

How Family Relationships Influence Child Development: Recent Research and Parallels to the Classroom

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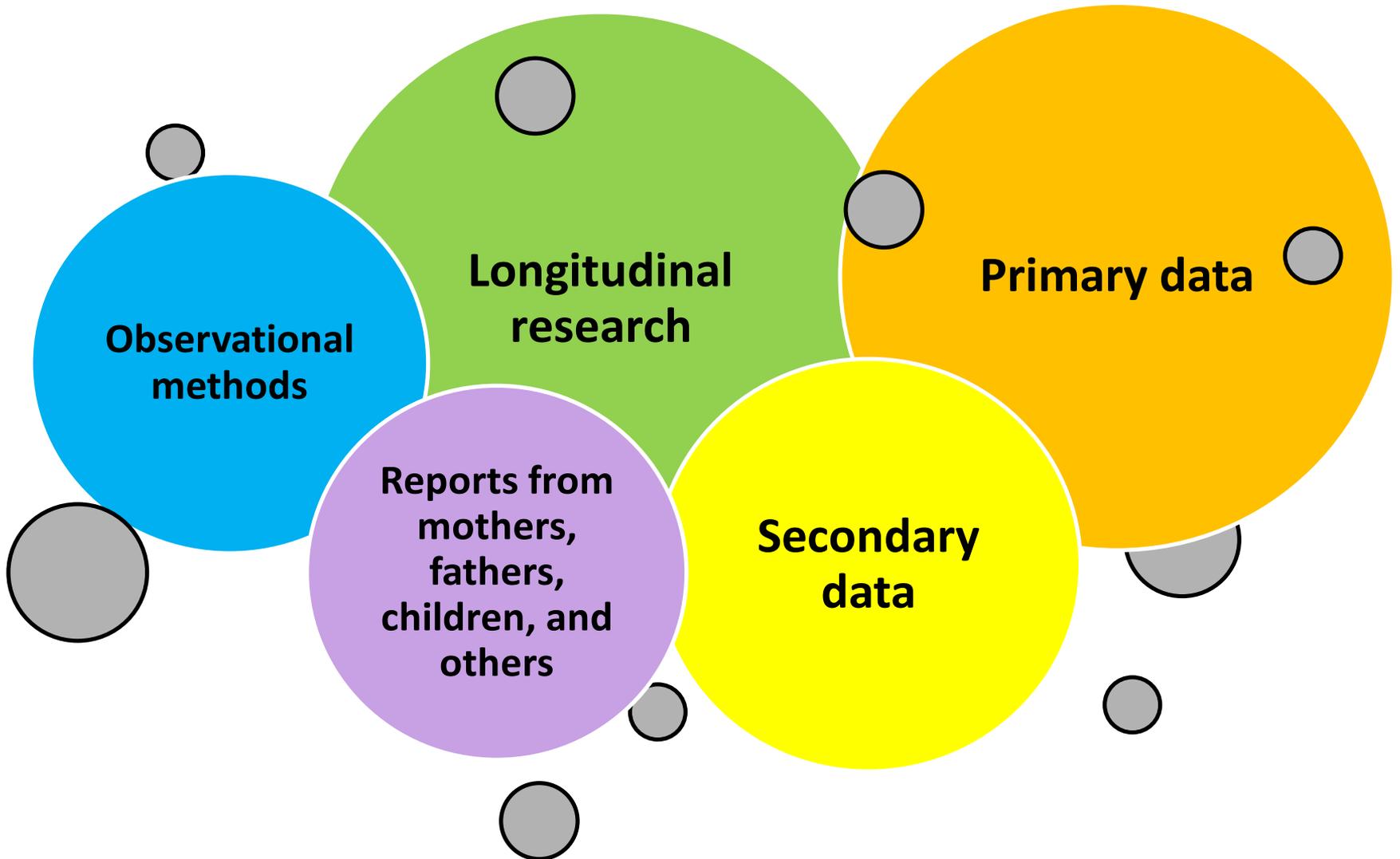
Ohio State University



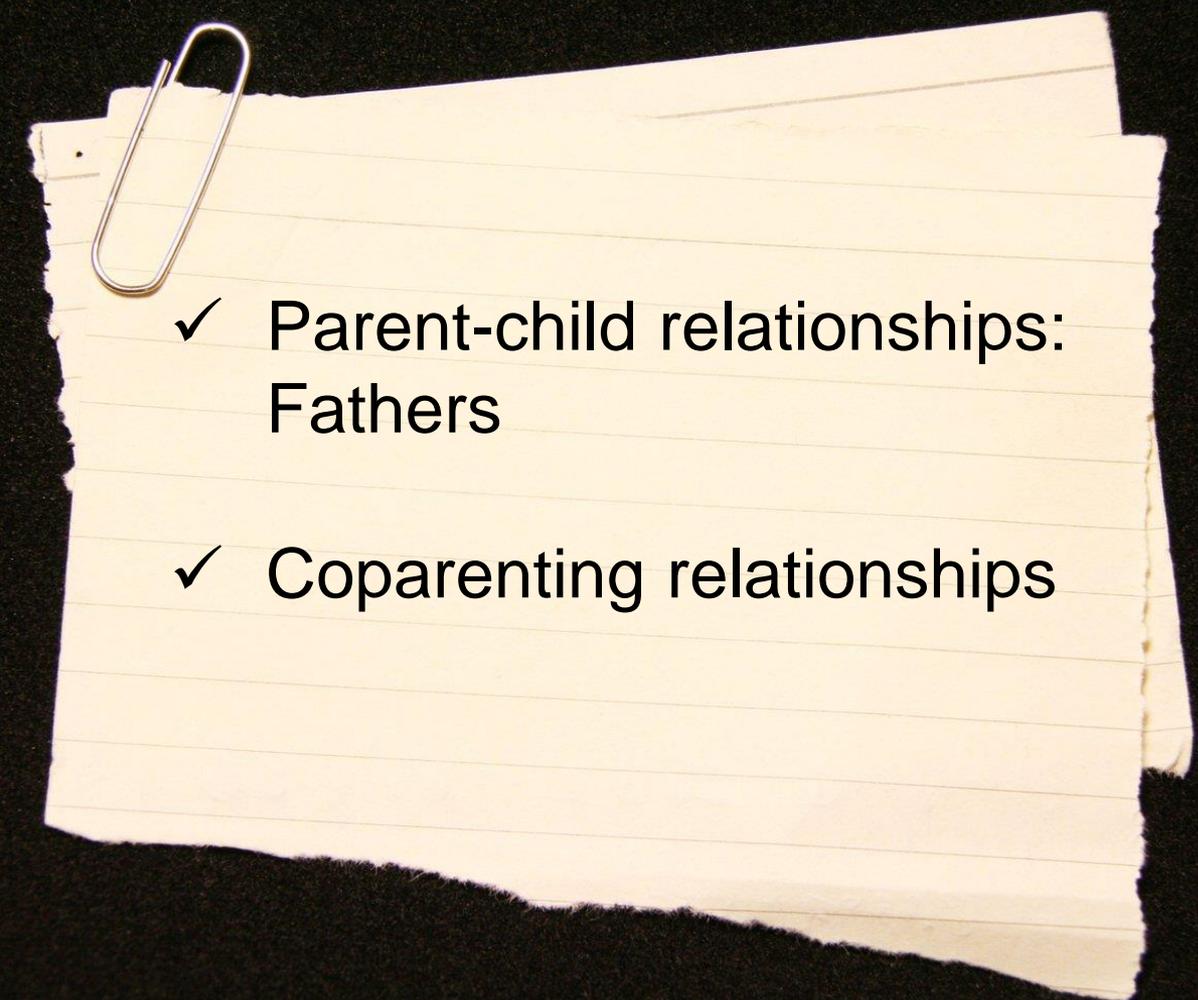
My research

- Coparenting: extent to which parents cooperate as a team in rearing children
- Fathering: variations across families
- Role of child characteristics: temperament, gender
- The parenting experience: transition to parenthood, effects of parenting on parents

My methods



Today's agenda

- 
- ✓ Parent-child relationships:
Fathers
 - ✓ Coparenting relationships

Attachment theory

- Humans evolved to develop close relationships with parents early in life
- Some relationships more secure than others
- Security of attachment relationships direct result of quality of care (sensitivity)

Ainsworth et al., 1978
Bowlby, 1969

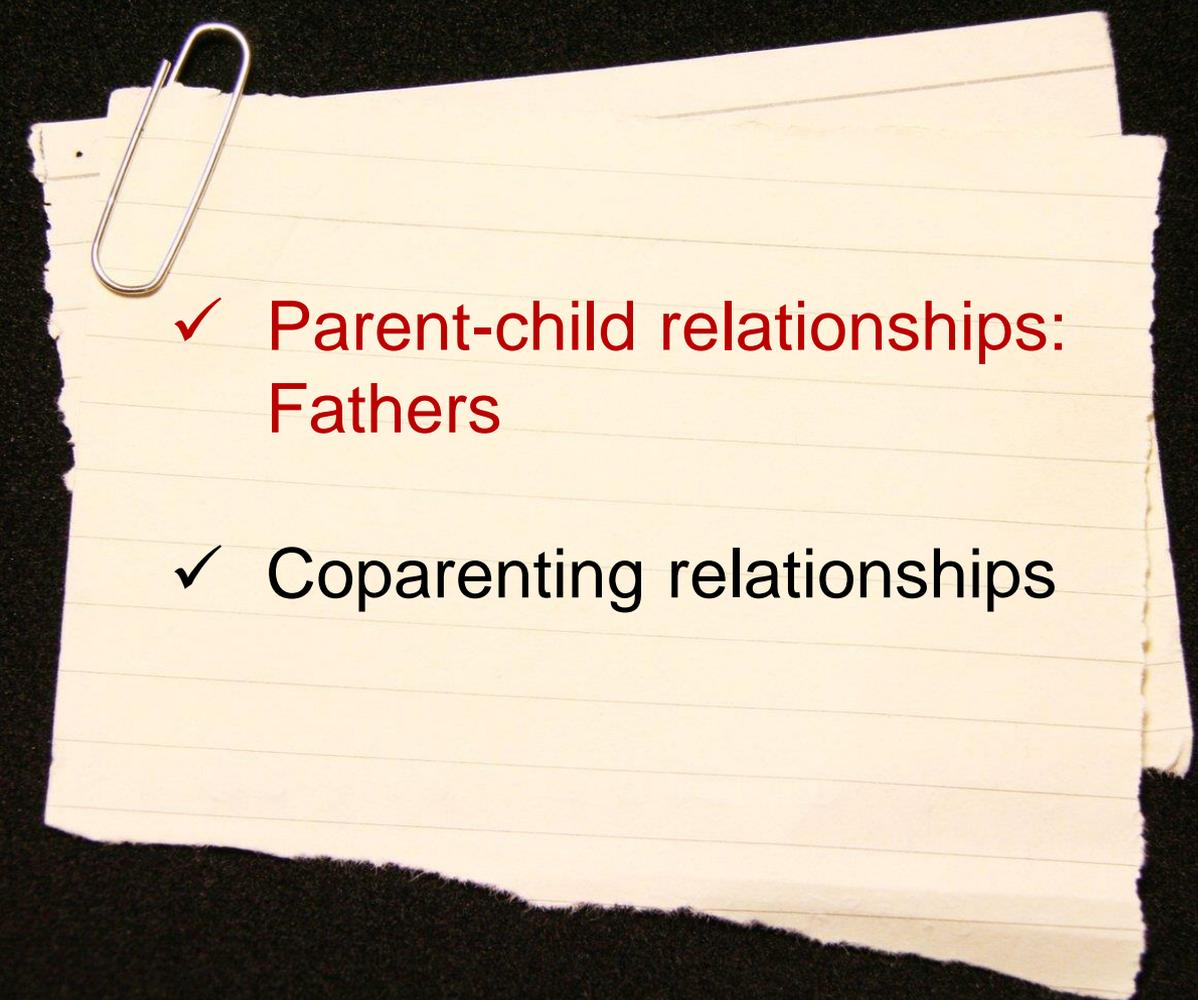
Attachment theory

- Quality of early attachments affects
 - children's social-emotional development
 - subsequent relationships



for a review, Groh et al. (2017)
Child Development Perspectives

Today's agenda

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Human Development, 1975

Michael Lamb

Fathers: Forgotten
Contributors to Child
Development



Child Development Perspectives, 2018

Fathers Are Parents, Too! Widening the Lens on Parenting for Children's Development

Natasha J. Cabrera,¹ Brenda L. Volling,² and Rachel Barr³

¹University of Maryland, ²University of Michigan, and ³Georgetown University

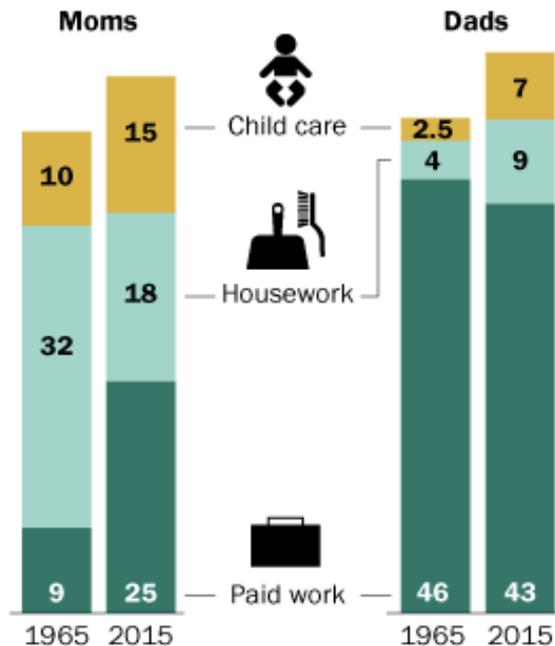


SRCD Working
Group on
Advancing
Research on
Fathers (2016)

What has changed in 40+ years?

For both moms and dads, more time spent on child care

Average number of hours per week spent on ...



Note: Paid work includes commute time.

Source: 1965 data from table 5A.1-2, Bianchi, S.M. et al., "Changing Rhythms of American Family Life" (2006). 2015 data from Pew Research Center analysis of American Time Use Survey (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

- Today's fathers are more involved in childrearing
- More stay-at-home fathers
- Fathers' involvement in parenting matters for children's development

for a review, Schoppe-Sullivan & Fagan (2020)
Journal of Marriage & Family

Father-child attachment

- Children form attachments to fathers
- Father-child attachment security matters
- BUT...quality of care less predictive of father-child attachment security



Lamb (2012)

Lucassen et al. (2011)

Father-child attachment

- Fathers and mothers interact differently with children
- Fathers promote exploration vs. providing safety and comfort
- Fathers' stimulation or activation may promote secure attachment

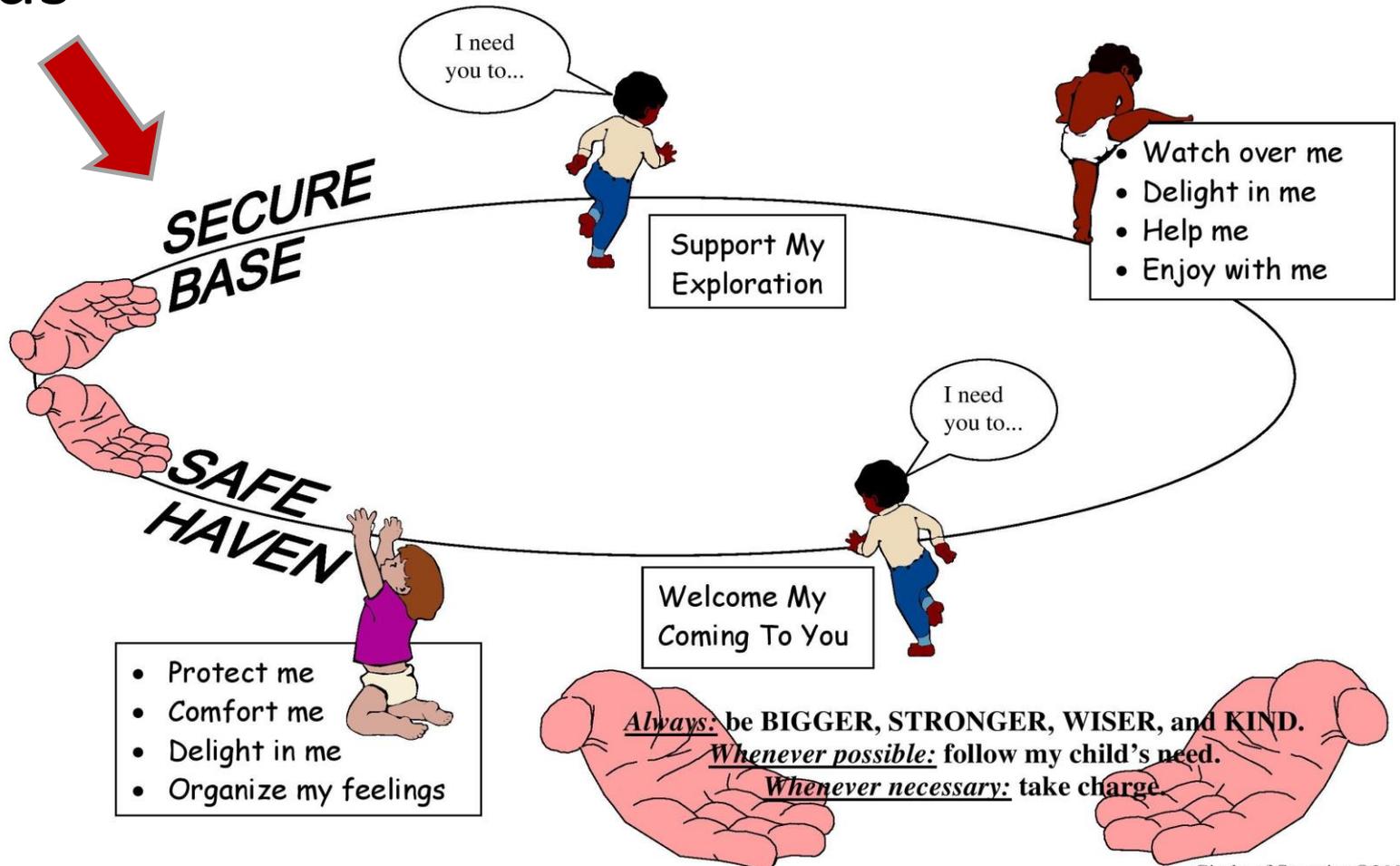
Grossmann et al. (2002)
Paquette (2004)



CIRCLE OF SECURITY®

PARENT ATTENDING TO THE CHILD'S NEEDS

Dads



One example

- Does paternal stimulation promote secure attachment to fathers?
 - Physical stimulation (tickling, lifting up to “fly”)
 - Object stimulation (shaking rattle in face)



One example

- 58 fathers and their infants participated together in Strange Situation Procedure when infants were 12-18 mos
- Observed fathers' parenting during interactions with their infants at 9 mos
 - Rated fathers' sensitivity and stimulation
 - Also intrusiveness (a form of insensitivity)

One example



Fathers' greater stimulation of their infants may facilitate secure infant-father attachment, as long as fathers aren't too insensitive.

Other examples

- Fathers may provide unique support for children's language development
 - Requests for clarification
 - *Wh*-questions
- Fathers may support children's self-regulation by challenging regulation
 - Destabilize child (e.g., tickling, mild startling)
 - Interrupt child creating a regulatory challenge

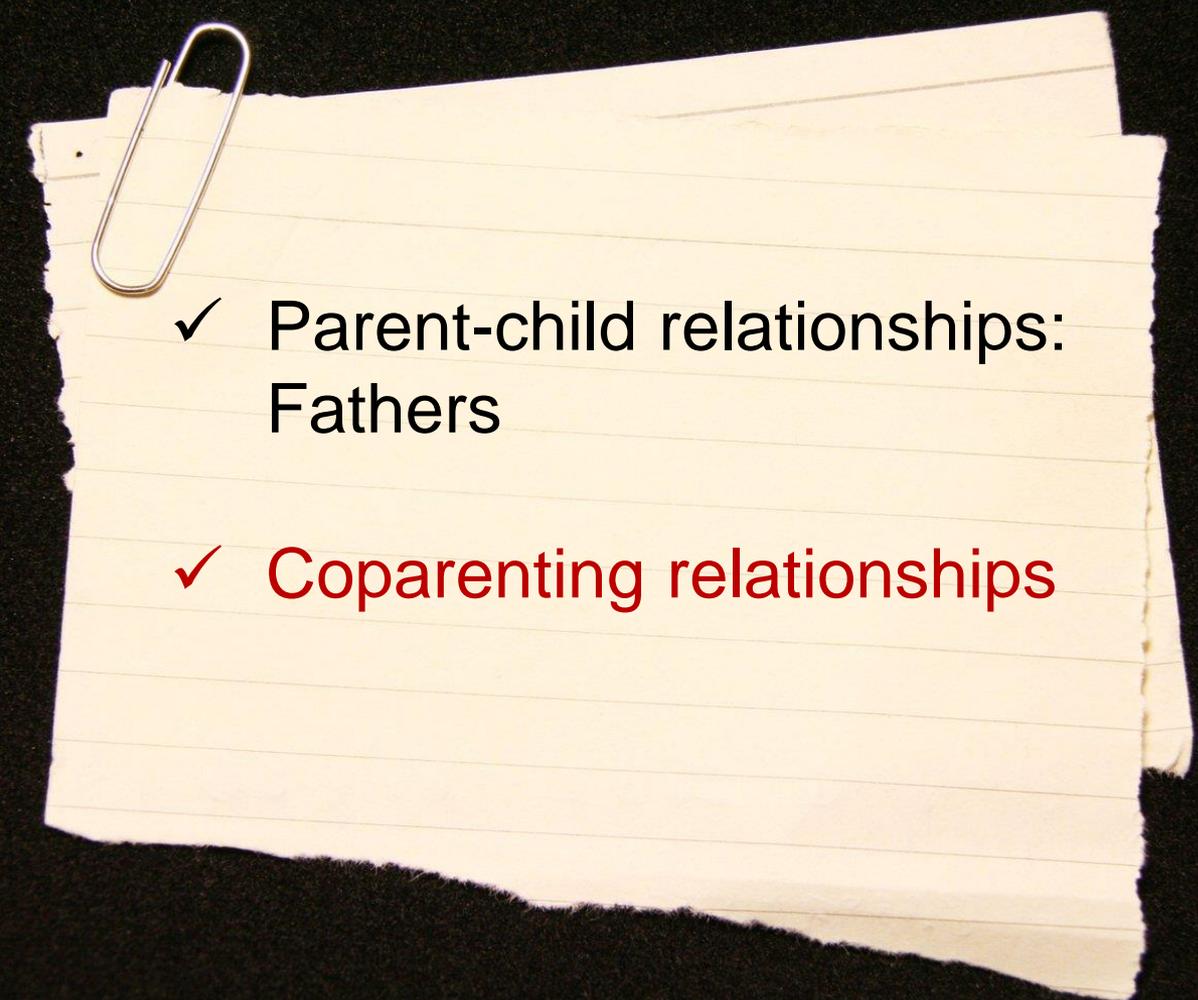
In the Classroom...

- When discussing attachment and parenting, cover research on men/fathers
- Activity idea:
 - Ask students to explain why fathers have received much less attention than mothers in research on child development
 - Is this lack of attention justified – why or why not?

Be a “Dad”

- Students need safety and security to learn
- But, students also need to be challenged to deal with uncertainty and figure things out
- Be a secure base:
 - Encourage students to struggle before providing assistance
 - Allow students autonomy when possible
 - Support students’ efforts from the sidelines

Today's agenda

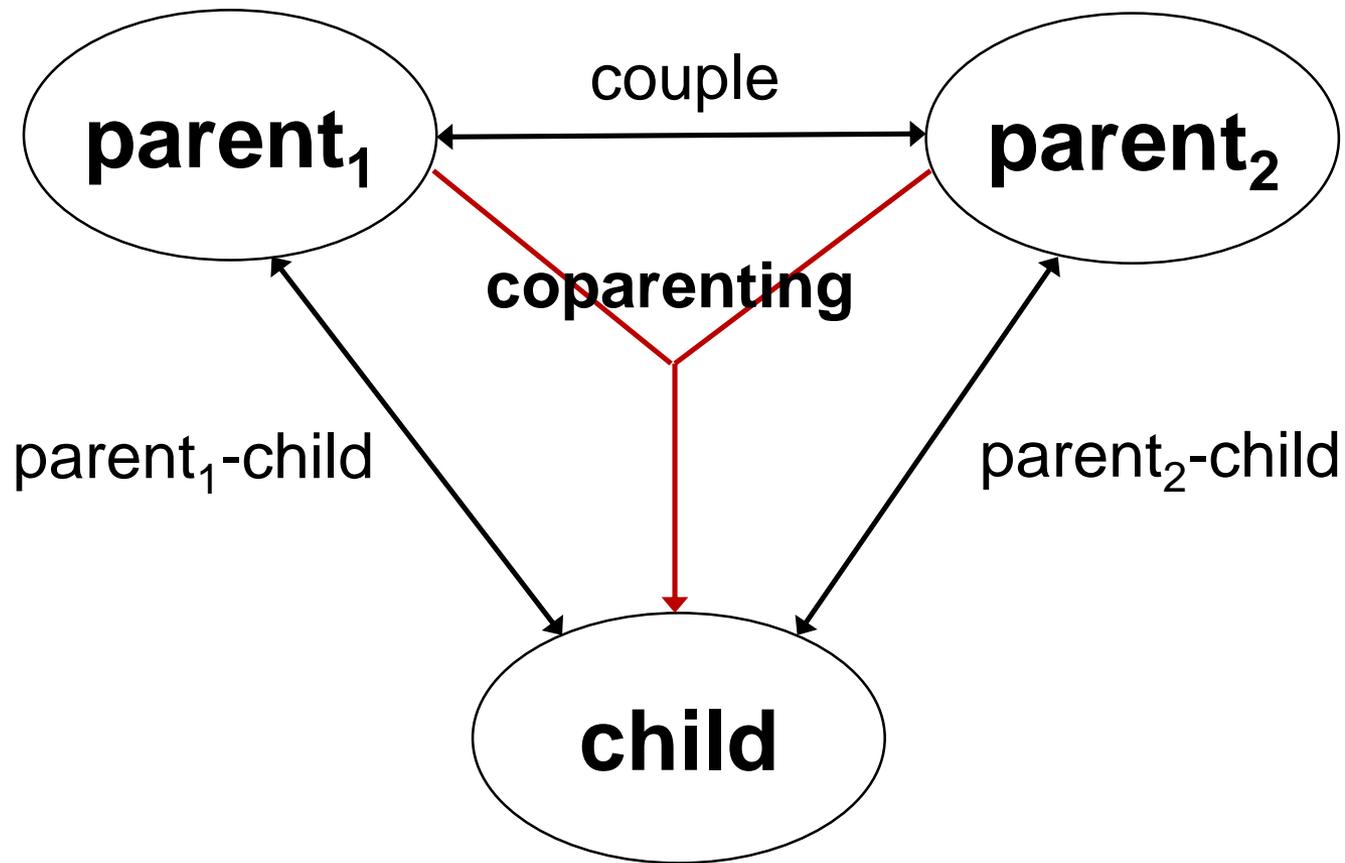
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- ✓ Parent-child relationships:
Fathers
 - ✓ Coparenting relationships

Family systems theory

- Families consist of interdependent parts
 - Individuals affect each other
 - individuals cannot be understood outside of context
- Children are members of multiple subsystems that affect their development

S. Minuchin (1974)
P. Minuchin (1985)

What is coparenting?



Child Development, 1985

Patricia Minuchin

“Most of our ideas about child-rearing and its effects are based on data drawn from one parent, who has been treated either as the representative of parenting in the family or as the primary source.”

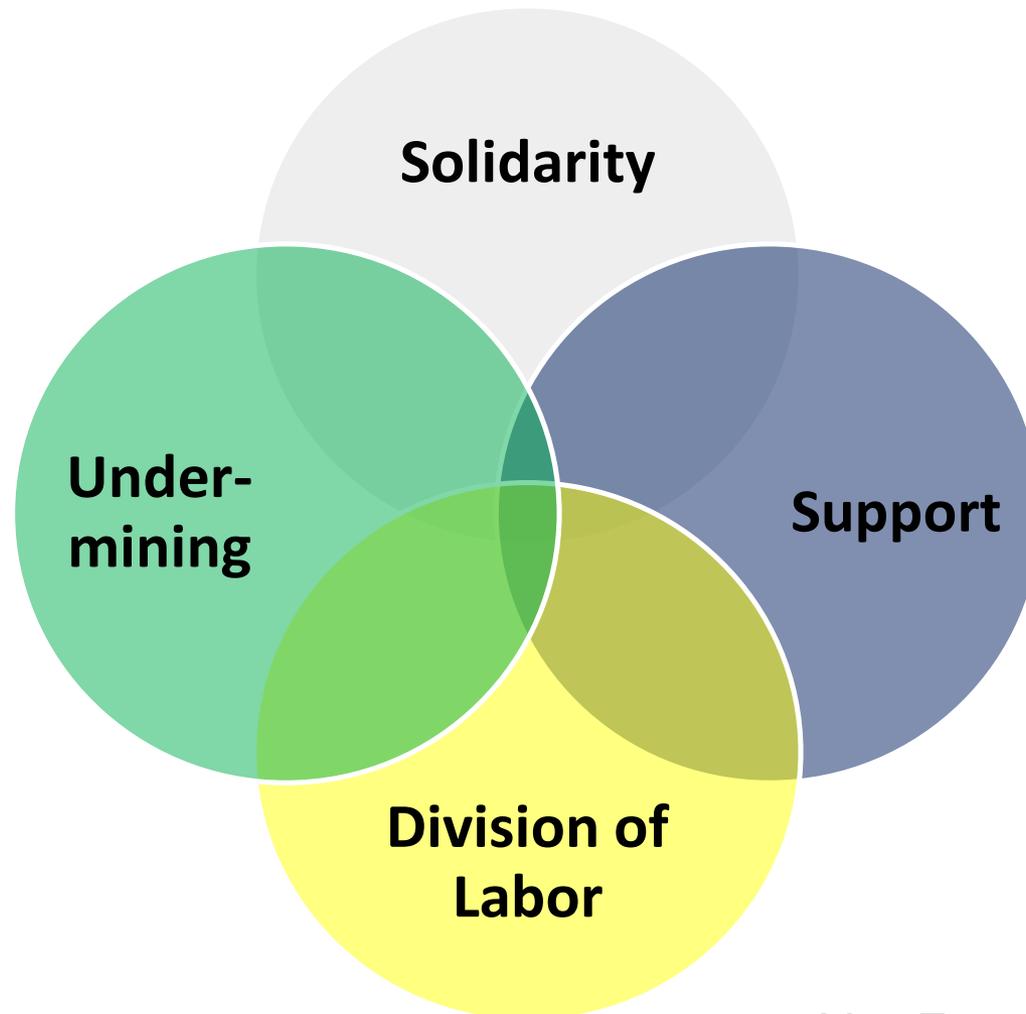
Why coparenting?

- Most children are parented by more than one adult at any given time
- Parents don't necessarily share the same style or approach
- Coparenting applies across family types



Farr & Patterson (2013)
McHale et al. (2013)

What is coparenting?



Feinberg (2003)
Van Egeren & Hawkins (2004)

Coparenting matters

- More supportive coparenting linked to child positive social-emotional development
- Coparenting has **unique** effects...even when taking into account:
 - Couple (romantic) relationship
 - Mother- and father-child relationships

Relationships are bidirectional

- Some children are harder to coparent:
 - Difficult temperament
 - greater undermining (conflict)
 - greater instability in coparenting



Cook, Schoppe-Sullivan, et al., 2009
Davis, Schoppe-Sullivan, et al., 2009

Some children more susceptible

Children with difficult temperaments more susceptible to coparenting: Benefit more from supportive coparenting than children with easier temperaments



In the Classroom...

- When covering parenting and discipline, define and discuss coparenting
- Activity idea:
 - Ask students to think about their parents or the folks who raised them.
 - Did your folks share the same style or approach to parenting and discipline?

Adopt a Systemic Perspective

- Classrooms, programs and departments all systems
- Relationships are bidirectional
- Be a good “coparent”:
 - Get on the same page
 - Support colleagues and assistants
 - Step up when help is needed
 - Appreciate the “whole”



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- The participating families

For further information...

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to request slides and articles mentioned in this presentation.