services over 12 weeks. Adding a strong career-focused component to the program could generate synergy in the mix of skills required in relationships and jobs. In addition, the two components could complement each other in giving youth a realistic way to reach both career and family-formation goals.

In developing a holistic approach to teaching life skills to participants, the demonstration would build on the experience of prior youth-development programs and on the teaching of skills documented in the reports of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (1992) and of the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.<sup>23</sup> Some of the skills in relationship curricula—especially in communication, listening, problem solving, and allocating resources—parallel those emphasized as required for careers. The emphasis on work-based learning will provide youth with the opportunity to practice these skills in context.

This holistic youth demonstration emphasizes the information and skills aspect of our framework, but includes an effort to change preferences, improve incentives, and utilize

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<sup>23</sup> See <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/>.

constructive contexts as well. Given the improved and increasingly visible career options, young women would have more of an incentive to delay pregnancy to pursue occupational outlets. The enhanced career success of potential male partners would encourage women to see marriage as a more viable and sensible option. The initiative builds on the theoretical and empirical youth-development field and on empirical data showing the importance of early interventions. Evidence from other demonstrations indicates these components can be effective for the target population. Although the demonstration can ultimately exert significant positive effects on marriage, employment, and family functioning, the impacts will take time to materialize and document. Finally, the demonstration could be subject to rigorous evaluation and, if successful, readily expanded to scale.

## **V. CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

Using policies and programs to strengthen marriage, family-functioning, and employment outcomes poses serious challenges. Although interventions often have a single focus, family formation, job-market outcomes, and family functioning interact in important ways that cannot be ignored. For this reason, the development of policies and programs that take explicit account of these interactions is a potentially critical step in promoting each of these objectives. The motivation to succeed in a job-training program may come in part from the desire to enter or maintain a good marriage and provide a decent living standard for a spouse and children. The choice of marriage over cohabitation or other couple relationships may be difficult to sustain without a steady income. Unhealthy family relationships may carry over into the work place, harming an individual's career. Alternatively, unemployment may erode the healthy functioning of a family.

We have presented seven demonstration ideas that recognize the potential importance of these types of interactions for the success of employment, marriage, and family-functioning outcomes. Table 1 summarizes the initiatives and how they relate to our conceptual framework. All seven fit our criteria for testing a promising approach. Although we chose to limit the discussion to seven, we realize that other approaches also have potential for improving overall family well-being. Two promising ideas involve the military. One would combine improved postmilitary career preparation with expanded marriage education, relationship, and financial-literacy skills training. A second would provide new

outlets for groups of at-risk youth to join the military after a special premilitary education, training, and relationship-skills program. Other approaches might incorporate mental-health services alongside the employment- and marriage education components. Already, some sites have been developing programs that link employment- and mental-health services (Iverson and Armstrong 2004).

We view the next steps as considering all of the options described in this paper as well as other possibilities and determining which deserve a more detailed analysis and review. We believe we have laid out a sound framework, sensible demonstration criteria, and some promising and feasible moderate- to large-scale demonstration initiatives. It is now time for a careful discussion of the alternatives followed by a thorough analysis of those selected as having the highest priority.

**Table 1: How Demonstration Proposals Relate to the Conceptual Framework**

	<b>Preferences</b>	<b>Incentives/ constraints</b>	<b>Uncertainty/ information</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Context</b>
Adding effective employment services to marriage-oriented programs		Reduces constraints and improves incentives	Reduces uncertainty about earnings of a potential spouse	Links provision of job-related and couple skills	
Offering Marriage-related services to targeted unemployment insurance recipients					
Adding marriage education to Job Corps and other selected out-of-school youth programs	Helps youth clarify their preferences about family life over time		Teaches youth about the importance of family outcomes for long-term economic and social fulfillment	Provides dating and other relationship skills, which might complement job skills	Success in relationship-skill programs might alter the Job Corps environment somewhat
Conducting a holistic marriage-employment-family functioning demonstration for offenders and ex-offenders	Helps offenders clarify their preferences about family life over time		Teaches offenders about impacts of family interactions and outcomes on long-term fulfillment	Provides dating and other relationship skills, which might complement job skills	
Strengthening the functioning of families for parents working nonstandard or irregular hours		Reduces a constraint and possibly tensions in relationships	Provides information about how to adapt to nonstandard hours	Gives couples more skills in coping with this problem	
Adding marriage education and relationship skills to the Nurse Home Visiting Intervention	Mothers may raise their priority on relationship quality		Provides information about the role of healthy marriage in childrearing	Provides skills to help deal with roles as mother and partner	
Linking marriage education, mentoring, and expanded work-based learning for youth	Helps youth clarify their priorities about the value of family life			Provides youth with combination of dating, relationship, and job skills	

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## **Appendix**

### **Marriage, Employment and Family Functioning: A Literature Review**

**Prepared by**

**Robert I. Lerman, Urban Institute and American University  
Gregory Acs, Urban Institute  
Suzanne Bianchi, University of Maryland  
Anupa Bir, RTI International  
Natasha Pilkauskas, RTI International**

**Submitted to**

**Mark Fucello  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation  
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20447**

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## **I. Introduction**

The relationships among marriage, labor-market choices and outcomes, and family functioning are complex. How well adults succeed in the labor market can directly affect their marital and family status, which in turn can affect their living standards and their relationships with their children. But, marital status and family status also affect labor-market choices, such as whether to work and how much to work. The interactions are often unclear and frequently vary by subgroup. A high-earning man or woman might be able to choose among several good choices of partners without committing to a marriage. Marriage might divert attention from one's career and lead to lower long-term earnings. On the other hand, marriage might strengthen responsibility and long-term time horizons that lead some spouses to work more and others to work less. Cohabitation might be a viable substitute for marriage in couple relationships, but less so with child rearing. High income might keep families together or become a source of dissention and family conflict. Work by mothers might serve as a good example to children and reduce the financial burden on families or might limit the attention children receive at critical junctures.

The direction of causation is often difficult to determine. Marital status may affect the wages people earn and the commitment to work people make (Ahituv and Lerman 2005), but this relationship may be mediated by the effect of marriage on the quality of couple relationships and parent-child relationships. The types of jobs available to mothers and fathers may affect the amount of time parents spend with their children. At the same time, the priority parents attach to parenting time may affect the jobs they choose. The dynamics of these interactions are likely to vary by sex and over time as individuals age. Moreover, statistical analyses are generally able to capture average effects for groups but not all the variations in impacts within groups.

Social scientists have tried for decades to sort out which relationships are genuinely causal and which are merely associations. The job is complex and fraught with conceptual, methodological, and empirical problems. Are the researchers simply showing correlational relationships or learning about causation? It is hard enough to document causation in one particular relationship, such as between marriage and work effort. Can the researchers incorporate all the key interactions in studying this or other specific relationships? Are there

sufficient data to determine the size of the impacts and how they differ among subgroups of the population?

The complexities become magnified when researchers try to incorporate links between marriage and family functioning and between family functioning and labor-market outcomes. Each of the relationships involves many possible connections that may vary over the life cycle, may be changing as the economy and social attitudes evolve, and may differ by demographic group.

No doubt personal characteristics affect the choices that individuals face and make. Recent research argues for the importance of both cognitive and noncognitive abilities (like patience, self-control, and time management) in determining choices that individuals make (Cunha and Heckman 2005). The effects can be multiplicative, because skills and abilities are acquired, reinforced, and complemented through development.

Notwithstanding the difficulty of determining causation, the issues are so important as to demand the attention of policymakers. At stake is the economic, educational, and social welfare of children. By influencing marriage, labor-market outcomes, and the way families function, the presence or absence of policies can affect the current and long-term well-being of the next generation.

A reasonable first step toward the development of policy options for improving family and child outcomes is to examine carefully the findings of research on the multiple connections between marriage, work, and family functioning. This paper conducts such a review, with the goal of informing directions for future interventions and how best to test their likely effectiveness. The family-work relationships under study have been the subject of extensive observational and experimental research. In addition, many public policies have attempted to influence a variety of marital, work, and family-functioning outcomes. In short, there is a great deal to consider.

Before the review and analysis of the relevant empirical studies, the next section describes our approach, methods, and theoretical perspectives. This section also lays out the main questions and how they fall into subsequent parts of the paper. Next, we review and summarize the observational (nonexperimental) studies on each of three sets of relationships: (1) the interaction between marriage and labor-market outcomes; (2) the interaction between labor-market outcomes and family functioning; and (3) the interaction between marital and family structure and family functioning. Section IV turns to the

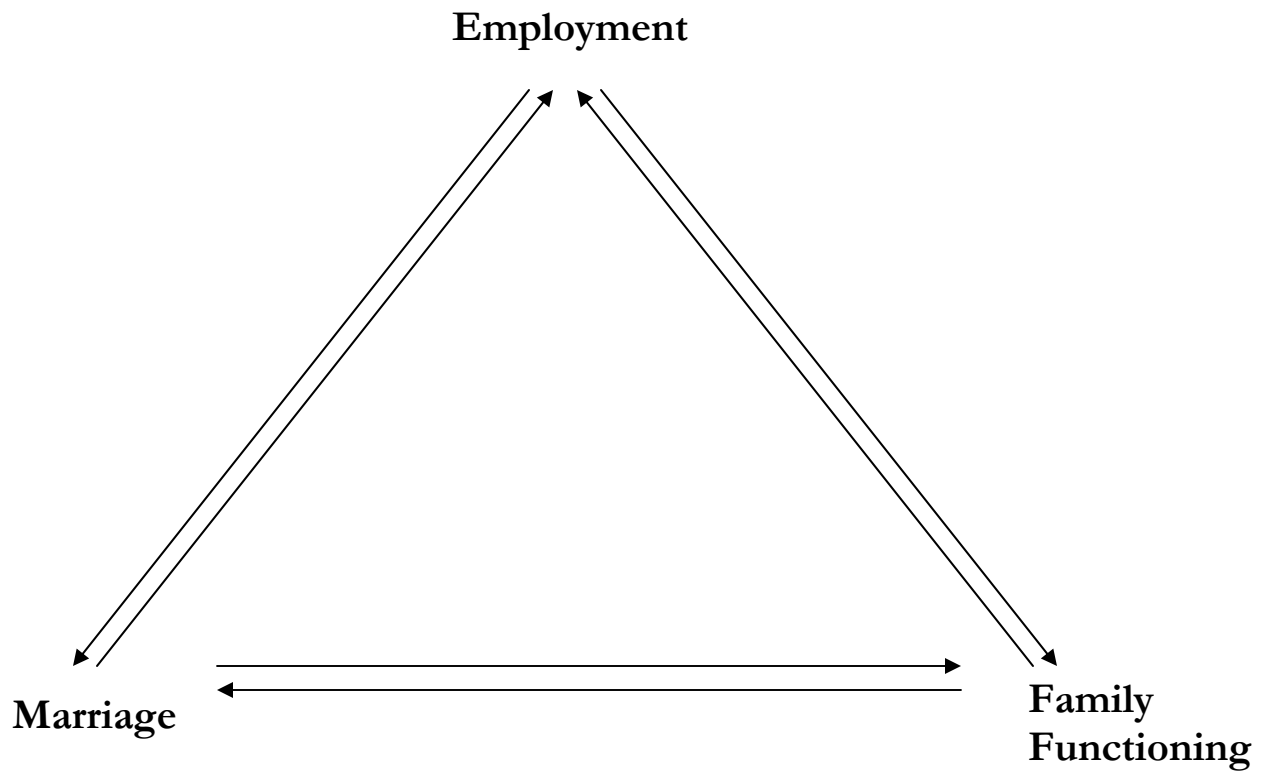
experimental research and considers all the relationships significantly affected by the demonstration treatments, whether or not the planners of the demonstration targeted the outcomes. Section V concludes by delineating the empirical results by the strength of their findings, highlighting what the research shows clearly, shows with some uncertainty, or does not show one way or another.

## **II. Approaches to Examining the Literature**

Covering the vast literature dealing with marriage, labor-market outcomes, and family functioning requires setting limits on what to include and thus what to exclude. This appendix examines a considerable number of relevant studies but does not offer a full, comprehensive review. Figure 1 depicts the three-way link between marital status, job-market outcomes, and family functioning. The triangular pattern displayed in the figure highlights the potential links running in both directions between any two of the three poles. One goal of this review is to highlight which arrows represent the strongest relationships. Now, in doing so, we recognize that each pole generally represents several possible variables or statuses. The labor-force status pole can represent employment, hours worked, wage rates, job stability or occupational status. The marital status pole can involve comparing marriage to never-married, separated, divorced, or remarried status, and, within each of the nonmarried statuses, to cohabiting or not cohabiting. Family functioning incorporates an extensive array of variables, from the health of relationships between partners and between parents and children to the way in which children are acculturated, mentored, and educated. Thus, in highlighting which are the key relationships, we must recognize, for example, that marriage (relative to being never-married or divorced and noncohabiting) may exert large and significant effects on some family-functioning outcomes but not on others.

The timing of relationships adds another level of complexity to defining the marriage, employment, and family-functioning poles. Current employment may affect the timing of marriage, divorce, or remarriage, but may have little impact on whether someone ultimately marries. Current unemployment may exert little effect on family functioning today, but frequent unemployment may lead to long-term family problems. Job availability in a single year may have little impact on marital status in the following year, but a sustained

**Figure 1. Relationship between Marriage,  
Employment, and Family Functioning**



period of abundant employment opportunities may increase marriage rates. The relationships may vary substantially by age. Marrying too early or too late might weaken long-term job-market outcomes. Good jobs may do little to encourage marriage at some ages but may affect marriage greatly at other ages.

The interactions between employment and marital status are likely to be strongly mediated by decisions about childbearing. Although no studies are able to capture the joint and simultaneous decisions of men and women concerning employment, marriage, and fertility, the trends suggest diverging patterns. College-educated women have been delaying marriage and childbearing by investing early in their careers. Meanwhile, less-educated women are continuing to have children at young ages and increasingly prior to marriage, perhaps because they see fewer work-related reasons to delay childbearing and because economic and social gains from marrying low-wage potential spouses are modest or nonexistent (Ellwood and Jencks 2004).

A second element of our approach is the distinction between associations (or correlations) and causation. Ideally, we would like to know about both association and causation. But, causation is typically difficult to determine, despite extensive efforts by researchers. Certainly, much of the literature aims (usually imperfectly) at establishing causation. Association, however, might be important for targeting purposes. If certain types of marital situations are correlated with the poor functioning of families, then focusing on families in these situations may be desirable even if the relationship is not causal. Often, studies yield evidence of correlations that control for a variety of observable differences between individuals. A good example is the positive correlation between marriage and wage rates, even among those with the same levels of education, age, race, and family background. Such results do not prove causation but are nonetheless informative, showing that the observed association is not an artifact of association with those factors.

The potential limitations on causal inference come mainly from biases associated with simultaneity and unmeasured heterogeneity. For example, simultaneity can arise in a statistical association between marriage and earnings, since higher earnings might be leading to marriage, marriage might be leading to higher earnings, or both. The idea of unmeasured heterogeneity (sometimes linked with selection) is that a third unmeasured factor (say, good looks, a good personality, or a strong responsibility ethic) is causing both marriage and higher earnings. The simultaneity and unmeasured heterogeneity problems pose difficulties

in estimating causal links among marriage, employment, and family functioning, especially with nonexperimental analyses.

Third, in the review we recognize that the studies cover individuals in a variety of contexts and time periods. Findings about relationships that take place in some contexts may not be enduring and carry over to other contexts. For example, the interactions between work and marriage may operate in a different way for the generation born in the 1940s than for the generation born in the 1970s or 1980s. It is important to report the context (whether the study deals with various subgroups, from all U.S. residents to subgroups classified by age, sex, race, educational level, initial marital or parental status, economic status, and region of residence), the time period, and the economic conditions.

Although the primary interest in this review is how the various relationships operate among individuals with low to moderate expected incomes, the observational studies often cover a wider spectrum of the population. The review looks most closely at results for relevant target groups but does not exclude broader studies. As seen in section IV, the demonstrations and program evaluations typically focus on those from the low-income or lower middle-income groups. In reviewing these findings, we include results from projects that emphasized one outcome (such as higher employment and earnings), but where there are data on its link with the outcomes displayed in figure 1. For example, the primary goals of Job Corps and the focus of the Job Corps evaluation are to raise the education and skill levels of at-risk, out-of-school youth and to improve their career outcomes (Child Trends 2003). To the extent the project did so, it would have exerted an exogenous effect on earnings and career outcomes. We can then examine whether demonstrations also yielded positive effects on marriage or family functioning, possibly as an indirect effect of improved labor-market outcomes or possibly as a direct, though unintended, effect of the services provided.

### **III. The Empirical Literature on Observational Data**

Researchers have produced an array of nonexperimental studies of the relationships between marriage, employment, and family functioning. This section reviews many of these studies in three parts: (1) interactions between labor-market outcomes and marital status; (2) interactions between marriage and family functioning; and (3) interactions between employment and family functioning. In each part, we discuss several studies and present a

table listing the key studies, their data, and their findings. In most cases, causation is difficult to determine. However, most studies are at least able to determine statistical associations between marriage, employment, and family functioning that control for a variety of confounding factors, including age, education, family background, and sociodemographic group.

### **A. Broad Perspectives on Marital Status and Labor-Market Outcomes**

Theories offer possible explanations of how marriage affects employment and how employment affects marriage. According to Gary Becker's seminal work (1981), marriage makes families better off partly by allowing individuals within families to specialize, which yields greater productivity on the part of mothers and fathers. With specialization, one spouse may be more likely to work in the job market and be motivated to work hard enough to raise his or her wages, while the second spouse may focus on family responsibilities and thus be less likely to engage in market work. However, the theory may not hold if household production involves activities requiring different skills, such as distinct mother and father contributions to child rearing (Lundberg and Pollak 2007). Several researchers have questioned Becker's specialization perspective on other grounds. Oppenheimer, Kalmijn, and Lim (1997) point out that couples may maximize living standards by having both partners work and buying housework services. Lam (1988) sees marriage as offering partners the ability to share private goods, such as housing, and raising children. In all of these cases, the rationale for marriage remains but does not necessarily involve the housework–market work division of labor and is likely to lead men and women to choose partners with similar education and wage levels.

The sharing of certain economic and social resources in marriage (such as housing) yields economies of scale. By raising living standards for any given amount of earnings, however, economies of scale could lessen the pressure to increase work effort and thus lower hours worked. Marriage provides for risk-sharing protection against unexpected events (Oppenheimer 2000; Waite 1995). Weiss (1997) suggests that marriage may allow individuals to overcome credit constraints (partners can loan to each other). Marriage-induced economies of scale, risk diversification, and enhanced ability to borrow can apply to cohabiting couples and some other household-sharing arrangements; but such benefits are more likely to arise in marriage, since it is a more stable living arrangement than is































**Table 2. Women's Annual Earnings and Weeks Worked by Marital Status, Presence of Children, and Age, 2004**

Parent and Marital Status	Ages 25–34			Ages 35–44			Ages 45–54		
	Annual earnings	Weeks worked	Percent of population	Annual earnings	Weeks worked	Percent of population	Annual earnings	Weeks worked	Percent of population
<b>No child under 18</b>									
Married	\$25,453	36.3	17.1	\$26,391	37.1	18.5	\$27,065	37.2	34.4
Separated/widowed/divorced	\$20,912	37.9	5.4	\$27,669	39.4	9.9	\$27,206	38.1	14.3
Never-married, not cohabiting	\$22,977	39.1	17.3	\$30,615	40.2	7.8	\$28,547	37.5	6.3
Never-married, cohabiting	\$24,385	40.6	6.2	\$25,185	37.8	3.3	\$23,015	37.7	3.2
<b>With a child under 18</b>									
Married	\$17,996	29.9	39.6	\$23,859	35.0	48.6	\$26,151	36.8	31.7
Separated/widowed/divorced	\$18,445	35.9	3.0	\$25,290	38.8	6.1	\$31,113	39.7	6.9
Never-married, not cohabiting	\$20,121	37.0	8.4	\$24,673	37.3	3.9	\$25,302	36.3	2.1
Never-married, cohabiting	\$20,260	37.5	3.0	\$24,597	39.2	1.9	\$27,772	37.6	1.1
<b>Total</b>	\$20,946	34.7	19,631	\$25,409	36.7	21,882	\$27,009	37.4	21,405

Source: Tabulations by authors from the March 2005 Current Population Survey.

























































































































































































**Table 4. Maternal employment and Child Outcomes**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Key Independent Variables</b>	<b>Results on Key Variables</b>
Baum (2003)	Child's cognitive development: measured by Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) score, Peabody Individual Achievement Test of Mathematics (PIAT-M) score, and Peabody Individual Achievement Test of Reading Recognition (PIAT-R)	Maternal employment and work effort: measured by any work (1/0), work hours, number of weeks worked, number of weeks worked fulltime (at least 35 hours/week), and/or a set of indicators for the period in which the mother first started working after giving birth	Hours worked in the first quarter of the first year of a child's life have a negative effect on PPVT scores, whereas the PIAT-M and PIAT-R scores are not significantly affected by maternal labor in the first quarter of a child's life. The study suggests that maternal labor supply partially affects child development through increased family income--increasing family income increases child development and hence the increased family income from maternal work may partially offset the negative effects of maternal labor supply. The effects of maternal labor supply on child development generally remain the same when controls for childcare mode are included.

1988-1993 NLSY of mother-child pairs where the mother was between the ages of 23 and 30 in 1988. Longitudinal.

Baydar and Brooks-Gunn (1991)	Child outcomes: PPVT-R and Behavioral Problems Index (BPI)	Maternal employment status throughout the child's life assessed by week-by-week employment histories taken at each survey and maternal work hours assessed by "usual hours" survey question	Maternal employment in the child's first year of life had detrimental effects on both PPVT-R and BPI. Of mothers who worked during their child's first year of life, children whose mothers worked less than an average of 10 hours per week experienced the least negative effects of maternal employment on cognitive development. Further, working mothers who delayed entry into the LF until the fourth quarter of the child's first year of life had higher PPVT-R scores and lower BPI scores than the children whose mothers entered the LF earlier.
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1986 NLSY of 1,181 children who were 3 to 4 years of age in 1986 plus the work histories of their mothers (obtained in prior panels of the NLSY), restricted to White children. Longitudinal.

Belsky and Eggbeen (1991)	Child's socioemotional functioning: "adjustment" (behavior problems total + insecurity - compliance) and "shyness" (inhibition - sociability)	Maternal employment: no work, parttime, and fulltime work during each quarter of the first three years of her child's life	Children whose mothers were employed full-time beginning in their first or second year of life scored lower on "adjustment" than children whose mothers were not employed during the first three years. This effect was driven primarily by the "compliance" component of this measure, such that early and extensive maternal employment was associated with high levels of noncompliance.
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1986 NLSY of 1,248 Black and White children who were 4 to 6 years of age plus the work histories of their mothers (obtained in prior panels of the NLSY). Longitudinal.

Blau and Grossberg (1992)	Child's PPVT score	Maternal work effort: proportion of weeks worked in 1st year of child's life and proportion of weeks worked in 2nd+ years of child's life	Maternal employment has a negative effect on children's PPVT score in the first year of life, but a positive effect in subsequent years for a net overall effect throughout the child's first 3-4 years of zero. This study builds on previous studies summarized in this review in that it addresses the unmeasured heterogeneity of employed and nonemployed mothers (although the study finds no statistical evidence of such unobserved heterogeneity).
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1986 NLSY of 874 children who were 3 to 4 years of age. Longitudinal.

Brooks-Gunn, Han and Waldfogel (2002)	Child cognitive outcomes: Bayley Mental Development Index (MDI) at 15 months, revised Bayley MDI at 24 months, Bracken School Readiness Scale at 36 months.	Maternal employment status at 1, 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 24, 36 months of child's life as well as fulltime/parttime status (1-30 hours)	No effect of maternal employment within the first year of life on children's MDI scores at 15 or 24 months, but Maternal employment by the ninth month had a negative effect on the Bracken score at 36 months. Children whose mothers started working by the ninth month and worked 30 hours/week or more had lower 36-month Bracken scores than children whose mothers had not worked by 9 months. Part-time work by the ninth month had no effect on 36-month Bracken scores. Effects remained significant even after controlling for child-care quality, quality of the home environment, and maternal sensitivity.
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1991 NICHD Study of Early Child Care (SECC) of 900 European American, non-Hispanic children observed at ages 6, 15, 24 and 36 months. Longitudinal.

Desai, Chase-Lansdale, Michael (1989)	Child's PPVT score	Maternal employment: continuously worked all 4 years of child's life, intermittently worked, worked in the first year, stopped work after the first 3 months, began work in the second year, continued work in the second year	Mother's employment has a negative effect on their 4-year-old child's PPVT score, but only among boys in higher income families. The effect was not found for girls or for children in low-income families, or families where mothers resumed their employment after the child's first year of life. Overall, there is no discernible influence of maternal employment on child's PPVT score at age 4.
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1986 NLSY of 503 4-year-old children and their mothers. Longitudinal.

<p>Han, Waldfoegel, Brooks-Gunn (2001)</p>	<p>child's PPVT-R (at ages 3-4), PIAT-Math (ages 5-6 and 7-8), PIAT-Reading (ages 5-6 and 7-8), Behavior Problems Index (ages 4+)</p>	<p>Maternal employment: employed during first year of child's life, employed during the 2nd or 3rd year, employed after age 3, currently working; quarter of the 1st year that maternal employment began, and FT/PT work in 1st year (FT=21+ hours/week)</p>	<p>Same results as above study (Waldfoegel, Han, Brooks-Gunn 2002), though they did not examine Hispanic Children. No effects of maternal employment were found for African American children, so all results reported in the rest of this summary pertain to White children only. This study tests whether effects vary by income and finds employment in the 1st year has negative effects on all outcome measures for children of low-income families, compared with lower/fewer negative effects among middle-income and high-income families. The study also examines marital status and finds that among single-mother families, there are no significant differences between single-mother families where the mother worked and those where the mother did not work in the 1st year. Lastly, the study also looked at BPI and found no overall effects of maternal employment on child's BPI, but the timing of maternal employment before the 4th quarter of the 1st year has a positive effect on children's behavioral problem (the higher the score, the more problems).</p>
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1986-1990 NLSY of 462 7 to 8-year-old children and their mothers. Longitudinal.

<p>Hill, Waldfoegel, Brooks-Gunn, Han (2005)</p>	<p>child's PPVT-R (at ages 3-4), PIAT-Math (ages 5-8), PIAT-Reading (ages 5-8), BPI (ages 4-8)</p>	<p>Maternal employment: no work in first 3 years postbirth, work only after 1st year, par-time work in 1st year, and full-time work in 1st year</p>	<p>Negative effects of maternal employment on children's cognitive outcomes were found in our analyses primarily for children whose mothers were employed full time in the first year postbirth as compared with children whose mothers postponed work until after their child's first year of life and also as compared with mothers who worked part time in the first year. Negative effects in terms of increased externalizing behavioral problems were evident in each of these comparisons involving mothers who worked full time in the first year. Standard missing data methods might overstate the negative effects of full-time maternal employment in the first year of life on children's cognitive development, and some might miss the detrimental effects on externalizing behavior as well. Moreover, standard regression methods that use only complete case data might overstate the advantages associated with part-time work in the first year in terms of cognitive measures. Results suggest that the effects of early maternal employment vary across different types of children and families.</p>
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1986-2000 NLSY of 6114 children of the NLSY born from 1982 to 1993. Longitudinal.

James-Burdumy (2005) child's PPVT-R (at ages 3-4), PIAT-Math (ages 5-18), PIAT-Reading (ages 5-18) Maternal employment: hours worked in years 1, 2, and 3 of the child's life; weeks worked in years 1, 2, and 3.

Fixed effects results show that only PIAT-M was negatively affected by maternal work hours and weeks worked in the 1st year of the child's life. PIAT-R was negatively affected by weeks worked in year 1, but not by work hours. Weeks or hours worked in year 2 were not associated with any outcomes. Weeks worked in year 3 positively affected PIAT-M scores, but hours worked in year 3 were not associated with any outcomes. To examine the effect of family income, Hours were interacted with very low income and findings indicated that none of the interactions were significant for PIAT scores. However, when hours worked in year 1 were interacted with low income, they had a negative effect on PPVT scores, suggesting that hours worked by low-income mothers in the child's first year are associated with lower PPVT scores. The coefficients on the interactions between a White race dummy and mother's hours worked in year 3 were positive for PIAT-M and PIAT-R (meaning work hours in year 3 were positively associated with PIAT-R and PIAT-M for White mothers only).

1986-1994 NLSY of 498 siblings and their mothers as well as the full sample, 2,119 children. Longitudinal.

Ruhm (2004) child's PPVT-R (at ages 3-4), PIAT-Math (ages 5-6), PIAT-Reading (ages 5-6) Maternal employment is measured in the year prior to the birth through the 4th years of the child's life as well as average weekly work hours divided by 20.

Maternal employment in the first year is associated with lower PPVT at ages 3-4, but higher ability for maternal employment in the 3rd and 4th years. Maternal employment in the first year is associated with lower PIAT-M and PIAT-R at ages 5-6, with negative effects persisting for maternal employment in the 3rd and 4th years. Coefficients on maternal employment decline (become more negatively associated with child outcomes) with the addition of more complete controls for heterogeneity. This occurs b/c the author claims to more carefully control for the heterogeneity between working and nonworking mothers than previous analyses. (Note: the author does not carefully indicate statistical significance in this study)

1986-1996 NLSY of 1,872 7 to 8-year-old children and their mothers. Longitudinal.

<p>Waldfoegel, Han, Brooks- Gunn (2002)</p>	<p>child's PPVT-R (at ages 3-4), PIAT-Math (ages 5-6 and 7-8), PIAT-Reading (ages 5-6 and 7-8)</p>	<p>3- Maternal employment: employed during first year of child's life, employed during the 2nd or 3rd year, employed after age 3, and currently working; employment hours were also assessed during the first year of child's life</p>	<p>For white children, maternal employment during the first year of life is associated with poor scores on all outcome measures. Current employment is also associated with lower scores on the PIAT-Math (ages 5-6). Yet, maternal employment after the child's first year of life is positive for PPVT-R, PIAT-R and PIAT-M (at ages 7-8). For African American children, there are no effects of 1st year maternal employment and positive for PIAT-R (age ages 7-8) for maternal employment during the second or third year of life. For Hispanic children, there are no effects of maternal employment during the 1st year of maternal employment, but negative effects for maternal employment during the 2nd or 3rd year on PIAT-M (age ages 5-6) and PIAT-M (age ages 7-8) scores.</p>
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1986-1990 NLSY of 1,872 7 to 8-year-old children and their mothers. Longitudinal.

**Table 5. Nonstandard Work Schedules, Long Work Hours, and Instability in Work Hours/Schedules and Child Care, Parenting and Child Outcomes**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Key Independent Variables</b>	<b>Results on Key Variables</b>
Casper and O'Connell (1998)	Father's primary or secondary care of children while mother is working (1/0)	Fathers' availability for child care (weekly hours father is not at work while wife is, relative work shifts of spouses, relative FT/PT status of spouses)	Job structures affect fathers' ability to care for preschoolers while mother's at work: father's time available to care for children is positively related to his care. Father's time w/children is maximized when couples work different vs. overlapping shifts.
1988, 1991, 1993 SIPP. Cross-sectional. Dual-earner parents with children under age 5. Reg controls for spouses relative/absolute income and education, # preschool children, region of country, sex of household head, wife's age, spouses relative ages.			
Dunifon, Kalil, and Bajracharya (2005)	Children's internalizing and externalizing behavior problems and levels of positive behavior	Maternal work conditions: long work hours (40+ hours/week), erratic work schedules ("a lot" of variation in number hours worked week to week), nonday shifts ("mostly" evening or mixday and evening hours), lengthy commutes (25+ minutes, top quartile of commute time)	Sig positive association between having a lengthy commute at 2 or more waves (relative to never having a lengthy commute) and children's internalizing behavior problems (effect size of 25% of a std dev in internalizing behavior). No Sig predictors of maternal work conditions on children's externalizing behavior problems. Children's positive behavior decreases when mothers have a long commute at one wave and when mothers have long commutes at 2 or more waves (effect sizes of 30% and 35% of std dev in positive behavior).
Women's Employment Study, 1997-2002, of 372 mothers with children ages 5 to 15 leaving welfare for employment (mothers were single at Wave 1). Longitudinal. Reg controls for number of children under 18 in HH, maternal age, whether the mother lives with her mother, whether the mother is married or cohabiting, mothers' educational level, mothers' race, child age in years, child sex, whether the mother has poor or fair health, parental stress, domestic violence, learning disability, several measures of mothers' mental health, mothers' average hourly wage, number of waves the mother was employed.			
Greenstein (1995)	Marital stability: assessed by years of intact marriage, marital disruption	Women's employment hours (weekly), gender ideology (five likert-style items based on survey responses)	Weekly work hours negatively related to marital stability only for women with nontraditional gender ideology, not women with traditional views.

**Table 6. Low Wages, Job Instability and Unemployment**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Key Independent Variables</b>	<b>Results on Key Variables</b>
Anderson, Kohler, and Letiecq (2005)	Fathers' depressive symptomology (Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale)	7-point "resource challenge" scale including current unemployment, inability to pay full amount of child support order, limited access to reliable transportation, no permanent place to live, problems with alcohol or drugs, health problems or disability, and ever convicted of a crime	Fathers' resource challenges were strongest predictor of depression scores (compared with measures for rural/urban residence, miles from child, social support, and coparent conflict). As the number of challenges increased, father's depression scores increased.

127 predominantly single African American men in 2 urban and rural responsible fatherhood programs, part of a larger study evaluation the Maryland Responsible Fathers Demonstration Project (RF) The primary purpose of the program is to help fathers become more capable of financially supporting their children, more compliant with Child Support Enforcement, and more involved in their children's lives as positive role models and nurturers.

Broman, Hamilton, and Hoffman (1990)	Family tension and stress assessed by:1) level of conflict with their spouse or partner (married/cohabitating only) and their children (parents only) and 2) series of questions about children's problems in school, behavioral/emotional problems, and trouble sleeping	Unemployment	Unemployment is positively associated with spousal conflict (but no sig relationship with children's problems, child conflict, or corporal punishment of children. Path analysis indicates that employment status (employed vs. unemployed vs. anticipate being unemployed) has sig effects on financial hardship, and that, in every case, financial hardship exerts a significant impact on family tension and stress (all in expected directions). The authors observe that from 15 to 75% of the effect of unemployment or its anticipation on family tension and stress is mediated through financial hardship. A series of interaction terms indicated that though the three employment status groups differend in their exposure to financial hardship, there was no evidence that the impact of financial hardship on family conflict and stress differed for the three groups. Further, the impact of financial hardship in producing conflict involving the spouse is greater for men than for women--separate regs for men and women reveal that financial hardship is not a sig predictor of spouse conflict for women, but it is for men.
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1987 study of three GM plants in the Detroit area and one from Flint which were scheduled to close (n=831). A pool of workers from 12 comparison plants in the same area that were not experiencing a shutdown were used as controls (n=766).

<b>Study</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Key Independent Variables</b>	<b>Results on Key Variables</b>
Flanagan (1990)	Mother and child perceptions of parent-child conflict	Change in parental work status (deprived families=job loss at Time 1 and 4, recovery families=job loss at Time 1 and reemployment at Time 4, nondeprived families=stable employment over time)	When families are coping with a job loss or demotion, adolescents report higher levels of conflict with their parents relative to other adolescents. However, the conflict associated with a loss of work status declines when the family recovers (there is a compensatory effect). Mothers' perceptions of conflict were not as sensitive to changing patterns of employment.
1983-84 Transitions at Early Adolescence Project, four wave panel study of 504 adolescents and their mothers from working and middle-class communities with auto manufacturing. Longitudinal (1st and 4th waves).			
Flanagan and Eccles (1993)	Adolescents' social competence (teacher's report of adolescent's ability to get along with peers) and disruptiveness in school (adolescent report)	Change in parental work status (deprived families=job loss at Time 1 and 4, recovery families=job loss at Time 1 and reemployment at Time 4, nondeprived families=stable employment over time)	Teachers reported that adolescents in deprived and declining families were less competent than their peers in stable or recovery families. In addition adolescents whose parents experienced a decline in work status were the most disruptive in junior high school. Most students had difficulty adjusting to junior high school, but the transition was particularly difficult for those students whose parents were changing work statuses.
1983-84 Transitions at Early Adolescence Project, four wave panel study of 883 adolescents (in sixth and seventh grade), their mothers, and their teachers from working and middle-class communities. According to mothers, 8.17% were married, 8.5% remarried, and 9.8% were divorced, separated or widowed. Longitudinal (1st and 4th waves only).			
Howe, Levy, Caplan (2004)	Depressive symptoms	Secondary stressors after job loss: 67 items (e.g. applying for or being refused welfare, unemployment or bank loans; restrictions in spending and increased debt; changes in routines; new demands for job search and training; and physical relocation)	Secondary stressors are associated with increases in depressive symptoms for the job seeker, but also have an effect on the mental health of the partner. Secondary stressors also appear to degrade the quality of the relationship, which contributes to increased distress.
1992 Interview study of married/cohabing white and black English-speaking couples where one partner had been laid off permanently from a nonseasonal job (recruited from five state employment agencies in urban/suburban counties in southern MD). Cross-sectional.			

<b>Study</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Key Independent Variables</b>	<b>Results on Key Variables</b>
Kalil and Ziol-Guest (2006)	Children's academic progress: parental report of grade repetition and expulsion/suspension	Parents' job loss: parents who were underemployed, had one job loss, had multiple job losses, or were persistently unemployed over a 2-year period	Mother's employment is never significantly associated with children's academic progress (even when mothers outearn fathers), but fathers' job losses are adversely associated with children's academic progress. Elementary school children whose fathers experience an involuntary job loss show double the odds of grade repetition compared to those whose fathers are continually working and this relationship is mediated by family economic resources. The odds of suspension/expulsion for children whose fathers experience multiple job gaps, whether voluntary or involuntary, are 5.3 and 2.8 times higher compared to children whose fathers continually work.

1996 SIPP of 4,500 school-age children in 2,569 two-parent primarily white families. Longitudinal (uses waves 6-12).

Kalil and Ziol-Guest (2005)	Adolescents' mastery (Pearlin Master Scale), self-esteem (Rosenberg self-esteem), grade repetition, school dropout (for at least 1 month)	Single mother's employment patterns: continually employed in a good job ("good" = at least 35hr/wk for \$7/hour w/health insurance OR \$8.5 w/out health insurance), continually employed in a bad job, continually unemployed, exactly one job loss followed by reemployment, exactly one job loss without regaining employment, and more than one job loss (reemployment not specified)	Relative to being continuously employed in a good job, adolescents whose mothers lose a job without regaining employment show declines in mastery and self-esteem, those whose mothers are continuously employed in a bad job show an increased likelihood of grade repetition, and those whose mothers are either persistently unemployed or lose more than one job show an increased likelihood of school dropout. These effects are not explained by concomitant changes in family income.
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1994-1996 and 1996-1998 waves of unmarried female respondents from the LNSY79 merged with their young adult children (ages 14-16 at beginning of the 2-year period). The 1994-1996 cohort of 14-, 15-, and 16-year-olds consists of 495 mothers with 538 adolescent children. The 1996-1998 cohort consists of 6757 mothers and 695 adolescent children.

<b>Study</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Key Independent Variables</b>	<b>Results on Key Variables</b>
Kessler, Turner and House (1989)	emotional functioning (depression, anxiety, and somatization subscales of the SCL-90) and physical health (self-evaluation)	unemployment and subsequent reemployment	All three distress measures (depression, anxiety, somatization) were significantly elevated among the currently unemployed compared to the stably employed at Time 1. Distress is slightly positively associated with probability of reemployment (suggesting people who are highly distressed by unemployment might search have more intense job searches). Finally, the authors assessed the effect of distress on subsequent reemployment and found reemployment is associated with improvements in depression. Further the reemployed experienced complete emotional recovery within a year of returning to work.
1984 Community interview survey of 391 respondents (146 unemployed, 162 previously unemployed and 184 stably employed) from 14 census tracts in southeastern Michigan. Follow-interview in 1985. Longitudinal.			
Liem and Liem (1988)	Individual and family functioning: husbands' and wives' affective states using 10-item Affect Balance Scale, psychological symptoms using Derogatis' Brief Symptom Inventory, and overall family climate using Moos and Insel Family Environment Scale	Recent job loss (respondent had to have held the job for at least one year prior to termination)	In comparison to their employed counterparts (control group identified through a combination of telephone surveys based on town census data and random screenings at grocery stores), unemployed blue- and white-collar workers reported higher levels of psychological symptoms following their job loss. They also reported a more negative mood. Workers who found employment before the second wave of interviews (4-5 months) derived considerable emotional relief from their employment compared to those who were still unemployed. However, reemployment at midyear were associated with only a slight positive effect on psychological well-being. The degree of interest and challenge in the job was positively associated with depression (so that the more challenged the respondents were by the job they lost, the more depressed they were). Wives' responses to their husbands' unemployment differed in two ways: 1) their symptoms did not manifest until 4 months following unemployment and 2) the absolute level of the effects was smaller than their husbands.
1981 Boston interview study of 82 recently involuntarily unemployed men and their families, conducted over a at 2, 4, 7, and 12 months. Longitudinal.			

<b>Study</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Key Independent Variables</b>	<b>Results on Key Variables</b>
McLoyd, Jayaratne, Ceballo, Borquez (1994)	Mothers depressive symptomatology and Adolescent socioemotional functioning (adolescent's perception of negative relations w/mother, perception of family's economic hardship, cognitive distress, depressive symptomatology, general anxiety, and self esteem)	Maternal employment status (1/0) and any employment interruption between 1988 and 1990, time of interview (1/0)	With the exception of general anxiety, none of the measures of socioemotional functioning was significantly correlated with maternal unemployment or work interruption directly. However, current maternal unemployment was associated with increased depressive symptomatology in mothers. Mothers who experienced layoffs and job loss or who stopped working were no more depressed than mothers who had not experienced these events. Maternal depressive symptomatology was, in turn, positively associated with harsher punishment of adolescents.

1990-91 Interview data from 241 single African American mothers and their seventh-and eighth-grade children in predominantly lower- and working-class neighborhoods from mid-sized midwestern city.

Vinokur, Price, and Caplan (1996)	depression (self reports and partner reports based on Hopkins Symptom Checklist), marital/relationship satisfaction (Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale)	Financial Strain (measured with 3-item index: difficulty in living on total HH income, anticipation of financial hardship in next 2 months, anticipation of reducing standard of living)	Financial strain increases symptoms of depression in the partner as well as the job seeker. These depressive symptoms dampen the partner's ability to provide support to the job seeker (express care and concern, provide help) and increase the partner's undermining behaviors (criticize, insult). This combination of decreased support and increased undermining has two separate effects on the job seeker: it increases depressive symptoms (above the already elevated level that is due to financial strain) and reduces satisfaction with the marital relationship.
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1991 Experimental study of 815 Recently unemployed job seekers and their spouses or partners from four state unemployment offices in southeast Michigan (501 were included in experimental condition of job search skills and 314 were control). Eligible respondents were those who had lost their job within the last 13 weeks and were still seeking reemployment, follow-up study conducted six months later. Longitudinal.

<b>Study</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Key Independent Variables</b>	<b>Results on Key Variables</b>
Yeung and Hofferth (1998)	Family reduction in total food expenditures $\geq$ 20%, Residential move, Receipt of food stamps, Wife's increase in work hours $\geq$ 150 (married/cohabiting only), Divorce or separation (married only)	Income loss (decrease of 50% or more in the ratio of total family income to needs over the period of study)***Note this study is NOT about explicitly losing a job, but they examine decreases in work hours***	Families that experienced either substantial income loss or whose head experienced reduced work hours at either t+1 or at both t and t+1 were much more likely than families experiencing no loss to reduce their food expenditures at t+1. Families that experienced a major income loss were significantly more likely to move in the subsequent year than those with no or a smaller income loss. Families which experienced a major income loss were significantly more likely to receive food stamps the following year than those with no, or a smaller, income loss. Families in which the head lost work hours in t+1 also were significantly more likely to receive food stamps in that year than those in which the head was stably employed. White families with a 50%+ loss of income was not associated with an increase in the work hours of the spouse, nor was the loss of head's work hours in the present or prior year associated with an increase in her work hours. Income loss was associated with a significantly increased probability of divorce or separation from a partner.

PSID of all families of all children born between 1967 and 1973 and present in the PSID between birth and age 20. Information about the oldest child in the family in 1968 was used to select families for inclusion in this study.

**Table 7. Child Health and Maternal Employment**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Key Independent Variables</b>	<b>Results on Key Variables</b>
<b>II.C.3. How child health and disability affect parental employment</b>			
<b>II.C.3.a Effects on parental employment</b>			
Heck and Makuc (2000)	Parental employment	Presence of child with special needs	Both in two-parent and in single-parent families, children with special needs were significantly more likely than other children to have a parent who did not work full-time (adjusted odds ratio = 1.27 in two-parent families and 1.66 in single-parent families)
1994 National Health Interview Survey N=21415 children 5-17 yrs old, including 1604 children with special needs			
Hodapp and Krasner (1994)	Likelihood of having two or more wage-earners	Presence of child with disabilities: visual impairments, hearing impairments, deafness, and orthopedic impairments	As a combined group, families of children with disabilities were more likely than remaining families to have only one wage earner (as opposed to two or more); difference appears to be due to families of children with orthopedic and visual impairments
National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988: Families of 8th grade children with disability (N=283) and without disability (N=22368)			
Loprest and Davidoff (2004)	Parental employment	Presence of child with special health care needs (CSHCN)	Controlling for differences in demographic and family characteristics, authors find no significant association between having a CSHCN and the probability of work or the number of hours worked among low-income single-parent families; Separate analysis of different dimensions of special health care needs shows that parents of children with activity limitations are significantly less likely to work and work fewer hours; this result does not hold true for the group of children defined based on elevated or special service use, or for the groups of children with specific chronic conditions; Only a specific subset of children with special needs present difficulties for low-income parents' work;
1999 and 2000 National Health Interview Survey: children living in single-parent families with incomes under 200% of the poverty line N=9844 low-income			

Rogers and Hogan (2003)	Anyone in the family made any or all of six types of job changes: not taken a job to care for child; quit working other than normal maternity leave; changed jobs; changed work hours to a different time of day; turned down a better job or promotion; worked fewer hours	Presence of child with functional limitations: limitation in mobility, self-care, communication, and learning ability; or medical condition: physical, neurodevelopmental, learning/behavior, asthma	Each of the 4 types of medical conditions is associated with increased likelihood of experiencing job changes; limitations in children's mobility, limitations in self-care, and moderate and severe but not mild learning disabilities were all associated with the likelihood of job changes. Functional limitations in mobility and self-care were both associated with intensive care requirements, which resulted in parents making various job changes;
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1994 and 1995 National Health Interview Surveys: 3446 children ages 5-17 with a disability

Smith, Romero, Wood, Wampler, Chavkin, and Wise (2002)	Current parental unemployment and work absence(s) in previous 6 months b/c of child illness	Presence of child with chronic illness: asthma, diabetes, sickle-cell anemia, epilepsy, hemophilia, cerebral palsy, or cystic fibrosis	Parents of children with high health care use rates were more likely to be unemployed (odds ratio =1.7); high rates of child health care use were not associated with parents missing work. Among the subgroup of parents of children with asthma, former welfare recipients (odds ratio=3.6) and denied applicants (OR=3.6) were significantly more likely to have missed work b/c of child illness. A high asthma severity score was strongly associated with work absences in parents (OR=4.6)
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2001 study of 504 predominantly low-income English or Spanish-speaking parents or primary caretakers of children aged 2-12 years with one of 7 chronic illnesses (see above). Respondents identified at clinical sites and welfare offices at San Antonio, Texas.

***II.C.3.b How maternal and child health and disability affect maternal employment***

Earle and Heymann (2002)	Maternal job loss: the involuntary end of a job, followed by a period of unemployment of at least 3 months	Existence of children's or mother's health conditions that limit activities	Controlling for personal, human capital, family, and local economic characteristics, having a health condition increased a woman's probability of job loss by 57% while having a child with a health limitation increased a woman's probability of job loss by 33%
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National Longitudinal Survey of Youth: 783 former female welfare recipients who held at least one job between 1979 and 1996. Longitudinal.

Lukemeyer, Meyers, and Smeeding (2000)	Maternal employment	Presence of disabled or chronically or mentally ill child	Controlling for individual and structural factors, children's disabilities explained a significant share of variation in employment outcomes; the presence of a child with only moderate limitations was not significantly related to mothers' employment; in families with a child with severe limitations, mothers' probability of employment was 15% lower, and mothers who were employed worked an average of 15 fewer hours/wk
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1995 data from Wave II of the AFDC Household Survey N=1756 families

Meyers, Lukemeyer, and Smeeding (1998)	Maternal employment	Presence of child with activity-limiting chronic illness, or emotional, mental, or physical condition that could result in a functional limitation	61% of mothers with no disabled children, 62% of mothers with a single, mild or moderately disabled child, and 79-83% of those with more than one or any severely disabled children were not employed when contacted; mothers' self-reports indicated that care for special-needs children depressed employment; 33% of those with only one mild to moderately disabled child, 65% of those with a single severely disabled child, and 90% of those with multiple and severely disabled children reported barriers to employment
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1995 data from Wave II of the California AFDC Household Survey N=1756 families

Parish, Seltzer, Greenberg, and Floyd (2004)	Maternal employment	Presence of child with developmental disability	Differences are b/t 61 mothers of children with developmental disabilities and 61 comparison mothers with no disabled children: In 1974, 46% of mothers with disabled children were employed, 12% were employed full-time, and 34% were employed part-time vs. 64% of mothers w/out disabled children were employed, 38% full-time, and 28% of employed part-time. Mothers of children with disabilities were less likely to have ever had a job spell that exceeded 5 yrs in duration and were less likely to have full-time jobs as their children grew older
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Wisconsin Longitudinal Study 1957-1992: 61 mothers of disabled children and 61 comparison mothers were examined for maternal employment outcome

Porterfield (2002)	Work choices (full-time, part-time, not at all) of single and married mothers	Presence of child with a disability (autism, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, mental retardation, other disabilities, or physical limitations) or existence of maternal disability	The variable with the largest effect on a mother's probability of choosing not to work at all is the disability status of the mother herself. A single mother with a young child with disabilities is 14% more likely to be out of the paid labor force and 17% less likely to work full-time than a single mother with no disabled child. The labor supply effect of having a young child with disabilities is not as great for married mothers as for single mothers; married mothers with young children with disabilities are more likely to work part time and less likely to work full time than are married mothers with no disabled children
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1992 and 1993 panels of the Survey of Income and Program Participation: single (N=3680) and married (N=9804) mothers with children under the age of 20

Powers (2003)	Maternal employment and usual weekly work hours	3 child-disability definitions: (1) mobility limitations on physical activities (2) health problems impacting learning activities (3) incorporates 1 and 2 and receipt of therapy or diagnostic services	For each definition of disability, the estimated effect of disability is always more negative for female heads than wives; a definition-3 disability is predicted to reduce wives' labor force participation by 6 percentage points; the probability of female heads' employment is reduced by 11 percentage points in the case of a definition-2 disability. While female heads' growth in work hours over time and probabilities of entering employment are negatively affected by child disability, evidence was not found for an analogous effect on wives
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1992 and 1993 pooled Survey of Income and Program Participation: wives (N=9594) and female heads (N=2756) with children under 21

Salkever (1990)	Single mothers' labor supply(worked at all in past year, hours of work in past year) and earnings(log of earnings in past year, log of earnings per hour in past year)	Presence of child with disability limiting participation in play activities or child's ability to do regular school work	The negative effect on earnings per hour increases with the age of the disabled child. The presence of a disabled child reduces the probability of maternal employment, but evidence for an effect of child disability on hours, wages, and earnings for working mothers was much weaker
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1976 Survey of Income and Education: 597 households with disabled children and 457 households with no disabled children that are female-headed, have at

Wolfe and Hill (1995)	Single mothers' employment, wages, and earnings capacity	Existence of ADL of mother (activity of daily living mother has difficulty performing); mothers' self-report of poor-fair health; presence of child with mobility limitations or mental or emotional problems limiting learning or schoolwork	The direct effect of own health (ADLs and poor/fair health) is to reduce labor force participation (coefficient on ADLs is negative and significant at the 1 percent level); the influence of having a disabled child is also negative (the coefficient is significant at the 1 percent level). Since poor health and disabilities reduce wages, the results of the wage measure suggest that health plays an important role through its influence on potential earnings. Authors' simulation "made healthy" 25% of women with a health problem and found labor force participation would increase by 2.2 percentage points among all single mothers (0 among healthy women; 8.4 percentage points among women who had originally had a health problem)
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1984 Survey of Income and Program Participation: 1647 single mothers