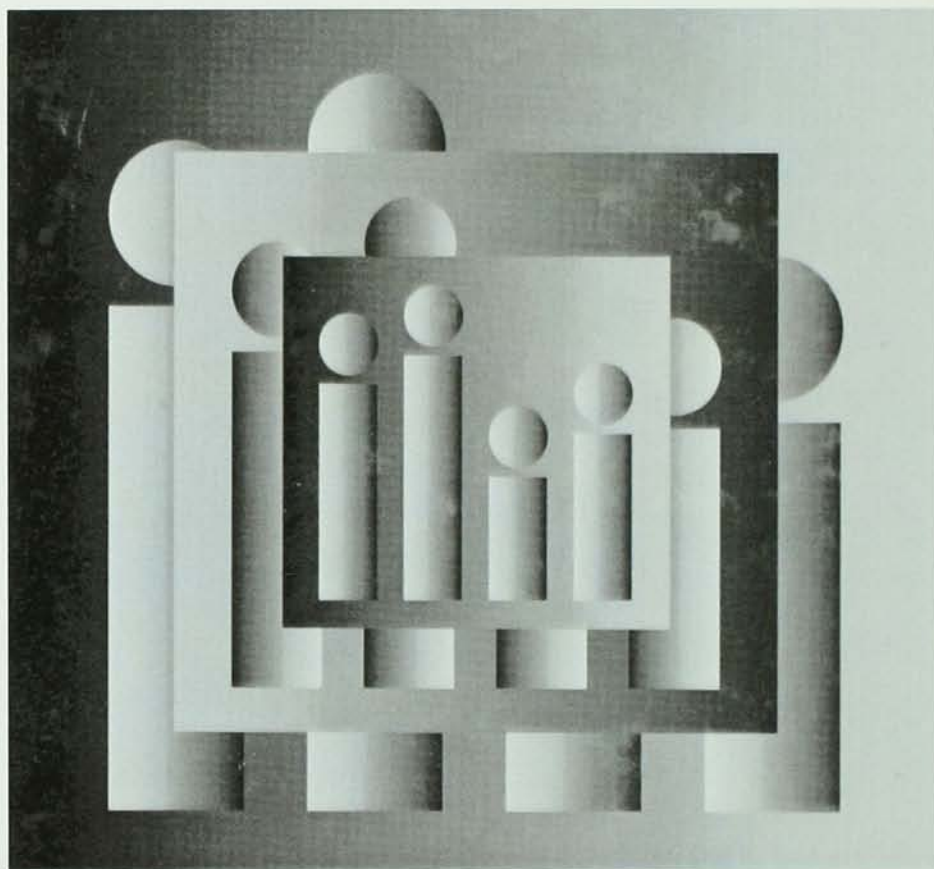
Exploring Family Relationships With Other Social Contexts



Edited by

Ross D. Parke

Sheppard G. Kellam

EXPLORING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER SOCIAL CONTEXTS

Family Research Consortium: Advances in Family Research

The Family Research Consortium was established to improve the quality of research and the breadth of collaboration in the field of family research. It has held five summer institutes for experienced researchers. The consortium designed and ran a multi-site postdoctoral training program in family process and mental health and initiated a number of collaborative research programs among its members. The consortium had 10 members: Elaine Blechman, PhD (Colorado), Robert Cole, PhD (Rochester), Philip Cowan, PhD (Berkeley), John Gottman, PhD (University of Washington), Mavis Hetherington, PhD (University of Virginia), Sheppard Kellam, MD (Johns Hopkins University), Ross Parke, PhD (University of California Riverside), Gerald Patterson, PhD (Oregon Social Learning Center), David Reiss, MD (George Washington University), and Irving Sigel, PhD (Educational Testing Service).

The work of the consortium was supported by two NIMH grants: a research grant, 1R01MH40357 and a training grant, 1T32MH18262. Joy Schulterbrandt was project officer and played a major role in stimulating the current congress and future ones as well.

This volume is based on the fourth summer institute, *Exploring Family Relationships With Other Social Contexts: Implications for Research and Mental Health.* Other volumes in the Family Research Consortium series include:

Patterson, G. R. (Ed.) *Aggression and Depression in Family Interactions* (1990)

Cowan, A., Hetherington, E. M. (Eds.) *Family Transitions* (1991)

Cole, R. E., & Reiss, D. (Eds.) *How Do Families Cope With Chronic Illness?* (1993)

EXPLORING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER SOCIAL CONTEXTS

Edited by
ROSS D. PARKE
University of California, Riverside
SHEPPARD G. KELLAM
The Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health

LAWRENCE ERLBAUM ASSOCIATES, PUBLISHERS
1994 Hillsdale, New Jersey Hove, UK

Copyright © 1994, by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
All rights reserved. No part of the book may be reproduced in any form, by photostat, microform, retrieval system, or any other means, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers
365 Broadway
Hillsdale, New Jersey 07642

Cover design by Mairav Salomon-Dekel

Library of Congres Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Exploring family relationships with other social contexts / edited by Ross D. Parke & Sheppard G. Kellam.
p. cm. — (Advances in family research)
Based on the Fourth Summer Institute of the Family Research Consortium.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-8058-1073-0
1. Family—United States. 2. Child development—United States. 3. Child rearing—United States. I. Parke, Ross D. II. Kellam, Sheppard G. IV. Series.
HQ536.E94 1993
306.87—dc20 92-40287
CIP

Books published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates are printed on acid-free paper, and their bindings are chosen for strength and durability.

Printed in the United States of America
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

Introduction and Overview 1
Ross D. Parke and Sheppard G. Kellam

1. **Processes Linking Families and Work: Implications for Behavior and Development in Both Settings** 9
Ann C. Crouter

2. **Families and Maternal Employment During Infancy: New Linkages** 29
P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale

3. **Patterns of Marital Interaction and Children's Emotional Development** 49
Lynn Fainsilber Katz and John M. Gottman

4. **Prebirth to Preschool Family Factors in Children's Adaptation to Kindergarten** 75
Philip A. Cowan, Carolyn Pape Cowan, Marc S. Schulz, and Gertrude Heming

5. **Family-Peer Relationships: A Tripartite Model** 115
Ross D. Parke, Virginia M. Burks, James L. Carson, Brian Neville, and Lisa A. Boyum

6. **The Social Adaptation of Children in Classrooms: A Measure of Family Childrearing Effectiveness** 147
Sheppard G. Kellam

7. The Contribution of Personal and Family Characteristics in Adolescence to the Subsequent Development of Young Adult Competence **169**
William J. McCarthy, Michael D. Newcomb, and Peter M. Bentler

8. Developmental Systems and Family Functioning **199**
Arnold Sameroff

9. Epilogue: Unresolved Issues and Future Trends in Family Relationships With Other Contexts **215**
Ross D. Parke

Author Index 231
Subject Index 243

EXPLORING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER SOCIAL CONTEXTS

Introduction and Overview

Ross D. Parke
University of California, Riverside

Sheppard G. Kellam
The Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health

In the 1990s it is no longer "news" that families do not operate independently from other social organizations and institutions. Instead, it is generally recognized that families are embedded in a complex set of relationships with other institutions and contexts outside the family. In spite of this recognition, a great deal remains to be discovered about the ways in which families are influenced by these outside agencies or how families, in turn, influence the functioning of children and adults in their extra-familial settings, such as school, work, daycare, or peer group contexts. Moreover, we know little about the nature of the processes that account for this mutual influence between families and other societal institutions and settings. The goal of this volume is to present examples from a series of ongoing research programs that are beginning to provide some tentative answers to these questions.

In this introduction a variety of trends—both demographic and scientific—that have converged since the 1980s to support this view of families' embeddedness in a wider set of societal institutions is briefly reviewed. Finally, the organization of the volume and the highlights of the remaining chapters are outlined.

SHIFTS IN SOCIAL ROLES AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

In the 1970s and 1980s, a variety of demographic and social changes have occurred that have altered the family's relationship to other institutions in our society.

Three changes are particularly noteworthy. They are the rise in maternal

employment, the increased use of day care for infants and young children, and the rise in the divorce rate. Each of these shifts have consequences for the family's relationships with other social institutions outside the family.

First, there has been a dramatic increase in the percentage of women who are employed outside the home. In 1950, only 24% of married mothers with children under 18 worked outside the home, compared with 41% in 1970. By 1990, 63% worked outside the home (Hayghe, 1990). Among mothers with children under age 6 the increase has been even more dramatic. Among married women with children under age 6, the labor force participation rate was 54% in 1990, compared with 30% and 12% in 1970 and 1950, respectively (Barrett, 1987). These changes have raised a variety of questions about the relationships between family and work. Although the focus was initially on the impact of maternal employment on children's development, the framing of this issue has broadened to include a wide range of questions concerning the reciprocal impact of experiences in family and work contexts on functioning in these settings. Moreover, as research has moved from issues of employment per se to consideration of the impact of quality of work on both women as well as men and how work shapes their family lives (Repetti, 1989).

A corresponding increase has taken place in the rise of out-of-home care for children. Approximately two thirds of children under 5 whose mothers work receive care for some portion of the week from individuals other than their parents, grandparents, and/or siblings (Hayes, Palmer, & Zaslow, 1990). As a result, many young children are exposed to nonfamilial caregivers and unfamiliar peers at earlier ages than in prior decades. This increase in day care has led to heightened interest in the effects of this type of care on young children's social and cognitive development, as well as the relationships between family and day-care settings (Howes & Olenick, 1986). In turn, this sharing of young children's socialization between families and day-care institutions has led to an increased focus on the role of peers in young children's development as well as new questions concerning the ways that families facilitate or impede children's successful adaptation to agemates outside the family (Parke & Ladd, 1992).

A third trend is the rise in the divorce rate in the United States from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s. Since that time, the divorce rate has leveled off, but at a high level, with approximately 50% of all first marriages ending in divorce (Cherlin, 1988). In turn, this has meant an increase in the family's link with a variety of outside institutions. Family involvement with the legal system has increased not only for divorce proceedings per se but also for issues of child custody disputes and the enforcement of child support arrangements (Cherlin, 1988). An increasing number of women are maintaining their own households after separation and divorce, and many of these women and their children endure a reduced standard of living, which, in turn, results in increased reliance on welfare and other government supports for economic survival (Garfinkel & McLanahan, 1986; Hewlett, 1986).

In summary, demographic shifts since the late 1970s have resulted in altered

relationships between families and other societal institutions such as the workplace, day-care settings and the legal and welfare systems.

TRENDS IN THEORY AND RESEARCH

A second set of trends are theory- and research-based. At the theoretical level, there has been an increasing recognition that families are embedded in a variety of social institutions. Perhaps, the most influential theoretical statement is found in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) volume, *The Ecology of Human Development,* in which he argued for recognition that families are linked to other institutions in a variety of ways. His now familiar scheme involving microsystems, mesosystems, ecosystems, and macrosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989) set the research agenda for a more vigorous examination of the ways in which families are linked with other institutions in our society. Whereas Bronfenbrenner offered a perspective from developmental psychology, other disciplinary perspectives were converging to embrace a similar view of family's place in the wider social environment. From the viewpoint of clinical psychology, community psychologists (Cowen, 1985) argued that families and children can only be understood by conceptualizing their relationship to the wider community in which they operate. Systems theory perspectives (Sameroff, 1983) also championed the importance of considering the interdependence among contexts including families. Finally, a new discipline that combines community, family, and developmental epidemiology has emerged in recent years (Kellam, 1990) that again seeks to place the family in its proper environmental mileau. This approach is illustrated by Kellam (chapter 6, this volume). Briefly, this approach deploys techniques of sampling, measurement and analysis that permit the mapping of variation in family form and functioning within well-defined communities.

In summary, a variety of perspectives are converging to provide a foundation on which to build theory and research that addresses the interface between families and other institutions.

Finally, as the chapters in this volume demonstrate, work in this area has moved beyond the descriptive phase and is beginning to focus on the *processes* that will help explain how families are linked with other contexts. In a sense, this volume exemplifies the second stage of research in this area. In the first round, the task involved description of the family's ties to other institutions, whereas in this second round, the explanatory processes that can account for these links are the focus.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUME

In this volume, a selection of recent research on this topic is presented.

In chapter 1, Crouter examines the relationship between families and work. Specifically, three issues are explored. First, she describes the processes through

which work or family status influences behavior in the other setting. Her chapter sounds a recurring theme, namely the bi-directional nature of the influences between families and other settings. Second, Crouter explores the influences of one linking process, namely the mood generated in one setting on interactions or behavior in the other settings. Third, she examines the ways in which adult development is enhanced—or impeded—in one setting that generalize to behavior in the other setting.

In chapter 2, Chase-Lansdale continues the exploration of work–family relationships by focusing on the issue of maternal employment and child care during the early years of life. Her chapter lays out a framework that links these two domains of research and shows how the limitations (e.g., small and unrepresentative samples and retrospective designs) have limited our understanding of work–family linkage. She argues that it is important to consider the child's experience in both the family and the child-care setting in order to understand the impact of maternal employment. This theme of a dual focus on the family setting and the extra-familial context (such as work) is similar to the message of the previous chapter. Finally, Chase-Lansdale argues for the utility of intervention research for evaluating our assumptions about family–work relationships, but cautions that an exclusive focus on children or mothers alone is insufficient. Interventions that target families—children and parents—are more likely to be helpful than programs that target only single members of the family.

In the next two chapters we begin an exploration of advances in our understanding of the role of marital relationships on children's functioning in contexts outside the family. First, Katz and Gittman (chapter 3) provide a compelling argument that we need to better understand the processes that link characteristics of marital relationships to children's socioemotional development. They outline specific characteristics of the marriage relationship, such as differing affective styles used in resolving marital conflict that, in turn, are linked to parent–child interaction and child outcomes, especially the child's peer relationships. They are able to demonstrate links between marital interaction style and children's emotional functioning both inside the family and with peers. The role of affective regulatory processes emerges as an important link between the marital relationship and children's social behavior with peers.

Cowan, Cowan, and their colleagues (chapter 4) continue exploration of this theme of the links between marriage and social adaptation outside the family by focusing on school settings. Using data from their longitudinal project beginning with the transition to parenthood, these investigators are able to show that a combination of marital quality, life stress, and parenting style can predict both academic achievement and social competence with peers 5 years later in kindergarten. Their work underscores the central role of the parents' marriage in children's development not only for dysfunctional families but for nonclinical families as well. The fact that the production of later adaptation begins with how well couples negotiate the transition to parenthood argues convincingly for the value

of focusing on transitions in development for illuminating family processes (Cowan, 1991; Cowan & Hetherington, 1991).

Parke and his colleagues (chapter 5) offer further insights into the mechanisms by which the family facilitates or hinders children's adaptation to their peers. These investigators offer a three-part model of how family and peer systems are linked. Parent–child interaction is the first route by which the family alters children's peer relationships. They argue that emotional regulatory skills as well as cognitive representational models of social relationships are two sets of processes that are acquired in the course of parent–child interaction that in turn may account for variations in children's success with peers outside the family. Second, parents serve as educators by directly teaching children social skills that may be helpful in their peer encounters. Third, parents serve as managers of children's opportunities for contact with other children and in this role may alter children's adaptation to peers. Together these three sets of family processes combine to influence children's relationships with other contexts, especially peer settings.

Kellam (chapter 6) continues the theme of how families, school, and peer contexts interact in determining how well a child adapts to the social and intellectual demands of classroom life. Using a developmental epidemiological strategy, Kellam illustrates the value of this approach for locating the sample under study in its community context. Data from large projects in Woodlawn and Baltimore are employed to illuminate the importance of recognizing the variation in structural composition of families within the same community and how this variation can be helpful in understanding later adaptation in extra-familial settings. Finally, Kellam provides a rich portrait of the classroom as a social field and argues for the value of a close examination of teacher- and peer-based processes as modifiers and consequences of family-based childrearing practices. The interplay among peer, teacher, and family process is illustrated by the use of the differential impact of intervention programs on children from different families and classrooms.

McCarthy, Newcomb, and Bentler (chapter 7) move us along the developmental trajectory by an examination of the impact of personal and family influences on the development of competence in young adults. Their findings suggest that family influences may be developmentally bound and have a greater impact on adolescents than on young adults. The impact of families on the competence of young adults may be mediated by their earlier impact on the personal beliefs, values, and lifestyle of individuals during their adolescent years. The importance of direct and indirect effects as well as the developmental stage of the individual are clearly illustrated by this work.

In chapter 8, Sameroff provides an overview of developmental models that can guide research in this area of family–context relationships. Moving beyond his earlier classic formulations of transactional models, Sameroff offers a dynamic developmental theory that seeks to explain how the individual, the family, and

context operate together to produce adaptive or maladaptive functioning. His theory alerts us to the important but often neglected role of culture as a regulatory context for shaping individual and family beliefs and behaviors. Finally, he describes new ways of viewing family regulatory processes including paradigms, myths, stories, and rituals that serve as vehicles for orienting family members relationships with contexts and institutions outside the family.

In the closing epilogue, Parke (chapter 9) outlines a variety of issues that can inform a future research agenda in this area. These issues include an expanded range of contexts, more emphasis on process, the development of a better taxonomy of contexts, and greater sensitivity to cultural and historical forces.

These chapters emerged from the fourth summer workshop of the Family Research Consortium that was characterized by lively exchanges not only between speakers and the audience, but among participants in small group discussions as well. Hopefully, these chapters will communicate some of the dynamism and excitement that was evident at the conference. In the final analysis the goal of the volume is to stimulate further theoretical and empirical advances in our understanding of how families relate to other contexts.

REFERENCES

Barrett, N. S. (1987). Women and the economy. In S. E. Rix (Ed.), *The American woman 1987–88: A report in depth*. New York: Norton.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1989). Ecology systems theory. In G. J. Whitehurst (Ed.), *Annals of child development* (Vol. 6, pp. 185–246). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Cherlin, A. J. (1988). The changing American family and public policy. In A. J. Cherlin (Ed.), *The changing American family and public policy* (pp. 1–29). Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.

Cowan, P. A. (1991). Individual and family life transitions: A proposal for a new definition. In P. A. Cowan & E. M. Hetherington (Eds.), *Family transitions* (pp. 3–30). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cowan, P. A., & Hetherington, E. M. (Eds.). (1991). *Family transitions*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cowen, E. (1985). Primary prevention in mental health: Past, present & future. In R. Felner, L. Jason, N. Mortsuger, & S. Farber (Eds.), *Preventive psychology*. New York: Pergamon.

Garfinkel, I., & McLanahan, S. S. (1986). *Single mothers and their children: A new American dilemma*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.

Hayes, C., Palmer, J., & Zaslow, M. (1990). *Who cares for America's children?* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Hayghe, H. V. (1990). Family members in the work force. In *Monthly labor review*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government printing office.

Hewlett, S. A. (1986). *A lesser life: The myth of women's liberation in America*. New York: William Morrow.

Howes, C., & Olenick, M. (1986). Family & child care influences on toddler compliance. *Child Development, 57*, 202–216.

Kellam, S. G. (1990). Developmental epidemiologic framework for family research on depression & aggression. In G. R. Patterson (Ed.), *Depression and aggression in family interaction* (pp. 11–48). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Parke, R. D., & Ladd, G. W. (Eds.). (1992). Family–peer relationships: Modes of linkage. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Repetti, R. L. (1989). Effects of daily workload on subsequent behavior during marital interaction: The roles of social withdrawal and spouse support. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57,* 651–659.

Sameroff, A. (1983). Developmental systems: Contexts and evolution. In P. H. Mussen (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 237–294). New York: Wiley.

1 Processes Linking Families and Work: Implications for Behavior and Development in Both Settings

Ann C. Crouter
The Pennsylvania State University

About 200 years ago, industrialization began to revolutionize the nature of work and its place in society, gradually bringing about the geographic separation of work and family for most sectors of society (Hareven, 1982). The nature of work changed as new technologies lead to the segmentation of work activities into smaller, more routinized functions. The workplace changed as well, with many work settings becoming increasingly large, complex, and hierarchical.

Families adapted to the changes wrought by new means of economic subsistence. In the United States, as in virtually all industrialized countries, fertility rates dropped as families came to the realization that children represented a very different economic and emotional investment than they had in an agriculturally based economy (Zelizer, 1985). Roles and opportunities for women also shifted markedly. In particular, rates of labor force participation for women have increased steadily since the 1950s, both in the United States and in other industrialized countries. Smaller families, increased job and educational opportunities, and changing gender role norms about the "place" of women in society all contributed to this trend (Davis, 1984). Women's participation in the paid labor force has also become increasingly continuous over the years, as fewer women have elected to stay home to care for young children. Indeed, the subgroup of women to experience the greatest increase in participation in the labor force in recent years has been mothers of children under 1 year of age (Hayghe, 1986).

As more women have entered the workplace, scholars have become increasingly interested in the interconnections between the workplace and families (Kanter, 1977). Researchers have approached this issue from several angles, three of which are discussed in this chapter. First, there has been increased

interest in families in which both mother and father work outside the home (Hoffman, 1989). These studies have focused primarily on the psychosocial functioning of children experiencing maternal employment. A number of recent studies have gone beyond simply identifying similarities and differences between children as a function of their social address (i.e., dual-earner vs. single-earner family; Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1982) and begun detailing the processes within these contrasting family contexts that appear to impede or enhance children's psychological well-being and development. A strength of this set of studies is that the studies illuminate the dynamics of family life. They pay little attention, however, to the nature of the work that parents do.

A second domain of research has focused on the emotional state of the worker/family member as he or she moves back and forth across the settings of work and home. The emphasis here is on short-term psychological processes operating within the individual who traverses the settings. In these studies, there is generally less attention to the properties of the settings themselves—to the roles, relationships, and activities therein—and to long-term processes of individual development.

The third set of studies revolve around work and family as settings for adult development. Both work and family are contexts that offer the kinds of activities that are likely to promote new skills and ways of looking at the world. To the extent that an individual's work, for example, encourages the development of a set of new skills or perspectives, these new abilities or viewpoints are likely to be generalized to life at home as well. These issues lie at the heart of the ecological perspective on development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989), and represent a promising research frontier for those interested in the interrelationship between work and family life.

In all three areas of research, few studies have paid equal attention to both settings. All too often, one setting is the primary focus, whereas the other is treated as a status variable or as a general source of stress. As Kline and Cowan (1989) explained, "studies from the employment or family perspectives, like maps drawn from the viewpoints of inhabitants from particular regions, show one domain occupying the foreground, while the other is represented only in sketchy outline" (p. 62). In part, this distortion in perspective is due to the complexity of the issues. It is difficult to conceptualize and design research that does justice to both settings. The uneven conceptualization and examination of work and family is also a product of the way in which the scientific disciplines have carved up the social world. Developmental researchers are trained to conduct research in laboratories, schools, and families, but rarely factories and offices. Organizational behavior experts, however, seldom follow their subjects past the boundaries of the workplace. Moreover, interdisciplinary collaboration in this domain of study is rare.

Paying equal attention to both settings provides some valuable insights that can sometimes be too easily glossed over when, for example, family is in the

foreground, with work simply seen as a background characteristic (e.g., dual-earner family). It is important to recognize, for example, that work and family are reciprocally interrelated. Although it is generally recognized that work has a powerful influence on family life, the workplace is not immune from effects emanating from workers' family lives (Kanter, 1977). In addition, work and family are not simply settings in which individuals are located. There is a planfulness behind individuals' choices of work and family roles that cannot be overlooked. Many people thoughtfully select a course of study to prepare themselves for a certain kind of job or career. Others turn down job opportunities for family reasons. Increasingly, women in fast-track occupations are postponing parenthood, and when they do have children, they tend to have smaller families than was the case for their mothers' generation. The point here is that individuals actively sort themselves into work and family settings on the basis of their interests, preferences, resources, skills, values, interpretations of prevailing social norms, and best guess about how to maximize future opportunities (Gerson, 1985). This issue of selection adds another layer of complexity to this area inquiry. It forces us to realize, for example, that dual-earner families may differ from their single-earner counterparts on a host of dimensions (e.g., gender role attitudes, educational background) in addition to the wife's employment status. For the field to progress, we must, in Elder's (1981) words, "discover the complexity."

This chapter examines recent developments in the three areas just described: (a) processes through which work or family status influences behavior in the other setting, (b) influences of mood generated in one setting on interactions or behavior in the other setting, and (c) ways in which adult development is enhanced—or impeded—in one setting that generalize to behavior in the other setting. These issues are explored first from the perspective of work's impact on the family and subsequently from the vantage point of studies on the influence of families and family life on the workplace. This structure is simply an organizational device, glossing over the fact that, in reality, the interrelationships between these primary settings of adult life are complex and reciprocal.

INFLUENCES OF WORK ON FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Single- and Dual-Earner Families as Settings for Development

Since the 1930s, developmental researchers have been interested in how the paid employment of mothers influences the psychological well-being and development of their children. As Bronfenbrenner and Crouter (1982) explained, early studies in this area had a social problems focus; maternal employment was assumed to have negative effects on children. Research designs were quite simplistic, employing a "social address model" in which children in traditional,

father breadwinner families were compared with children in dual-earner families on a host of outcomes such as school achievement and social adjustment. By the 1960s, studies had become somewhat more sophisticated, building social class and the child's gender into their designs and, occasionally, whether the mother worked full or part time (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1982). Even by the 1980s, however, when well over 50% of all mothers with children under 18 were in the paid labor force (Hayghe, 1986), little research had focused on the critical task of identifying the familial *processes* through which parents' work situations influence their children.

Attention to processes within families is essential for understanding the conditions under which parental work influences children. For example, several studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s (e.g., Banducci, 1967; Gold & Andres, 1978) reported that boys from middle-class families in which mothers worked outside the home performed less well in school than their peers whose mothers were homemakers. A process-oriented approach focuses on how a differential outcome like this one arises in the first place. Process questions require that one attend to the activities, roles, and relationships that occur within contrasting family contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The Penn State Family Relationships Project. Elaborating processes within dual- and single-earner families with school-age children has been the central agenda of the Penn State Family Relationships Project, a longitudinal study that I co-direct with Susan McHale. Since 1987, we have been following approximately 150 families, charting the interconnections between parents' work situations, patterns of daily family life (e.g., children's involvement in various activities; parents' monitoring of children's daily experiences), and the psychological adjustment and development of children moving through the late school-age years. Identified through several school districts in central Pennsylvania, the sample was selected based on several criteria. We sought two-parent, intact families in which our "target child," a fourth or fifth grader, was the oldest child with at least one younger sibling. All fathers were employed full time, but we allowed mothers' work hours to vary. At the first phase of the project, in the winter of 1987, about one third of the mothers worked outside the home full time, one third worked part time, and one third were homemakers. The sample is predominately middle class. Families live in the small cities, towns, and rural areas that are characteristic of central Pennsylvania.

Two recent studies from the project reveal the extent to which a focus on family process illuminates the conditions under which parental work status influences school-age children. The first investigation examined the connections between children's involvement in daily household tasks and their sense of competence, feelings of stress, and closeness to parents (McHale, Bartko, Crouter, & Perry-Jenkins, 1990); the second study focused on parental monitoring and its

links to children's school competence and conduct (Crouter, MacDermid, McHale, & Perry-Jenkins, 1990).

At each phase of the project, two different types of data were collected from participating families. In home interviews, mother, father, and target child were interviewed separately about work (e.g., parents' work schedules, feelings of role strain, work preferences), family relationships (e.g., feelings of closeness to other family members, views on the parents' marital relationship), and individual well-being (e.g., sense of competence, anxiety, depression). Through the eyes of the three family members, a triangulated portrait of work and family was developed. In the following several weeks, families were telephoned on 7 different evenings (5 week nights and 2 weekend nights) and asked in detail about a variety of activities that may have occurred on that specific day. Three of these calls were with mother and child, three were with father and child, and the final call was with all three family members. The telephone interviews with the child were designed to elaborate more specifically on children's roles in household chores, their involvement in activities with parents (e.g., leisure activities, homework, clubs and organizations), patterns of activity alone and with peers, the tenor of parent–child interactions, and the extent to which parents were knowledgeable about the child's experiences that particular day (i.e., monitoring). The telephone interview with the parent covered many of the same issues, allowing us to assess interrater agreement on shared activities. We also asked each parent about his or her involvement in household chores that day, as well as a variety of questions about that day's work schedule, child-care arrangements, marital interactions, and other matters. These data provided a window into the dynamics of daily life for children and parents in single- and dual-earner family contexts.

Involvement in Household Chores as a Mediating Process. Children's involvement in housework represents a family process with potentially quite different meanings in dual- and single-earner families. Although previous research has documented that children in dual-earner families perform more housework than their peers whose mothers are full-time homemakers (Hedges & Barnett, 1972; Propper, 1972), little is known about the links between involvement in housework and children's psychosocial functioning. Our ongoing research specifically examines this issue. In addition, we have asked whether the family process in question (i.e., involvement in housework) has different consequences in single-earner than in dual-earner family contexts, an example of what Bronfenbrenner and Crouter (1983) referred to as the "person–process–context model."

We reasoned that children's contributions to the division of labor may be particularly valued in families in which both parents work outside the home. Elder (1974) argued that sons who experienced their adolescent years during the Great Depression actually flourished under conditions of economic deprivation because their involvement in paid work and household chores were valued by

their parents as meaningful contributions to the family economy. Although contemporary dual-earner families are not experiencing the dire circumstances many Depression Era families faced, the involvement of children in family work may be particularly needed and valued in these "time-poor" environments. Families are also important settings for gender socialization (Huston, 1983). Thus, children probably take their cues about the appropriateness of being assigned household tasks from their parents, especially the parent of the same gender. We expected to see positive associations between involvement in housework and children's sense of competence and closeness to parents in dual-earner households, particularly when the child's level of involvement was congruent with the gender role attitudes and pattern of involvement in housework of the same-gender parent.

The results mirrored our expectations for boys, but not for girls (McHale et al., 1990). Boys from dual-earner families who were highly involved in household tasks saw themselves as more competent and rated their relationships with their parents more positively then did their counterparts who were less involved in housework. For the single-earner families, however, boys who were highly involved in housework saw themselves as less competent than their peers with fewer responsibilities. Interestingly, the boys who had the lowest scores on perceived competence were those whose level of involvement in housework was not congruent with their father's gender role attitudes or their father's own level of involvement in housework. Thus, boys in dual-earner families who performed few household chores and yet had less traditional fathers and boys in single-earner families who performed more tasks and had more traditional fathers had the lowest scores on perceived competence.

And what about girls? Perhaps because housework is such a pervasive theme in mothers' lives, we found few significant differences among girls as a function of their involvement in household chores. Our findings suggested that, regardless of family context, girls who were highly involved tended to see themselves as more competent than other girls.

The central finding in the study is that, at least for boys, the same family process (i.e., the son's level of involvement in the household economy) has quite different outcomes in single-earner and dual-earner family contexts. As we follow these families, we plan to elaborate on this theme, finding out more, for example, about the meaning fathers, mothers, and children attribute to doing household chores, including the extent to which children's involvement in housework is seen as a valued contribution to family life. We are also interested in whether children increase their involvement in housework when mothers either return to work for the first time or increase their work hours. We expect that sons' behavior will depend in part on how fathers respond to this change.

Parental Monitoring as a Mediating Process. Another family process of particular importance involves parental supervision and monitoring. As men-

tioned earlier, several previous studies found that middle-class boys with employed mothers performed less well in school than their peers whose mothers were homemakers. Scholars have speculated that middle-class boys in dual-earner families may not receive the level of parental supervision and monitoring that they need. Bronfenbrenner and Crouter (1982), for example, suggested that:

> Sons of employed, middle-class mothers may receive less effective supervision than their peers in families in which mother remains home. The difference may be manifested in such areas as monitoring the boy's homework activities, encouraging friendships that foster social behavior, showing an interest in the child's school activities and progress, or overseeing meals, television watching, bedtime, and other routines. (p. 55)

We have explored this issue in the Family Relationships Project by elaborating on Patterson and Stouthamer-Loeber's (1984) conceptualization of "parental monitoring": The extent to which the parent is knowledgeable about the child's daily activities, companions, and whereabouts. In each of our seven evening telephone interviews, we asked parents a set of questions about the child's experiences that day that the parent could only answer correctly if he or she had been monitoring the child. Our questions addressed such commonplace issues as homework assignments, activities after school, purchases made by the child, household chores, and television watching. After our telephone conversation with the parent, the child was interviewed separately, and the match between child's and parent's answers constituted an operationalization of parental monitoring. We asked different items each evening so that parents could not "prepare" ahead of time; mothers and fathers were asked identical monitoring questions across their respective telephone interviews.

Contrary to our expectations, boys and girls from single- and dual-earner family contexts did not receive different levels of parental monitoring (Crouter et al., 1990). Nor did the distinction between full-time and part-time maternal employment make a difference. Sons and daughters received similar levels of monitoring regardless of gender and regardless of their mother's level of involvement in the labor force. We did find, not surprisingly, that mothers were better monitors than fathers. More interesting, and consistent with the person–process–context model (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983), our data indicated different patterns of association between monitoring and children's school performance, their perceptions of school competence, and conduct for boys and girls in single- and dual-earner families. Findings indicated that less well-monitored boys generally fared less well than other children and, in the case of indices of conduct, this was particularly true for less well-monitored boys from dual-earner families.

Specifically, less well-monitored boys, regardless of parental earner status, received lower school grades and felt less competent at school-related activities than other children. Analyses of separate reports of the child's conduct by mother, father, and child revealed that less well-monitored sons in dual-earner fami-

lies were seen by all three respondents as having significantly more problematic conduct than other children in the sample. Interestingly, extent of parental monitoring was not linked to any of these outcomes for girls in either family context. We have not ruled out the possibility, however, that parental monitoring may have lagged effects for girls when they enter adolescence, a time when the incidence of psychological difficulties, particularly involving internalizing problems (e.g., depression), increases for girls (Eme, 1979). Our longitudinal analyses examines this possibility. We will also attempt to disentangle the causal sequence for boys: Are boys adversely affected by poor parental monitoring; are boys who are not performing well more difficult to monitor; or do parents tend to withdraw from boys who are functioning less well? It is most likely that these processes are reciprocally interrelated.

Other Mediating Processes. Note that the addition of family process variables transforms maternal employment research into family research. These data begin to illuminate how the daily lives of children in contrasting family contexts may vary in ways that have developmental implications. Other evidence for the importance of including process in studies of dual-earner families comes from Moorehouse's (1991) research on cognitive and social competence in first graders. Moorehouse grouped children in her sample on the basis of stability and change in mothers' work situations over a 3-year period. Concurrent full-time employment and change to full-time employment were associated with lower scores on indices of social and cognitive competence, as rated by teachers. Most interesting, however, was the buffering role of joint mother–child activities. These negative effects of employment disappeared under conditions when mothers were highly involved with their children in such enriching activities as reading aloud, talking together, and making up stories.

One of the next steps in research on the processes linking parents' involvement in work to the development and well-being of family members should be the examination of the interrelationships among mediating processes within contexts. We have begun to do this with data from the Family Relationships Project. For example, fathers' monitoring and children's involvement in household chores are related to one another quite differently for boys and girls in dual-earner families. For boys in dual-earner families, the more housework they do, the more closely they are monitored by their fathers ($r = -.37$, $p < .05$; higher levels of monitoring represent worse monitoring). Put another way, boys in dual-earner families who do little housework tend to have fathers who know little about their activities, whereabouts, and companions. The pattern may reflect boys' level of integration into their families. Thus, the relatively lower adjustment score of dual-earner boys who do little housework and are poorly monitored may reflect that these children are on the periphery of family life in multiple ways: An insight that is only gained by examining multiple family processes. For girls, however, the more housework they do, the less closely they are monitored by their fathers

($r = .37, p < .05$; the two correlations are significantly different: $z = 3.24; p < .01$). Girls heavily involved in household tasks may be seen by their fathers as so responsible and reliable that they do not need to be as closely monitored. Again, knowing about two family processes is much more revealing than focusing simply on one. Together, the data on involvement in chores and parental monitoring begin to show why family processes have different implications for sons and daughters.

Work as an Influence on Psychological States

The workplace has influences on the family that go far beyond simply the work status of parents. Two other types of linkages are particularly important. The first involves work as an "emotional climate" (Kanter, 1977), a setting that can influence employees' psychological states at the end of the work day, moods that in turn can be carried home where they may set in motion interactions and activities with family numbers. The second linkage, frequently overlooked but no less important, involves work as a setting for adult development, a context in which skills and perspectives are acquired that in turn affect the family system. These two types of linkages, one, by definition, transitory and the other representing more permanent change, have frequently been ignored by scholars in this area and are deserving of more systematic attention.

Anyone who has ever had an aggravating day at work will agree that it can be difficult to avoid bringing a bad mood home. Similarly, work can be a satisfying, even exhilarating experience that may influence the employee's mood at the end of the work day in a positive way. Surprisingly little research has been done on this process of work to family spillover, and much of the best research has been done very recently. Reliance on simplistic, cross-sectional research designs has often led previous researchers to interpret correlations between work and home mood as evidence of work's influence on family life. Piotrkowski and Crits-Christoph (1982), for example, correlated a measure of job mood (operationalized with a list of mood states respondents were to check off if they had experienced that mood "at any time during the last 2 days of work") and respondents' satisfaction with marital and family relations. This approach has a number of methodological limitations (see Crouter, Perry-Jenkins, Huston, & Crawford, 1989, for a critique), including the absence of a temporal sequence underlying the data on mood and behavior (e.g., data on work-induced mood preceding data on family relations), a global operationalization of mood that does not capture the ephemeral nature of psychological states, and reliance on global evaluations of family relations that, again, do not capture the short-term fluctuations in family dynamics that may be influenced by variability in mood at the end of the work day.

Several recent investigations have experimented with a variety of methodologies to capture the transitory nature of moods and the temporal sequencing

of work mood and behavior in the home. Repetti (1989a), for example, focused on air traffic controllers, an occupation noted for high stress levels, exacerbated by low levels of personal control over work events. Repetti asked a sample of male air traffic controllers and their wives to complete daily surveys on 3 consecutive days. These questionnaires asked the controllers about their perceptions of the work day (i.e., the extent to which conditions were difficult) and both partners were asked to rate the controller's level of social withdrawal and anger after the work day. Repetti also utilized objective data, gathered by the National Climatic Data Center and the FAA, on weather-related visibility and traffic volume as additional perspectives on work-related stress. Repetti found that air traffic controllers returning home from demanding shifts tended to be more socially withdrawn and to exhibit less anger in marital interactions. Furthermore, this pattern was moderated by spousal support such that controllers were particularly withdrawn and unaggressive after demanding shifts when their wives had been supportive. Repetti suggested that social withdrawal is a recovery behavior that is adaptive for people in jobs that are highly stressful. She also noted that decreased anger may be a by-product of social withdrawal because spouses are less involved in conjoint activities and thus have fewer opportunities for conflict. In a related study, Repetti (1989b) examined reports of father–child interaction for a small sample of air traffic controllers who were parents of 4- to 10-year-old children. Again, difficult work conditions were associated with lower levels of emotional involvement with the child, both positive and negative.

Other researchers have examined more heterogeneous samples, using various other strategies to capture the daily work mood–family behavior dynamic. For example, Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, and Wethington (1989) asked a sample of husbands and wives to complete short questionnaires about the day's events on each of 42 consecutive days. Respondents rated the extent to which they had experienced (a) heavy workloads, both at work and at home, and (b) interpersonal tensions, with family members or with workplace supervisors and coworkers. Bolger et al. found that when husbands experienced arguments on the job, they were more likely to quarrel with their wives when they returned home in the evening. In addition, when husbands experienced a demanding day at work they subsequently performed less work at home. In addition, their wives reported performing more housework on those days, compensating apparently for husbands' stress. In contrast, when wives experienced demanding days on the job, they subsequently did less housework but their husbands did not step in to do more. Instead, wives under stress appeared to defer housework to another day.

Similarly, Crouter et al. (1989), in the context of a larger, ongoing study of marriage, asked a small sample of husbands to complete a questionnaire about mood immediately upon return home from work. The instrument tapped stress, fatigue, arousal, and depression. Respondents and their wives were telephoned 24 hours later and asked to report on a variety of family behaviors and marital interactions that had ensued in the time since the questionnaire had been com-