

ADOPTION FACTS

Children of Married Parents

- Children who live with married parents tend to have higher grades, are more likely to attend college, and experience lower rates of unemployment.¹
- On average, children of married parents experience better physical and mental health, have lower rates of substance abuse, experience less child abuse, and are less likely to commit suicide or engage in criminal behavior.²
- “What has been shown, over and over again to contribute most to the emotional development of the child is a close, warm, sustained, and continuous relationship with both parents.”³

Children of Single Parents

- Children raised by a single mother are six times more likely to live in poverty, twice as likely to drop out of high school, and two to three times more likely to have serious emotional and behavioral problems than children who grow up with both parents.⁴
- During middle childhood, children raised by single parents have high rates of chronic health and psychiatric disorders.⁵
- On average, teens from single-parent homes are more attached to their peer groups and less attached to their parents’ opinions.⁶
- As teenagers and young adults, “being raised in a single-mother family is associated with elevated risks of teenage childbearing, . . .incarceration and with being neither employed nor in school.”⁷

¹ See William J. Doherty and others, *Why Marriage Matters: Twenty-One Conclusions from the Social Sciences* (Institute for American Values, 2002), 10-11

² See Doherty, *Why Marriage Matters*, 11-17.

³ Armand Nicholi, “The Impact of Parental Absence on Childhood Development: An Overview of the Literature,” *Journal of Family and Culture* (Autumn 1985), note 3; as quoted in Bill Muehlenburg, “The Case for the Two-Parent Family,” *National Observer—Australia and World Affairs* (Sept. 2002), 44.

⁴ Kristin A. Moore, *Report to Congress on Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing* (1985); and Patrick Fagan, “How Broken Families Rob Children of Their Chance for Future Prosperity,” *The Heritage Foundation Background*, no. 1283, June 1999.

⁵ “Executive Summary: Report to Congress on Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service (Sept. 1995), 12; cited in *Infant Adoption in Michigan: Reviving a Vanishing Phenomenon*, Michigan Family Forum (2005), 4.

⁶ Ross L. Matsueda and Karen Heimer, “Race, Family Structure and Delinquency: A Test of Differential Association and Social Control Theories,” *American Sociological Review* 52: 171-81; cited in *Why Marriage Matters: Twenty-One Conclusions from the Social Sciences* (2002), 16.

⁷ Executive Summary (Sept. 1995), 12; as quoted in *Infant Adoption in Michigan* (2005), 4.

- Children of unmarried women are likely to need to assume adult roles prematurely.⁸
- “Single mothers . . . report less perceived social support, fewer contacts with friends and family, and lower levels of social involvement than married mothers.”⁹

Benefits of Adoption

- “On an index of self-esteem, adopted adolescents compare favorably to” those who were not adopted.¹⁰
- Children who were adopted as infants have better health, see mental health professionals less often, have fewer behavioral problems, and do better in school than children born outside of marriage and raised by the unmarried mother.¹¹

*****THIS PAPER IS INTENDED TO BE INFORMATIONAL IN NATURE ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED LEGAL ADVICE*****

⁸ See Elizabeth Terry-Humen, Jennifer Manlove, and Kristin A. Moore, “Births Outside of Marriage: Perceptions vs. Reality,” *Child Trends Research Brief*, April 2001, 6.

⁹ John Cairney and others, “Stress, Social Support and Depression in Single and Married Mothers,” *Social Psychiatry Psychiatric Epidemiology* (2003), 28:445.

¹⁰ Search Institute, “New Study Identifies Strengths of Adoptive Families,” from June 1994 *Source Newsletter*, www.search-institute.org/archives/gua.htm; retrieved September 27, 2006.

¹¹ See Nicholas Zill, Mary Jo Cairo, and Barbara Bloom, “Health of Our Nation’s Children,” Vital and Health Statistics, series 10, no. 191, and Nicholas Zill, “Adopted Children in the United States: A Profile Based on a National Survey of Child Health,” testimony before the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, May 1995; cited in Patrick F. Fagan, “Adoption: The Best Option,” in *Adoption Factbook III* (1999), 3.