



To: State Judiciary Committee  
Subject: SB257  
Date of Testimony: January 30, 2018  
Type of testimony: written only  
Category: Neutral  
From: Dr. Linda Nielsen, Professor of Education  
Wake Forest University, Winston Salem, NC  
[Nielsen@wfu.edu](mailto:Nielsen@wfu.edu) 336 758 5345

In regard to the legislative meetings related to revisions of the Kansas custody statutes, I am providing a summary of the 60 studies that have compared the outcomes for children in sole physical custody versus children in shared physical custody families. As an internationally recognized expert on this topic, I have written numerous articles analyzing these studies and have presented this research at CLE seminars for judges, lawyers, and mental health professionals as well as to state legislative committees. Committee members are free to contact me for copies of the other 15 peer reviewed journal articles that I have written on this topic.

The accompanying article from the *Journal of Child Custody, February 2018*, is my most recent analyses of all 60 studies that have been published in English in peer reviewed academic journals. In these 60 studies joint physical custody specifically meant that children were living with each parent a minimum of 35% time in a “two home” family. In contrast, sole physical custody specifically meant the children lived primarily or exclusively with one parent and spent less than 35% of the time living with their “non-residential” parent.

### **Joint versus Sole Physical Custody: Outcomes for Children Independent of Family Income or Parental Conflict in 60 studies**

**Abstract:** Is joint physical custody (JPC) linked to any better or worse outcomes for children than sole physical custody (SPC) after considering family income and parental conflict? In the 60 studies published in English in academic journals or in government reports, 34 studies found that JPC children had better outcomes on all of the measures of behavioral, emotional, physical, and academic well-being and relationships with parents and grandparents. In 14 studies JPC children had equal outcomes on some measures and better outcomes on others compared to SPC children. In 6 studies JPC and SPC children were equal on all measures. In 6 studies JPC children were worse on one of the measures than SPC children, but equal or better on all other measures. In the 25 studies that considered family income, JPC children had better outcomes on all measures in 18 studies, equal to better outcomes in 4 studies, equal outcomes in 1 study and worse outcomes on one measure but equal or better outcomes on other measures in 2 studies. In the 19 studies that included parental conflict, JPC children had better outcomes on all measures in 9 studies, equal to better outcomes in 5 studies, equal outcomes in 2 studies, and worse outcomes on one measure but equal or better outcomes on other measures in 3 studies. In sum, independent of family income or parental conflict, JPC is generally linked to better outcomes for children.

**Resume – Dr. Linda Nielsen**  
**Professor of Adolescent & Educational Psychology**  
**Wake Forest University**

**Education**

1967-69 B.A. English University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
 1970-72 M.A. Educational Psychology & Counseling U.T. Knoxville  
 1972-74 Ed.D. Educational Psychology & Counseling U.T. Knoxville  
 Area of concentration: Adolescent Psychology

**Teaching Experience**

1970-1973 High school English teacher, Knoxville, TN.  
 1973-1974 Instructor, Department of Educational Psychology & Counseling  
 University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
 1974-present Professor of Education, Wake Forest University  
 Program affiliations: Women & Gender Studies (1978-2012)  
 Humanities (2012-present)

**Current areas of expertise**

Child Custody: Shared parenting (joint physical custody)  
 Father-daughter relationships  
 Adolescent Psychology

**Books**

*Child custody & parenting plans: Research & Issues (in progress)*  
*Father-Daughter Relationships: Contemporary Research and Issues* (2012) Taylor & Francis/ Routledge.  
*Between Fathers & Daughters: Enriching or Rebuilding Your Adult Relationship* (2008) Turner Publishing  
*Embracing Your Father: Building the Relationship You Always Wanted with Your Dad* (2004) McGraw Hill  
*Adolescence: A contemporary view* (1987-1996, 3 editions, college textbook) Harcourt Brace  
*How to motivate adolescents: A guide for parents, counselors and teachers* (1983) Prentice Hall

**Distinctions and awards**

Phi Beta Kappa  
 Outstanding graduate award. College of Education. University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
 Fourteen grants. WFU Research & Publications Fund  
 National award for outstanding article: Women's Scholars. U.S. Office of Education  
 Post-doctoral Fellowship: American Association of University Women (9 awarded)  
 University Research leave to write 1st book: How to Motivate Adolescents  
 University Research leave to write 2<sup>nd</sup> book: Adolescence: A contemporary View (700 page textbook)  
 American Bar Association: Service Award for Domestic Violence Advocacy Program  
 Archie Grant: Research on fathers and daughters  
 Wake Forest technology training grant  
 University leave to write 3<sup>rd</sup> book: Embracing your father  
 Annual Community Service Award: Today's Woman Health Center  
 National Public Radio: one hour program on my Fathers & Daughters books  
 PBS documentary featuring my work on Fathers & Daughters  
 Course development grant for Children of Divorce  
 University research leave to write 4<sup>th</sup> book: Between Fathers and Daughters  
 Course development grant: Child Custody: Research & Issues

University research leave to finish 5<sup>th</sup> book: Father-daughter relationships: Research & Issues (textbook)  
WFU grants to present CLE seminars to family court judges & lawyers

### **Child Custody: Shared parenting (joint physical custody): Publications & Professional Activities**

#### **National service 2005- present**

Provided research as requested by members of custody law reform committees in : Bermuda, Scotland, United Kingdom, Israel, Canada, Romania, Sicily, Australia, Arizona, Oregon, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Carolina, North Carolina, Michigan and West Virginia.

#### **Expert witness testimony**

Vetted as an expert witness for custody cases in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, and North Carolina.

Affirmed by the North Carolina Appeals Court as an expert witness on the topic of shared parenting  
*Smith v. Smith*, 786 S.E.2d 12 (2016)

#### **Conferences and CLE Seminars on shared parenting (joint physical custody)**

International Conference on Shared Parenting	May	2017	Boston
Louisiana Bar Association: Family Law	November	2014	New Orleans
North Carolina Bar Association: Family Law Specialists Conference	July	2014	Raleigh, NC
South Carolina Bar Association: Family Law conference	January	2014	Charleston, SC
North Carolina Bar Association: District Court Judges Conference	October	2013	Charlotte, NC
Midwestern Family Law Conference	October	2012	Omaha, Nebraska
Seminar for family court & mental health professions	May	2011	Bermuda
Association of Family & Conciliatory Courts National Conferences			
Shared physical custody: Research and custody implications		2012	Chicago
Divorced father-daughter relationships: Implications for custody		2009	Denver

#### **Newspaper & Magazine Interviews about Shared Parenting Research**

Among others: *Washington Post*, (Dec. 2017) *Time* (2016, Sept 29), *Wall Street Journal* (2015, April 6), *USA Today* (2014, Nov 14)

#### **Invited Guest Editor**

Guest editor: *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, special issue on Shared Physical Custody (2018, in press)

#### **Journal articles (peer reviewed) Shared parenting & children of divorce**

“Woozles: Their impact on child custody decisions” *American Journal of Family Law* (2018, in press)

“Joint versus sole physical custody: Outcomes for children independent of quality of parent-child relationships, conflict and income (2018, in press) *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*: Special issue on Shared Parenting

“Joint versus sole physical custody: Outcomes for children independent of conflict and income” (2018, in press, *Journal of Child Custody*

“Re-examining the role of parental conflict, coparenting and custody arrangements (2017) *Psychology, Public Policy and Law*, 23, 211-231. [American Psychological Association Journal]

“Shared physical custody: Does it benefit children?” (2015) *Journal of American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers*, 28, 79-139

“Pop goes the woozle: Being misled by the research on child custody and parenting plans.” (2015) *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 56, 595-633.

“Woozles: Their role in family court, custody law reform and parenting plans.” (2014) *Psychology*,

*Public Policy and Law* [an American Psychological Association journal] 20, 46-67.

“Parenting plans for infants, toddlers and preschoolers: Research and issues (2014) *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 55, 315-334.

“Shared physical custody: Summary of 40 studies on outcomes for children” (2014) *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 55, 613-635

“Shared parenting: Review of the Research” (2013) *American Journal of Family Law*, 27, 61-72 & 123-137.

“Divorced fathers and their daughters: A research review” (2011) *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 52, 77-93.

“Shared residential custody: Research and issues” (2011) *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 52, 586-609.

“Disenfranchising, demeaning & demoralizing divorced dads” (1999) *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 31, 139-177.

“Stepmothers: Why so much stress?” (1999) *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 30, 115-148.

“College students with divorced parents” (1999) *College Student Journal*, 30, 542-573.

“Adolescents from divorced and blended families” (1993) *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 42, 176-199.

### **Articles for State Bar Association Magazines**

“Ten damaging myths: Shared Custody and Fathering Time” (January, 2013) *Oregon Family Law Newsletter*.

“Shared Residential Custody: Dogma vs. Data” (January, 2013) *Nebraska Lawyer Magazine*

“Custody for young children: Myths and Misconceptions” (March, 2013) *Wisconsin Family Law Newsletter*

“Shared Residential Custody: Research Family Lawyers (Feb, 2013) *Atlanta Bar Association Magazine*.

“Shared residential custody: Fact and Fiction” (October, 2012) *North Carolina Family Bar Newsletter*

### **Father-Daughter Relationships: Publications & professional activities**

#### **National recognition for father-daughter research**

Article by Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, Kathleen Parker about my father-daughter course

PBS documentary about my Fathers and Daughters course

National Public Radio one hour show with Frank Stasio about my newest father-daughter book

Radio, newspaper & magazine interviews including: Wall Street Journal, Chicago Tribune, Washington Post, Arizona Republic, Cosmopolitan, National PTA Magazine, Military Wives, Good Housekeeping, Seventeen, Woman’s Day, Woman’s Health.

**Consultant for Mattel Toys (2017)** : “Dads play Barbie” national advertising campaign

**Catalyst for Proctor & Gamble (2016)** Father-daughter Super Bowl commercials

#### **Publications: Books**

*Father-Daughter Relationships: Contemporary Research and Issues* (Taylor & Francis, Routledge, 2012)

*Between Fathers & Daughters: Enriching or Rebuilding Your Adult Relationship* (Turner Publishing, 2008)

*Embracing Your Father: Building the Relationship You Always Wanted With Your Dad* (McGraw Hill, 2004)

#### **Chapters in books**

“Father-daughter relationships” (2017) Mazza & Perry, eds. *Fatherhood in America: Social work perspectives in a changing society*. Charles Thomas Publishers

“Fathers and daughters: A needed course in family studies” (2007) *The Craft of Teaching about Families (NY)* Haworth Press.

#### **Academic Journal articles**

“Young adult daughters’ relationships with their fathers: Review of recent research (2014) *Marriage and Family Review Journal*, 50, 1-13.

“Divorced fathers and their daughters” (2011) *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 52, 77-93.

- “College daughters’ relationships with fathers: A 15 year study (2007) *College Student Journal*, 41, 112 -123.  
 “Father-daughter relationships: Review of Research” (2005) *Marriage & Family Review*, 38, 1-13.  
 “Fathers & Daughters: Why a course for college students?” (2001) *College Student Journal*, 35, 280-316  
 “Self-esteem & eating disorders in female undergraduates” (2000) *College Student Journal*, 34, 352-377.

### **Magazines**

- “How public schools can strengthen father-daughter relationships” (2009) *National PTA Magazine*  
 “Strengthening father-daughter relationships in military families” (2005) *Military Spouse Magazine*, 4, 22-28.  
 “Helping clients with father-daughter issues” (2005) *North Carolina Counselors Association Newsletter*.

### **Lectures and seminars on fathers & daughters**

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| National Men’s Studies Association National Conference | 2008       |
| Wake Forest University: Seminars for fathers           | 2008- 2010 |
| North Carolina State Conference for School Counselors  | 2004       |
| National Women’s Studies Association Conference        | 2000       |
| University of San Francisco, Quito, Ecuador            | 2000       |

## **Adolescent Psychology: Publications & professional activities**

### **Books**

- Adolescence: A contemporary view* (Harcourt Brace, 1987-1996, 3 editions) college textbook  
*How to motivate adolescents: A guide for parents, counselors and teachers* (Prentice Hall, 1983)

### **Academic journal articles & book chapters**

- "Adolescents’ Locus of control and reading abilities” (1989) *Reading Improvement*. 46,15-27.  
 "Teaching adolescents self-management" (1983) *Educational Clearinghouse*, 34, 22-31.  
 "Decreasing adolescents' feelings of powerlessness" (1983) *American Secondary Education*, 36,33-41.  
 "Contingency contracting with adolescents" (1980) *Programs for Special Children* Ornyx Press, Tucson, Arizona  
 "Decreasing female students' math anxiety" (1979) *College Student Journal*, 13, 51-58.  
 "Creative activities for teaching psychology” (1979) *New Directions in Teaching*, 6, 1-9.  
 "Counseling suspended high school students" (1979) *American Personnel & Guidance Journal*, 18, 442-446.  
 "Creating in-school suspension programs for adolescents” (1979) *School Counselor*, 42, 325-332.  
 "Project Acumen: Helping learning disabled adolescents” (1979) *Learning Disabilities*, 45,70-75.  
 "Contingency contracting with adolescents" (1978) *Secondary Education*, 18, 12-24.  
 "Effects of criterion referenced grading” (1977) *Journal Educational Research* , 14, 71-81.  
 "The effects of a college contingency system” (1976) *College Student Journal*, 8, 153-168.  
 "Analysis of Keller's personalized instruction system" (1976) *Experimental Education*, 44, 49-53.  
 "Increasing high school students' classroom participation" (1975) *Secondary Education*, 9, 23-29.

### **National Conferences**

- Professional development for feminist psychologists, National Association for Women in Psychology (1980)  
 Decreasing female students’ math anxiety. American Personnel & Guidance Association (1978)  
 Creative strategies for teaching psychology. American Psychological Association (1976)

### **Federal Research Grants: Program designer, staff trainer & researcher**

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Project Acumen: Teaching learning disabled adolescents Guilford County Schools | 1976-1977 |
| Creating in-school suspension programs Forsyth County School System            | 1977-1978 |

### **School Workshops: Motivating adolescents**

Motivating female students Alliance of Math & Science for Girls Reidsville, NC 1985  
 Motivating adolescents Guilford, Forsyth & Yadkin County Schools 1975-1985  
 Establishing in-school suspension programs N.C. Center for Teachers 1979

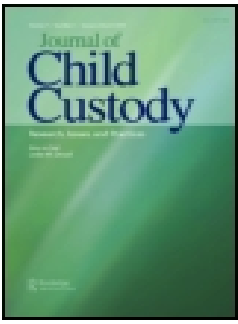
### **Women and Gender Studies: Publications & professional activities**

#### **Publications**

"Alchemy in academe" (1982) *Handbook for Women Scholars* U.S. Office of Education  
 \*National award for most outstanding paper on gender issues  
 "Sexism and self-healing in the university" (1979) *Harvard Educational Review*, 49, 467-478.  
 "Profile of the ideal colleague"(1979) *Improving College & University Teaching*, 27, 163-168.  
 "Counseling married career women" (1976) *National Association of Women Deans, Administrators & Counselors Journal*, 8, 12-22.

#### **Professional activities**

Director: WFU Association of Women Faculty 1983 - 1985  
 Director: WFU Women's Studies Internships 1985 - 2005  
 Women's Studies Steering Committee 1985- 2005



## Joint versus sole physical custody: Outcomes for children independent of family income or parental conflict

Linda Nielsen

To cite this article: Linda Nielsen (2018): Joint versus sole physical custody: Outcomes for children independent of family income or parental conflict, Journal of Child Custody, DOI: [10.1080/15379418.2017.1422414](https://doi.org/10.1080/15379418.2017.1422414)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15379418.2017.1422414>



Published online: 24 Jan 2018.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

---



## Joint versus sole physical custody: Outcomes for children independent of family income or parental conflict

Linda Nielsen

Adolescent & Educational Psychology, Wake Forest University, Winston Salem, North Carolina, USA

### ABSTRACT

Is joint physical custody (JPC) linked to any better or worse outcomes for children than sole physical custody (SPC) after considering family income and parental conflict? In the 60 studies published in English in academic journals or in government reports, 34 studies found that JPC children had better outcomes on all of the measures of behavioral, emotional, physical, and academic well-being and relationships with parents and grandparents. In 14 studies, JPC children had equal outcomes on some measures and better outcomes on others compared to SPC children. In 6 studies JPC and SPC children were equal on all measures. In 6 studies, JPC children were worse on one of the measures than SPC children, but equal or better on all other measures. In the 25 studies that considered family income, JPC children had better outcomes on all measures in 18 studies, equal to better outcomes in 4 studies, equal outcomes in 1 study, and worse outcomes on one measure but equal or better outcomes on other measures in 2 studies. In the 19 studies that included parental conflict, JPC children had better outcomes on all measures in 9 studies, equal to better outcomes in 5 studies, equal outcomes in 2 studies, and worse outcomes on one measure but equal or better outcomes on other measures in 3 studies. In sum, independent of family income or parental conflict, JPC is generally linked to better outcomes for children.

### KEYWORDS

Joint custody; joint physical custody; physical custody; shared parenting

Sole physical custody (SPC) arrangements where children live primarily or exclusively with their mother and spend varying amounts of time with their father after their parents separate are becoming less common as joint physical custody (JPC) families where children live more than 35% of the time with each parent are on the rise. The increasing popularity of JPC is seen, for example, in Wisconsin where JPC increased from 5% to more than 35% from 1986 to 2012 (D. Meyer, Cancian, & Cook, 2017). As far back as 2008, in Washington state 46% of the parents had JPC plans (George, 2008) as did 30% in Arizona (Venohr & Kaunelis, 2008). Internationally rates have risen to nearly 50% in Sweden (Bergstrom et al., 2017); 30% in Norway (Kitterod & Wiik, 2017) and in the Netherlands (Poortman & Gaalen, 2017); 37% in



Belgium (Vanassche, Soderman, DeClerck & Matthijs, 2017); 26% in Quebec providence and 40% in British Columbia, Canada (Bala et al., 2017); and 40% in the Catalonia region of Spain (Flaguer, 2017). At least 20 states in the United States are considering revising their custody laws to be more supportive of shared physical custody (Jones, 2015).

Nevertheless, two questions regarding JPC custody arrangements continue to stir debate. First, are the outcomes for children significantly better or worse in JPC than in SPC families? Second, if JPC children do have better outcomes, can this largely be attributed to their parents having significantly higher incomes or significantly less conflict than SPC parents? Put differently, do children benefit from JPC if their parents have a poor coparenting relationship or high levels of conflict or when the plan was “forced” on one of the parents as a result of a custody hearing or prolonged, conflicted negotiations with lawyers? Is it true, as some social scientists have claimed (e.g., Smyth, McIntosh, Emery, & Howarth, 2016), that if JPC children have better outcomes than SPC children, it is probably because JPC parents have far more money and far less conflict? The present article briefly summarizes the 60 studies that have compared JPC and SPC children’s outcomes. Unlike any previous articles on this topic, this article addresses the question: How do the outcomes of JPC and SPC children differ after family income and parental conflict are considered?

### **Previous summaries of children’s outcomes in JPC and SPC families**

There are presently only two meta-analyses that have compared children’s outcomes in JPC and SPC families (Baude, Pearson & Drapeau, 2016; Bauserman, 2002). Neither addressed the question of family income or the level of parental conflict. More importantly, neither analysis included more than a portion of the existing 60 studies. Baude et al. included only 17 of the 51 studies published in English that existed at the time. In all 17 studies, children were living with each parent at least 35% of the time. JPC children had better outcomes than SPC children, though the overall effect sizes were small. Notably, however, the benefits of JPC were much larger for children who lived 50% time with each parent than for JPC children who lived less than 50% time with each parent. Similarly Bauserman found better outcomes for JPC (defined as 25% time with each parent) children in all 10 studies that had been published in academic journals between 1988 and 1999, though again the effect sizes were small, which Bauserman attributed to the small samples sizes in the existing studies.

In addition to the two meta-analyses, several authors have summarized a portion of the quantitative studies that were available at the time they wrote their reviews. When Fehlberg, Smyth, Maclean, and Roberts (2011) and Trinder (2010) wrote their summaries of the research, there were 39

quantitative studies that had compared JPC and SPC children's outcomes (Nielsen, 2011). Fehlberg and Trinder included only 5 of the 39 studies, while purporting to be presenting a "research review." Similarly, in "detailing the current body of literature", McIntosh and Smyth (2012, p. 156) included only 5 of the 40 available studies at the time (Nielsen, 2011). More recently, Smyth et al. (2016) included only 17 of the 42 existing studies published in peer reviewed journals. These summaries of the research share four things in common: (a) claiming to be reviews of the available literature; (b) excluding the majority of studies where JPC children had better outcomes than SPC children; (c) reporting data incorrectly from several studies in ways that support the claim that JPC children have worse outcomes than SPC children; and (d) concluding that, based on the empirical data, JPC poses more risks and harm for children than SPC.

The most recent of the review articles serves to illustrate how data can be misrepresented when comparing JPC and SPC children's outcomes (Smyth et al., 2016). These authors reported that Buchanan, Maccoby, and Dornbusch (1996) found that JPC: "works badly for children exposed to bitter and chronic tension" (Smyth et al., 2016, p. 121). This is not correct. Buchanan et al. concluded: "We did not find that dual residence (JPC) adolescents were especially prone to adjustment difficulties under situations of high interparental conflict" (p. 257). "*When the conflict was high and hostile they were not more stressed or depressed or worse on any measures of well-being*" (Buchanan et al., 1996, p. 265, emphasis added). Similarly the authors cited Bauserman's meta-analysis (2002) as finding that JPC "may prolong or intensify children's exposure to parental conflict, neglect, violence, abuse or psychopathology" (Smyth et al., 2016, p. 120) In fact, Bauserman reached the opposite conclusion: "The research reviewed here *does not support claims by critics of joint custody* that joint custody children are likely to be exposed to more conflict or to be at greater risk of adjustment problems due to having to adjust to two households or feeling torn between parents" (Bauserman, 2002, p. 99, emphasis added).

Eliminating most of the available studies from summaries of the literature or inaccurately reporting the results in ways that support only one viewpoint is not a matter of small consequence. For example, in a book aimed at mental health and family court professionals involved in custody decisions, based on 17 of the 42 studies available at the time, Smyth et al. (2016) concluded that: "Put simply, the international literature looks to comprise—at best—a disparate collection of partially overlapping investigations with little convergence among the various lines of inquiry" (Smyth et al., 2016, p. 135). Similarly Smyth's co-author, Robert Emery, following the controversial veto of a shared parenting bill by Florida's Governor, was quoted in a Florida newspaper as saying that "the problems with joint custody outweigh the benefits" and "children suffer in joint custody arrangements (Presson, 2016).

In order to avoid the kind of distortions or bias that have been referred to as “scholar advocacy” (Emery et al., 2016) or as “woozling” the data (Nielsen, 2014b), authors who summarize the research must take great care to report the findings accurately and to include the results of all studies, not just those that support their particular point of view.

In addition to the 60 quantitative studies that are presently available, there are ten other studies where 466 JPC and SPC children from six different countries were interviewed about their experiences and feelings (Birnbaum & Saini, 2015). In these ten studies, children who had good relationships with both parents and who had some flexibility in the parenting schedule were the most satisfied in JPC families. The children’s experiences in the two types of families were varied and mixed, even for children in the same family. The weakness of these studies is that there were no objective, quantitative measures of children’s well-being, in contrast to the comparisons in the 60 quantitative studies.

The most comprehensive summaries of the quantitative studies comparing JPC and SPC children’s outcomes included all 40 studies that existed at the time (Nielsen, 2014a; Nielsen, 2015). The present article updates these previous summaries with an additional 20 studies. Due to space limitations, only these 20 additional studies are included in the references. The other 40 references are listed in Nielsen’s two review articles (2014a, 2015). The major focus of this article, however, is to address the question of how JPC and SPC children’s outcomes differ after family income and parental conflict are taken into account. This information brings us closer to determining whether higher income and lower parental conflict are the likely causes of JPC children’s better outcomes. This important question has not been explored in any of the former summaries of these studies or in either of the two meta-analyses.

### ***Selection of the 60 JPC vs. SPC outcome studies***

To identify relevant studies, three data bases were searched: Psych-Info, Social Science Citation Index and ProQuest Social Science. The key search words were: joint physical custody, shared parenting, shared care, custody and income, parenting plans and income, income, and children’s well-being. Six journals likely to publish articles on these topics were also searched at each journal’s website: *Journal of Family Psychology*, *Child Development*, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *Child Custody*, *Family Court Review*, *Family Relations*, *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage* and *Psychology, Public Policy and Law*. Articles were selected on the basis of whether they had statistically analyzed quantitative data that addressed the questions presented at the outset of this article. All 60 studies were included. These searches do not capture studies that have not been published in English.

In the 60 studies children ranged in age from infants to young adults. Studies were conducted in ten different countries, with one study having a sample from 26 countries (Bjaranson & Arnarrson, 2011). Sample sizes ranged from 21 to 51,802. Data came from a variety of sources: court records, mediation and counseling centers, public schools, convenience samples, college students, and parents who were recommended to researchers by lawyers and mediators. Seven studies were commissioned and published by the Australian government rather than being published in academic journals (designated by “a” in Table 1). Even though these studies did not have the benefit of blind peer review, they are included because they were based on large, nationally representative samples and were conducted by research institute teams. Eight studies specified that the sample included parents in litigation or parents whose JPC plan was the result of a custody hearing (designated by C+ in Table 1). In 19 studies parental conflict was factored in before comparing the children’s outcomes (designated with “C”). In 25 studies parents’ incomes were factored in (designated with “\$”). Two studies (McIntosh et al., 2011; Tornello et al., 2013) are designated with an “X” in the table because the researchers used measures that had no established validity or reliability, meaning that it is not clear what was actually being measured or how we can interpret the results.

In order to provide a simplified, brief overview of the 60 studies, data were grouped into five broad categories of child well-being which are similar to the categories used by Bauserman (2002) and Baude et al. (2016) in their meta-analyses (a) academic or cognitive outcomes which includes grade point averages and scores on tests of cognitive development; (b) emotional or psychological outcomes which includes feeling depressed, anxious or dissatisfied with their lives or having low self-esteem; (c) behavioral problems which include misbehaving at home or school, hyperactivity, and teenage drug, nicotine or alcohol use; (d) overall physical health or psychosomatic illnesses; and (e) the quality of parent–child relationships that includes how well they communicate and how close they feel to one another.

### ***Positive outcomes for JPC children***

As Table 1 illustrates, 60 studies compared children’s outcomes in SPC and JPC families. In 34 studies, JPC children had better outcomes on all measures of well-being. In 14 studies they had better outcomes on some measures and equal outcomes on others. In 6 studies, there were no significant differences between the two groups on any measures. In 6 studies, JPC children had worse outcomes on one measure, but equal or better outcomes on all other measures.

JPC and SPC children had the most equal outcomes in regard to school achievement and cognitive skills. This suggests that custody arrangements

9

**Table 1.** Outcomes for Joint Physical Custody vs. Sole Physical Custody Children in 60 Studies Children.

JPC better on all measures than SPC 34 studies	Factors Included in Study	# of Children Physical custody			Ages	Academic & Cognitive development	Depression, anxiety overall satisfaction, self esteem	Peer Behavior Substance use Hyperactivity	Health & psychosomatic problems	Parent-child or other Family relationships
		Joint JPC	Sole SPC							
Buchanan	= C = \$	51	355 mom 100 dad	13–16	better	Better	Better	better	Better	
Brotsky	C+	45	10	1–10	Better	Better	Better			
Breivik	\$*	41	483	12–16						
Barumazadeh	C *	91	328 mom 34 dad	11–12		better				
Bergstrom (2014)	\$*	129	176	4–18		better	better			
Bergstrom (2017)	\$*	136	151	3–5		better				
Bjarnason		2,206	25,578	11–15		Better life satisfaction				
Bjarnason		2,206	25,578	11–15					Better	
Carlsund (2013)	\$*	888	2,019	11–15		Better	Better	better	Better	
Carlsund (2012)	\$*	270	801	11–15			better		Better	
Cashmore (gov)	=C+	84	473	0–17	Better	better	better			
Cashmore (gov)	=C+ = \$	90	411	0–17		better				
Campana		207	272	10–18		better	Better			
Dissing	\$*	3,222	3,032	11–12		better				
Fabricius (2012)	C*	152	871	College					better	
Fabricius (2003)		80	739	College					Better	
Fabricius (2007)		75	136	College				better	Better	
Fabricius (2016)	=C = \$	13	103	College				better	Better	
Fransson (2016)	\$*	391	543 mom 111 dad	10–18		Better				
Frank		16	90	College					better	
Hagquest	\$*	17,754	30,400	12–15				better		
Irving	=C = \$	108	294	1–11		better				
Jablonska		443	2,920	14–15			better behavior equal drinking	better		

Janning	= \$	5	17	College					Better
Jappens		176	707	10–25					Better with grand parents
Laftman	\$*	1,573	1,584	15–16		Better		better	Better
Lee	C* = \$	20	39	6–12			Better		
Nilsen	\$*	398	1,223	16–19		better		better	
Pearson		62	459	9–12		Better		Better	
Shiller	= C	20	20	6–11				Better	
Turunen	\$*	387	758	10–18		better			
Turunen		240	567	10–18		better			
Wadsby		324	736	17–18		Better			Better
Westphal	\$*	1,076	2,767	10–18					Better with grand parents
<b>JPC equal or better outcomes than SPC 14 studies</b>									
Bergstrom (2013)		17,350	43,452	12–15	Equal	Better		better	Better
Bergstrom(2015)	\$*	15,633	29,468	12 & 15	Equal	Better		better	
Bastaits(2016)		138	238	10–18		Better self esteem			Better
						Equal life satisfaction			
Drapeau	= C \$ *	37	75	8–12		Equal to better	Equal		
Donnelly	= C	12	88	6–18					Equal affection
									Better boundaries
Fransson		497	854	10–18		Equal psychological	Equal drinking	better	Better
						Better stress	Better smoking		
							Better bullying		
Havermans		224	446	11–19	Equal				Better
Kaspiew (gov)	= C	947	3,513		Moms say equal	Moms say equal	Dads		Grand parents better
					dads say better	say better			
Luepnitz	= \$	22	30	8–13		Equal			Better

(Continued)

Table 1. Continued.

JPC better on all measures than SPC 34 studies	Factors Included in Study	# of Children Physical custody			Ages	Academic & Cognitive development	Depression, anxiety overall satisfaction, self esteem	Peer Behavior Substance use Hyperactivity	Health & psycho somatic problems	Parent-child or other Family relationships
		Joint JPC	Sole SPC							
Melli		597	595		1–16		Equal		Better	Better
Neoh		27	40		8–15		Equal	Better		
Qu (2010) (gov)	= C	1,000	4,320		1–17	Moms say equal Dads say better			better	
Qu (2014) (gov)	= C	720	2,354		4–17			equal	equal	
Spruijt	= \$	135	400		10–16	Equal	Equal	Equal		Better dad & stepmom
<b>Equal outcomes 6 studies</b>										
Bastaitis (2014)		139	227				Equal			
Cashmore		26	110		Teenage		equal			
Faust		34	35		2–19		equal	equal		
Johnston	= C+ = \$	28	69		9–15		Equal	equal		
Kline	= C+	35	65		4–12		equal	Equal		
Pearson		9	83		9–12		Equal	equal		
<b>JPC worse outcome on 1 measure 6 studies</b>										
Lodge(gov)	= C	105	398 mom 120 dad		12–18	Equal			better – girls worse - boys	Better –parents grand parents & stepparents
Sandler	C+	67	74		12–14				Mixed	Mixed
Sodermans	\$*	104	330 mom 70dad		14–21		Mixed: depression Equal: life satisfaction			
Vanassche	= C+	395	1,045		12–19					Better with dad

McIntosh (gov) X	C* \$*	20 60	ages 2-3 232 ages 4-5 870	2-5	Girls worse boys better Mixed for toddlers Equal for preschoolers	Better social development	Equal to Better all ages	Equal with mom
Tornello X	C \$	174	1,880	0-5	Equal	Better social development	equal	Mixed infant attachment

C\* conflict was controlled by statistically JPC & SPC differences into the analysis  
 = C conflict was controlled because there were no significant differences between JPC & SPC conflict  
 \$\* income was controlled by statistically factoring it in to the analysis  
 = \$ income was controlled because there were no significant differences between JPC & SPC parents  
 C+ researchers specified that very high conflict parents in litigation over custody were in this study  
 gov government published study (Australia), not peer reviewed academic journal  
 Mixed differences between JPC & SPC outcomes depended on factors like gender, personality, or age  
 X some measures used to gather data were not validated.



may have less impact on children's cognitive skills or school performance than on the many other areas of their lives that were assessed in the 60 studies. Notably, JPC was linked to children having better relationships with their parents, stepparents, and grandparents in 24 of the 25 studies that assessed family relationships. It should be noted that one measure in the Tornello et al. study (2013) is listed in the "family relationships" column, although the study did not assess the quality of children's relationships with their parents. The study assessed how impoverished, single parent, inner city, minority mothers felt their toddlers interacted with them, with the results being "mixed" based on the child's age.

In all 4 studies that compared JPC and SPC children's relationships with their grandparents, JPC children had the better relationships (Jappens & Bavel, 2016; Kaspiew et al., 2009; Lodge & Alexander, 2010; Westphal, Poortman, & Van der Lippe, 2015) As Table 1 indicates, these studies included large numbers of children ranging in age from 2 to 25. These findings are noteworthy because children who have close relationships with their grandparents after their parents separate are better adjusted emotionally and behaviorally than children without these close relationships (for a review see Jappens, 2018, in press) . In these regards, then, JPC children again have an advantage over SPC children.

### ***Negative outcomes for JPC children***

Despite the more positive outcomes overall for JPC children, in 6 of the 60 studies JPC children had worse outcomes than SPC children on one, but not on all, measures of well-being. These 6 studies are listed at the end of Table 1. Because people are especially concerned about any negative outcomes for children who live in JPC families, these six studies are described in detail below.

In an Australian study commissioned by the government, toddlers (ages 2–3) had worse outcomes in JPC on two of the six measures of well-being (McIntosh et al., 2011). Because this one study has so often been misrepresented in the media and in academic circles (Nielsen, 2014b; Warshak, 2014), it merits more careful attention than the other 59 studies. The 19 JPC toddlers scored lower on a 3 question test of "persistence at tasks" and lower on 3 questions asking how often they tried to get their mother's attention and how often they looked at her. Neither of these two measures had any established validity or reliability, in contrast to the instruments used to measure children's outcomes in the other 59 studies. Nevertheless, on the basis of these two invalid measures, these researchers concluded that JPC toddlers were less securely attached to their mothers and less persistent at tasks than SPC toddlers. The 22 JPC toddlers also scored more poorly than 191 SPC toddlers on a validated "problem behavior" scale (refusing to eat,

clinging to the mother when she tried to leave, hitting the mother). Again, these researchers interpreted this finding as a negative outcome of JPC. In fact, however, JPC toddlers' scores were well within the normal range and were not significantly different from the scores of 50% of the toddlers with married and with separated parents in the general population. On the other four validated measures of well-being, JPC and SPC children were not significantly different.

In the second study, also Australian, there were 105 JPC adolescents (ages 12–18), 120 in JPC with their father and 398 in SPC with their mother chosen from a nationally representative data base (Lodge & Alexander, 2010). Eight (16%) of the 50 JPC boys reported that they “*sometimes* didn't get along with peers,” compared to 32 (8%) of JPC boys living with their mothers (*italics added*). In contrast, JPC girls were four times less likely than SPC girls to “*sometimes* not get along” with peers.

In the third study highly “conscientious” adolescents with a great need to plan ahead and to be very organized were more anxious and depressed in JPC than in SPC families. However, the least conscientious adolescents who were less anxious and less depressed in JPC (Sodermans & Matthijs, 2014). For 400 adolescents in SPC (70 were living with their fathers) and 104 in JPC, the high and the low conscientiousness adolescents were equally “satisfied with their lives” in JPC as in SPC. Since the researchers did not report how many of the 104 JPC children were in the “highly conscientious” group, we cannot know how widespread a problem this was. It appears, however, that there were very few “highly conscientious” adolescents, since the researchers concluded that: “We observe very few changes in the effect sizes of the control variable by entering the personality variables” (Sodermans & Matthijs, 2014, p. 350).

The fourth study compared adolescents from 545 mother custody, 92 father custody and 385 JPC families (Vanassche, Sodermans, Matthijs, & Swicegood, 2013). JPC teenagers were more depressed and more dissatisfied with their lives than SPC teenagers when they had bad relationships with their fathers. In those families where conflict still remained high eight years after divorce, girls were more depressed in JPC than in SPC. On the other hand, in these families with years of unending conflict, boys were less depressed in JPC than in SPC. Overall the quality of the relationship with both parents mattered more than the custody arrangement or parental conflict.

In the fifth study with an Arizona sample of 74 SPC and 68 JPC adolescents in high conflict families, children's outcomes again depended on the quality of their relationships with their fathers. All of the JPC and SPC parents had been designated high conflict by a judge and were in litigation over custody issues. The adolescents who had bad relationships with their fathers had more behavioral problems in JPC than in SPC (Sandler, Wheeler, & Braver, 2013). On other hand, JPC children did not have worse outcomes than SPC children

when they had good relationships with their fathers. This again suggests that it is not the level of parental conflict that matters most, but the quality of children's relationships with their parents.

The sixth study stands apart from the other 59 studies in two ways that make it difficult to generalize or to interpret the results. First, all of the children (ages 0 to 5) were living in impoverished, inner city, minority families where only 20% of the parents had been married or had lived together and where mothers' and fathers' rates of incarceration, substance abuse, addiction, violence and mental health problems were extremely high (Tornello et al., 2013). Second, one third of the children lived primarily with their fathers, which means the mothers' reports on a test of "secure attachment" were not actually assessing the link between JPC and SPC and this measure. Only 1 of 14 correlations between frequency of overnighting and child adjustment measures were significant. The one negative finding was that the 22 babies who spent anywhere from 52 to 256 nights away from their mother each year had more insecure attachment scores than the 124 babies who spent fewer than 52 nights a year away from her. For the three year olds, the 22 JPC children had more insecure scores than the 137 SPC toddlers. On the other 13 measures of well-being, there were no significant differences linked to how often the children overnighted with their father. On one measure, the five-year-old JPC children had better outcomes in terms of having better social behavior than the SPC children.

Overall, these six studies caution against JPC for adolescents who have bad relationships with their fathers, for girls whose parents have high, ongoing conflict many years after separating, and for adolescents who are highly conscientious.

### **JPC versus SPC parents: Conflict and coparenting**

Although the 60 studies show that JPC is generally more beneficial for children than SPC, the central question for the present article is: Are these benefits largely due to JPC parents having significantly higher incomes or having significantly less conflict than SPC parents? If this is true, then this would likely account for the better outcomes of JPC children.

Do JPC parents have substantially less conflict and more cooperative coparenting relationships than SPC parents? In 14 of the 19 studies that addressed this question, JPC couples did not have significantly less conflict or more cooperative, communicative coparenting relationships than SPC couples (see Nielsen, 2017, for citations to the 19 studies). Compared to SPC couples, in 3 studies JPC couples had less conflict; in one study they had more, and in one study the conflict differences depended on the age of the children. In short, cooperation and low conflict are not likely to account for JPC's children's better outcomes.

Another aspect of conflict is how much disagreement the parents had over their parenting plan at the outset. Are JPC parents a unique group who, unlike SPC parents, agree to their plan “voluntarily” and without being “forced” to agree to share? According to the 7 studies that have specifically addressed this question, the answer is “no” (Nielsen, 2017). The percentage of couples who were initially opposed to JPC at the outset ranged from 30% to 80% of the parents. In each of these studies, however, JPC children had better outcomes than SPC children despite the fact that many of their parents had not agreed to the plan at the time they were separating.

Not only do JPC parents generally not have significantly less conflict or more cooperative coparenting relationships than SPC parents, JPC children have better outcomes than SPC children even after family conflict is taken into account. As designated in the “conflict” column on [Table 1](#), 19 of the 60 studies considered parental conflict before comparing children’s outcomes. In some studies, parental conflict was not significantly different between SPC and SPC parents, and in other studies, the researchers added conflict into the statistical analyses before comparing the children’s outcomes. In the 19 studies that considered parental conflict, JPC children had better outcomes on all measures in 9 studies, equal to better outcomes in 5 studies, equal outcomes in 2 studies, and worse outcomes on one measure but equal or better outcomes on other measures in 3 studies.

In sum, there is not compelling evidence that low conflict or cooperative coparenting account for JPC children having better outcomes than SPC children. The two groups of parents are more similar than they are different in regard to conflict and coparenting. More importantly, JPC children generally had better outcomes even after parental conflict was taken into account.

### **JPC and SPC outcomes independent of family income**

The second question is whether JPC children have better outcomes because their parents are wealthier than SPC parents. There are studies—especially older studies—showing that JPC parents are wealthier and better educated than SPC parents. However, studies that merely compare JPC and SPC parents’ incomes, without comparing the children’s outcomes, cannot address the question: Does income account for the better outcomes for JPC children?

Twenty-five of the 60 studies that compared children’s outcomes controlled for family income, as indicated with “\$” on [Table 1](#). Income was taken into consideration either because JPC and SPC incomes were not significantly different to begin with or because the researchers added income into the statistical analysis before comparing the children’s outcomes. In the 25 studies that considered family income, JPC children had better outcomes on all

measures in 18 studies, equal to better outcomes in 4 studies, equal outcomes in 1 study, and worse outcomes on one measure but equal or better outcomes on other measures in 2 studies.

Why were JPC children's outcomes better than SPC children's outcomes, even after family income was factored in? A thorough examination of this question is beyond the scope of this article and is available elsewhere (Nielsen, 2018, in press). Two studies are offered here merely to illustrate that higher family income may, in fact, be disadvantageous to children and that other factors, such as the quality of the parent—child relationship, may matter more than income.

In a Swedish study with 391 JPC families and 654 SPC families, the 10 to 18 year-olds with the wealthier and most well-educated parents were more stressed and more anxious than children with less wealth, less educated parents (Fransson, Turunen, Hjern, Östberg, & Bergström, 2016). Moreover, having a parent with a graduate degree was more closely linked to children's stress and anxiety than was the physical custody plan. The researchers speculated that highly educated, higher income parents might put more academic and social demands on their children, which, in turn, increases children's stress and anxiety.

Similarly, in a French study with 91 children living in JPC, 34 living with their fathers and 328 with their mothers and 1,449 living in intact families, wealthier children were no less likely than less wealthy children to be caught in the middle of their parents' arguments (Barumandzadah, Lebrun, Barumandzadah, & Poussin, 2016). SPC children were also just as likely as JPC children to be caught in the middle of their parents' arguments. Money did not buy happiness in the sense that wealthier children were not more protected from their parents' conflicts.

As Table 1 shows, only a few of the studies controlled for both conflict and income. These are the studies where income and conflict were either equal to begin with (designated with "=" on the Table) or where the difference in income and conflict was factored into the statistical analysis (designated with "\*" on the Table). A close analysis of these studies is presented elsewhere, with special attention to those studies that also considered the quality of the children's relationship with both parents (Nielsen, 2018, in press). One of these studies by Buchanan et al. is detailed here to illustrate that neither conflict nor income can be held accountable in any simplistic way for the better outcomes of JPC children.

In Buchanan et al.'s study (1996) conflict, income and quality of the parent—child relationship all came into play in explaining JPC children's better outcomes. In 80% of JPC families, one parent was initially opposed to the plan. Despite their parents' initial conflict over the JPC plan, JPC children still had better outcomes than SPC children on measures of emotional and behavioral problems four years after the divorce, even in the

highest conflict families. The one exception was that the small group of children who did not feel close to either of their parents and whose parents were still in high conflict four years after separating. These children were more likely to be caught in the middle of their high conflict parents' arguments in JPC than in SPC families. As for income, there were no significant differences in the incomes of the JPC and SPC families. However, in SPC families, the children with higher income parents had more behavioral problems and used drugs or alcohol more often than SPC children with lower income parents. This was not the case in JPC families.

In sum, neither family income nor parental conflict can account for JPC children having better outcomes than SPC children. This might largely be explained by the fact that the quality of children's relationships with each parent often effects how well children fare in JPC or in SPC (for a review of these studies, see Mahrer, O'Hara, Sandler, & Wolchik, 2018, in press). Further analyses of the JPC and SPC studies show that children's outcomes are effected not only by the quality of their relationships with their parents, but by the child's gender (Nielsen, 2018, in press). In other words, the reason why JPC children have better outcomes independent of family income and parental conflict may be because they have better relationships with each parent, which, in turn, may override the importance of family income and the amount of conflict or cooperation between the parents.

### ***Limitations of the studies***

Several limitations should be kept in mind in regard to the studies comparing children's outcomes in JPC and SPC families. First and foremost, the studies are correlational, which means none can prove that family income, or parental conflict, or the custody arrangement caused better or worse outcomes for children. Fortunately, a number of studies analyzed several different factors simultaneously, showing which factors were the most closely linked to the outcomes. Other studies included factors such as income, conflict, age of the children or parents' educational levels to eliminate the possibility that those factors were influencing the outcomes. These more sophisticated statistical techniques in some of the more recent studies bring us closer to understanding which factors might be the cause of children's better or worse outcomes. When the present article discusses the "impact" or "effects" of JPC or family income or parental conflict, this refers to the statistical significance of findings and does not imply causality.

Second, the studies are not all of equal quality. Some are superior to others in regard to sample size, representativeness of the sample, validity and reliability of the measures, and sophistication of the statistical analyses. Moreover, roughly half of the studies did not take account of parental conflict or family income before comparing the children's outcomes. This leaves open



the possibility that in those particular studies, low conflict or high income were more closely linked to children's well-being than was the JPC plan.

Although Smyth et al. (2016) have criticized JPC studies for using different measures and having different types of samples, this is in fact a strength in social science studies, not a weakness. When studies use different samples, different measures and different approaches to explore the same question, and when they arrive at the same general conclusions, this is a desirable situation referred to as "convergent validity" (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2001). Convergent validity adds to the confidence and the trustworthiness of the findings.

Third, even though differences between JPC and SPC children's outcomes are statistically significant, the effect sizes are generally small to moderate. It should be remembered, however, that small effect sizes are also common in studies of the links between children's well-being and factors such as parental conflict, poverty, and domestic violence. Effect sizes in social science and in medical studies are often relatively small, yet they have important implications for large numbers of people (Ferguson, 2009). In fact many public health policies and treatment protocols are based on research findings with correlations in the range of only .15 to .30 which are considered weak to moderate (G. Meyer, 2001). More specific to the issue of the small effect sizes in the JPC and SPC studies, Amato and Rezac (1994) point out that even the small effect sizes in their famous meta-analysis of the frequency of nonresidential fathers' contacts with their children meant significantly better outcomes for very large numbers of children.

Fourth, almost all of the data regarding children's well-being and about the level of conflict between the parents comes only from the mothers. Without the fathers' input, especially in the JPC families where children are living with each parent at least 35% of the time, we cannot know how accurate the mothers' reports are. Likewise, relying only on the mothers' reports of conflict between the parents may be yielding an inaccurate or skewed view.

## Conclusion

As the studies summarized in this article demonstrate, JPC is linked to better outcomes than SPC for children, independent of family income or the level of conflict between parents. This is not to say that children do not benefit in any way from living in higher income families or from having parents with low conflict, cooperative coparenting relationships. What these studies do mean is that the better outcomes for JPC children should not be attributed to higher family incomes or to low conflict between their parents. Moreover, all 30 studies that assessed children's relationships with their parents and other

relatives found better outcomes for the JPC children. Given this, it is highly likely that family income and parental conflict are less closely linked to children's well-being than the quality of their relationships with their parents, stepparents, and grandparents. As researchers continue to explore the factors that might explain children's better outcomes in JPC families, it is clear that shared parenting families are on the rise and that children are benefitting from this new family form.

## References

The references marked with an asterisk are the 20 new studies cited in Table 1 that were published since Nielsen's last review of 40 studies in 2014.

- Amato, P., & Rezac, S. (1994). Contact with nonresident parents, interparental conflict and children's behavior. *Journal of Family Issues*, *15*, 191–207.
- Bala, N., Birnbaum, R., Poitras, K., Saini, M., Cyr, F., & LeClair, S. (2017). Shared parenting in Canada: Increasing use but continued controversy. *Family Court Review*, *55*, 513–530.
- \*Barumandzadah, R., Lebrun, E., Barumandzadah, T., & Poussin, G. (2016). The impact of parental conflict and the mitigating effect of joint custody after divorce or separation. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, *57*, 212–23.
- \*Bastaitis, K., & Mortelmans, D. (2016). Parenting as mediator between post-divorce family structure and children's well-being. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *25*, 2178–2188.
- \*Baude, A., Pearson, J., & Drapeau, S. (2016). Children's adjustment in joint physical custody versus sole custody: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, *57*, 338–360.
- Bauserman, R. (2002). Child adjustment in joint custody versus sole custody. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *16*, 91–102.
- \*Bergstrom, M. (2015). Fifty moves a year: Is there an association between joint physical custody and psychosomatic problems in children? *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, *69*, 769–774.
- \*Bergstrom, M., Fransson, E., Fabian, H., Hjern, A., Sarkadi, A., & Salari, R. (2017). Preschool children living in joint physical custody arrangements who less psychological symptoms. *Acta Paediatrica*, July, 1–7.
- \*Bergstrom, M., Fransson, E., Hjern, A., Kohler, L., & Wallby, T. (2014). Mental health in Swedish children living in joint physical custody and their parents' life satisfaction. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, *55*, 433–439.
- Birnbaum, R., & Saini, M. (2015). A qualitative synthesis of children's experiences of shared care post divorce. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, *23*, 109–132.
- Bjarnason, T., & Arnasson, A. (2011). Joint physical custody and communication with parents: A cross national study of children in 36 western countries. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *42*, 871–890.
- Buchanan, C., Maccoby, E., & Dornbusch, S. (1996). *Adolescents after divorce*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.
- \*Drapeau, S., Baude, A., Quillet, J., Godbout, E., & Ivers, H. (2017). Relations between postdivorce custody arrangements, family contexts and children's adjustment. *Journal of Child Custody*, *14*, 1–23 (on line).
- Emery, R., Holtzworth, A., Johnston, J., Pedro-Carroll, J., Pruett, M., Saini, M. (2016). Scholar-advocacy in family law. *Family Court Review*, *54*, 134–149.



- \*Fabricius, W., & Suh, G. (2017). Should infants and toddlers have frequent overnight parenting time with fathers? The policy debate and new data. *Psychology, Public Policy and Law*, 23, 68–84.
- \*Faust, J., Ko, C., & Alexander, A. (2017). Parent child gender matching and child psychological adjustment after divorce. *Journal of Child Custody*, 14, 1–10.
- Fehlberg, B., Smyth, B., Maclean, M., & Roberts, C. (2011). Legislating for shared time parenting: A research review. *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, September, 318–337.
- Ferguson, C. (2009). An effect size primer: A guide for clinicians and researchers. *Professional Psychology, Research and Practice*, 40, 532–538.
- Flaquer, L. (2017). Gender equality, child well-being and shared residence in Spain. International Conference on Shared Parenting. Boston. May 29.
- \*Fransson, E., Låftman, S. B., Östberg, V., Hjern, A., & Bergström, M. (2017). The living conditions of children with shared residence-the Swedish example. *Child Indicators Research*, 10–15 on line.
- \*Fransson, E., Turunen, J., Hjern, A., Östberg, V., & Bergström, M. (2016). Psychological complaints among children in joint physical custody and other family types: Considering parental factors. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 44, 177–183.
- George, T. (2008). *Residential time summary reports*. Washington State Olympia, WA: Washington State Center for Court Research.
- \*Hagquist, C. (2016). Family residency and psychosomatic problems among adolescents in Sweden: The impact of child-parent relations. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 44, 36–46.
- \*Havermans, N., Sodermans, K., Matthijs, K. (2017). Residential arrangements and children's school engagement. *Youth and Society*, 49, 1104–1122.
- Jaffe, P. (2014). A presumption against shared parenting for family court litigants. *Family Court Review*, 52, 187–197.
- Jappens, M. (2018, in press). Children's relationships with grandparents in shared versus sole physical custody families. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, Spring.
- \*Jappens, M., & Bavel, J. (2016). Parental divorce, residence arrangements and contact between grandchildren and grandparents. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 78, 451–467.
- Jones, A. (2015). Big shift pushed in custody disputes. *Wall Street Journal*, April 16.
- Kalmijn, M. (2016). Father child contact, interparental conflict, and depressive symptoms among children of divorced parents. *European Sociological Review*, 32, 68–80.
- Kitterod, R., & Wiik, K. (2017). Shared residence among parents living apart in Norway. *Family Court Review*, 55, 556–571.
- \*Laftman, S., Bergstrom, M., Modin, B., & Ostberg, V. (2014). Joint physical custody, turning to parents for emotional support and subjective health: Adolescents in Stockholm Sweden. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 42, 456–462.
- Lodge, J., & Alexander, M. (2010). *Views of adolescents in separated families*. Sydney: Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Mahrer, N., O'Hara, K., Sandler, I., & Wolchik, S. (2018, in press). Does shared parenting help or hurt children in high conflict divorced families? *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, Spring.
- McIntosh, J., & Smyth, B. (2012). Shared time parenting: A matrix for evaluating risk. In K. Kuehne & L. Drozd (Eds.), *Parenting plan evaluations: Research for the family court* (pp. 156–187). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- McIntosh, J., Smyth, B., Kelaher, M., & Wells, L. (2011). Post separation parenting arrangements: Patterns and developmental outcomes. *Family Matters*, 86, 40–48.
- Meyer, D., Cancian, M., & Cook, S. (2017). The growth in shared custody in the United States (Wisconsin). *Family Court Review*, 55, 500–512.

- Meyer, G. (2001). Psychological testing and psychological assessment. *American Psychologist*, 56, 128–165.
- Nielsen, L. (2011). Shared parenting after divorce: A review of shared residential parenting research. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 52, 586–609.
- Nielsen, L. (2014a). Shared physical custody: Summary of 40 studies on outcomes for children. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 55, 613–635.
- Nielsen, L. (2014b). Woozles: Their role in custody law reform, parenting plans and family court. *Psychology, Public Policy and Law*, 20, 164–180.
- Nielsen, L. (2015). Shared physical custody: Does it benefit children? *Journal of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers*, 28, 79–139.
- Nielsen, L. (2017). Re-examining the research on parental conflict, coparenting and custody arrangements. *Psychology, Public Policy and Law*, 23, 211–231.
- Nielsen, L. (2018, in press). Children's outcomes in shared versus sole physical custody: 60 studies considering income, conflict, and quality of parent-child relationships. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, Spring.
- \*Nilsen, S., Breivik, K., Wold, B., & Boe, T. (2017). Divorce and family structure in Norway: Association with adolescent mental health. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 58, 1–20.
- Poortman, A., & Gaalen, R. (2017). Shared residence after separation: A review and new findings from the Netherlands. *Family Court Review*, 55, 531–544.
- Presson, G. (2016, January). Florida family law reform bill bad for kids? Sun Sentinel.
- \*Qu, L., & Weston, R. (2010). *Parenting dynamics after separation: A follow up study of parents who separated after the 2006 family law reforms*. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- \*Qu, L., Weston, R., & Dunstan, J. (2014). *Post separation parenting, property and relationship dynamics after five years*. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- \*Sandler, I., Wheeler, L., & Braver, S. (2013). Relations of parenting quality, interparental conflict, and overnights with mental health problems of children in divorcing families with high legal conflict. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 27, 915–924.
- Shadish, W., Cook, T., & Campbell, D. (2001). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.
- Shiller, V. (1986). Joint versus maternal custody for families with latency age boys: Parent characteristics and child adjustment. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 56, 486–489.
- Smyth, B., McIntosh, J., Emery, R., & Howarth, S. (2016). Shared time parenting: Evaluating the evidence of risks and benefits for children. In L. Drozd, M. Saini, & J. Olesen (Eds.), *Parenting plan evaluations: applied research for the family court* (pp. 118–170). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Sodermans, K., & Matthijs, K. (2014). Joint physical custody and adolescents' subjective well-being: A personality X environment interaction. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 28, 346–356.
- Tornello, S., Emery, R., Rowen, J., Potter, D., Ocker, B., & Xu, Y. (2013). Overnight custody arrangements, attachment and adjustment among very young children. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 75, 871–885.
- Trinder, L. (2010). Shared residence: A review of recent research evidence. *Child and Family Law Quarterly*, 22, 475–498.
- \*Turunen, J. (2017). Shared physical custody and children's experience of stress. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 58, 371–392.
- \*Turunen, J., Fransson, E., & Bergstrom, M. (2017). Self esteem in children in joint physical custody and other living arrangements. *Public Health*, 149, 106–112.
- Vanassche, S., Sodermans, A., Matthijs, K., & Swicegood, G. (2013). Commuting between two parental households: The association between joint physical custody and adolescent wellbeing following divorce. *Journal of Family Studies*, 19, 139–158.

- Vanassche, S., Sodermans, A., Matthijs, K., & Swicegood, G. (2017). Alternating residence for children after parental separation: Recent findings from Belgium. *Family Court Review*, 55, 545–555.
- Venohr, J., & Kaunelis, R. (2008). Child support guidelines. *Family Court Review*, 43, 415–428.
- Warshak, R. (2014). Social science and parenting plans for young children: With the endorsement of the researchers and practitioners listed in the Appendix. *Psychology, Public Policy and Law*, 20, 46–67.
- \*Westphal, S., Poortman, A., & Van der Lippe, T. (2015). What about the grandparents? Children's postdivorce residence arrangements and contact with grandparents. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 77, 424–40.