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Coparenting Experiences in African American Families: An Examination of Single Mothers and their Non-Marital Coparents

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Abstract

African American youth from single mother homes continue to be overrepresented in statistics on risk behavior and delinquency, a trend that many be attributed to father-absence, socioeconomic disadvantage, and compromises in parenting more typical of single than two-parent families. Yet, this risk-focused perspective ignores a long-standing strength of the African American community, the involvement and potential protective impact of extended family members in childrearing. This study describes the experiences of 95 African American single mothers and their non-marital coparents who participated in a study of African American single mother families with an 11 to 16 year old child. Specifically, the study examines: 1) the extent to which nonmarital coparents are involved in childrearing; 2) the relative levels of risk (i.e., depression, mother-coparent conflict) and protective (i.e., parenting) associated with maternal and coparent involvement; and 3) how similarly and/or differently coparent and mother variables operate with regard to youth externalizing problems. Findings reveal that a range of family members and other adults actively participate in childrearing in African American single mother families, coparents do not differ from mothers on certain study variables (i.e., depression and mother-coparent conflict) but do for others (parenting), and coparent involvement is associated with youth adjustment in ways that are similar to our more established understanding of maternal involvement. The potential clinical implications of the findings are discussed and future research directions are highlighted.

Keywords

African American; Single Mother; Coparent; Externalizing

The majority of African American youth are raised in single parent households, most single mother-headed, at some point during childhood and/or adolescence (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011; U.S. Census Data, 2009). Reasons for the rise in the number of African

American single mother families are diverse and complex, but include a rise in out-of-wedlock births, particularly for first-born children, and declining rates of marriage (Pew Research Institute, 2007; Ventura, 2009). This shift from the traditional structure of the married, two-parent family has led some to suggest that growing up in a single mother home is a correlate, if not the primary cause, of many of the most pressing societal issues facing African American youth, including externalizing problems (e.g., Choi & Jackson, 2012; Griffin, Botvin, Scheier, Diaz, & Miller, 2000; Taylor, Larsen-Rife, Conger, Widaman, & Cutrona, 2010). Specifically, some posit that disadvantage arising from the absence of a second parent and the poverty in which single-mother families are more likely to live perpetuate compromises in African American single mothers' parenting practices (e.g., parental supervision, disciplinary practices, family warmth and cohesion, etc.) and, in turn, exacerbate the vulnerability for externalizing problems, including aggression and rule breaking behavior (e.g., Lengua, 2012; Taylor, 2011; Tomlinson, 2010).

The importance of the aforementioned work cannot be minimized as it has facilitated the identification of youth at greater risk for externalizing problems. In addition, this body of research has extrapolated the mechanisms mediating the linkage between single-mother households and psychosocial adjustment problems among youth within these families, which has, in turn, identified targets for intervention programming (Kotchick, Dorsey, & Heller, 2005). However, comparing African American single mother families with European American and two parent families tells us relatively little about the *range* of variability in the African American single mother family context or the risk and protective processes linked to youth aggression and rule-breaking behaviors *within* this group (see McLoyd, Hill, Dodge, 2005 for a review). For example, the broader "fragile families" literature has focused primarily on coparenting between mothers and fathers who are unmarried at the time of the child's birth (e.g., Carlson & Hognas, 2011; Eyre, Flythe, Hoffman, Fraser, 2012; Roy & Burton, 2007; Waller, 2012). Regardless of race, fragile families research highlights that unmarried mother-father relationships are vulnerable to ending within a few years of the child's birth, with father involvement tending to wane as children age, particularly in families in which mothers and fathers have more difficulty navigating coparenting (Shannon, Cabrera, Tamis-Lemonda, 2009; also see Carlson & Hogas, 2011, for a review). Yet, fragile families research also suggests that unmarried African American mothers and fathers in particular may be even less likely to have an expectation of marriage than couples in other racial or ethnic groups (Waller & McLanahan, 2005). Consistent with these trends, African American youth (67%) are much more likely to live in a single mother household at some point during childhood or adolescence than youth (23%) in the general population (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011; Hamilton, Martin, & Ventura, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

As such, instead of focusing on father involvement or lack of involvement in the coparenting role, this study aims to highlight the realities of the diverse coparenting alliances that evolve in many African American single mother families and the impact of these diverse alliances on youth externalizing problems (Burton & Hardaway, 2012; Carlson & Hognas, 2011; Gaskin-Butler, Engert, Markievitz Swenson, & McHale, 2012; McHale, Waller, & Pearson, 2012; Roy & Burton, 2007). Importantly, the coparenting literature does not specify that a

romantic or marital relationship is inherent or even implied in the coparenting construct (McHale & Lindahl, 2011). Rather, coparenting quite simply refers to the coordination of childrearing responsibilities between two adults (e.g., McHale, 2007; McHale & Lindahl, 2011, for recent comprehensive reviews). Of relevance to coparenting, historians point to a connection between the strength of African American extended family networks and African values and customs regarding families (e.g., Johnson & Staples, 2005). This wider inclusion of family members means that a larger number of people have a role in the care of individuals, including assuring the health and well being of youth (Cabrera, Scott, Fagan, Steward-Streng, Chien, 2012; Jones, Zalot, Foster, Sterrett, & Chester, 2007; Jones & Lindahl, 2011; McHale, 2009). To this point, prior work with a very low income sample of African American single mothers of children ranging in age from 7 to 11 revealed that 97% of mothers identified another adult or family member who assisted with childrearing (Jones, Shaffer, Forehand, Brody, & Armistead, 2003). Twenty-six percent of the single mothers in that sample identified the child's biological father; however, others identified the child's maternal grandmother (31%), maternal aunt (11%), older sister (11%), as well as a diverse group of other relatives and non-relatives, such as friends and neighbors, who have been referred to as "fictive kin" (see Jones, Zalot et al., 2007, for a review). In addition, the quality of these diverse coparenting alliances were consequential for youth adjustment both directly (e.g., youth externalizing problems), as well as indirectly via compromises in known protective factors, such as maternal parenting, and modifying the impact of known risk factors (e.g., neighborhood risk) (e.g., Goodrum, Jones, Kincaid, & Parent, 2012; Jones, Forehand, Dorsey, Foster, & Brody, 2005; Sterrett, Jones, & Kincaid, 2009).

As such, utilizing a coparenting framework to conceptualize and contextualize African American single mother families may at its core require adapting the traditional definition of "family" from one that relies on the legal status of caregivers (i.e., mothers and fathers as coparents) to one that better considers "the relevant people in the family network and accept[s] unconventional family shape" (Minuchin, Colapinto, & Minuchin, 2007; p. 25; also see Jones et al., 2007; Jones & Lindahl, 2011; McHale & Irace, 2011, for reviews). The proposed research fills this important niche by capturing the diversity of non-marital coparenting alliances undertaken by single mothers and other adults who together coordinate the care and upbringing of African American youth from single mother homes, including the coparents themselves who have not been a focus of prior publications, and the importance of non-marital coparents' role in these alliances for understanding variability in youth adjustment (see Jones & Lindahl, 2011; Jones et al., 2007; McHale & Lindahl, 2011, for a review).

Specifically, this study aims to describe the experiences of non-marital coparents by providing more information regarding the range of individuals involved in non-marital coparenting roles in African American single mother families, the extent and quality of coparent involvement in childrearing, and potential risk and protective factors associated with coparent involvement for youth adjustment. As such, the current study utilized data on non-marital coparents collected as part of a study of African American single mother families with an 11 to 16 year old child, an age range during which parenting and coparenting are critical to healthy youth outcomes (Tragesser, Beauvais, Swaim, Edwards, & Oetting, 2007).

With the aim of demonstrating that non-marital coparents have the potential to significantly impact childrearing and youth outcomes, coparent-responses were compared to maternal responses on all primary study variables, including both risk (i.e., depressive symptoms, mother-coparent conflict) and protective (i.e., parenting) factors. There is a rich history of research on both parental depressive symptoms (see England & Sim, 2009, for a review) and parenting style (e.g., Aunola & Nurmi, 2005; Barnett & Scaramella, 2013; Hart, Newell, & Olsen, 2003), particularly among mothers, and the impact of these maternal factors on youth adjustment, including externalizing problems (see England & Sim, 2009 for a review; Maughan, Cicchetti, Toth, & Rogosch, 2007; Weaver, Shaw, Dishion, & Wilson, 2008). Both theory and research suggest that symptoms of depression and its correlates, including irritable affect, angry and hostile behavior, and lax/undercontrolled disciplinary practices, in mothers may inhibit optimal emotion regulation development leading to dysregulated aggression and conduct problems in youth (see England & Sim, 2009 for a review; Low & Stocker, 2005; Weaver et al., 2008).

In contrast, positive parenting behaviors or behaviors characterized as high levels of warmth/support and monitoring/control are considered protective, such that youth raised in homes with greater positive parenting are less likely to experience adjustment problems (see Morris, Cui, & Steinberg, 2013, for a review). It is generally understood that higher levels of warmth and support can provide various types of social support such as emotional, appraisal, informational, and instrumental assistance. In turn, these types of support can improve well-being and buffer the effects of various stressors, protecting against externalizing behaviors, as well as other forms of adjustment difficulties (e.g., Goodrum et al., 2012; Morris et al., 2013; Sterrett et al., 2009). With regard to monitoring/control practices, which typically involves supervising children's activities, keeping track of children's school work and peer relationships, and requiring conformity to family and community norms, youth of parents who engage in more monitoring/control are more likely to exhibit lower levels of adjustment problems (Morris et al., 2013). Generally, parents who are aware of the activities that their children are engaging in can encourage those activities or redirect their children from negative activities (e.g., spending time with deviant peers, consuming alcohol or illicit drugs, etc.) to more positive activities decreasing the likelihood that their children will experience externalizing behaviors (Morris et al., 2013). Although the literature on maternal depression and positive parenting and their effects on youth adjustment are well established, far less attention has been devoted to the *direct* impact of these factors as they relate to father-involvement, let alone non-marital coparents (e.g., Jones et al., 2005; Jones et al., 2007; McHale, 2011).

Similarly, conflict between mothers and fathers has been well examined in the literature with greater interparental conflict thought to model aggressive or hostile behaviors and expose children to intense stressors, resulting in an exacerbation of youth externalizing outcomes. More specifically, children learn much about interpersonal relationships from watching their parents (Belsky, 1981). Therefore, parents that engage in aggressive behaviors during conflicts may provide children with maladaptive models of problem solving or conflict resolution (Davies, Martin, & Cicchetti, 2012). In addition, children exposed to interparental conflict often experience intense stress (Buehler, Lange, & Franck,

2007; Cummings, Schermerhorn, Davies, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2006). Researchers have theorized that individuals experiencing intense stress may depend on dominant, well-learned coping strategies that may be less mature or adaptive (Shelton & Harold, 2008). Extending this rationale would suggest that children may rely on such maladaptive coping strategies, such as aggression or withdrawal, when exposed to higher levels of marital conflict (Buehler et al., 2007; Davies et al., 2012). Furthermore, longitudinal studies have suggested that parental conflict may play a causal role in child behavior problems (Grych, Harold, & Miles, 2003; Shelton & Harold, 2008), such that improvements in child behavior often followed the dissolution of high-conflict marriages, whereas children whose parents remained in high conflict relationships demonstrated poorer outcomes (Amato, 2010; Amato & Afifi, 2006). However, less is known about the impact of coparent conflict across the range of adults who assist mothers with childrearing in single mother families.

Accordingly, this study had three primary aims: 1) To examine the extent to which non-marital coparents are involved in childrearing, with the hypothesis that non-marital coparents are integrally involved in the daily lives of African American youth from single mother homes; 2) To examine the relative levels of individual factors (i.e., depressive symptoms, parenting style) and relationship quality (i.e., interparental conflict, (co)parent-youth relationship quality) between mothers and coparents, with the hypothesis that coparents will bring similar levels of risk and protection to the family context as mothers; and 3) To examine both risk (i.e., interparental conflict, depressive symptoms) and protective (i.e., positive parenting) factors associated with youth externalizing problems with the hypotheses that both coparent and maternal depression, as well as interparental conflict (as reported by both mothers and coparents) would be associated with higher levels of youth externalizing problems, while mother- and coparent- youth relationship quality, as well as monitoring, would each be associated with lower levels of youth externalizing problems.

Method

Overview

The data used in the current analyses come from the African American Families and Children Together (AAFACT) Project, which aimed to explore the role of extended family members in the psychosocial health of African American youth from single mother homes ($N = 194$).

Eligibility for AAFACT—Families were considered eligible for AAFACT if mothers identified: 1) The family as “African American”; 2) Her marital status as “single”; 3) An 11 to 16 year old child residing in the home; and 4) A non-marital coparent or “another adult of family member who assisted in daily childrearing responsibilities” for the target child. Non-marital coparent participation was not a requirement of the study (i.e., mothers could fill out measures on the role of the coparent); however, non-marital coparent participation was encouraged. In approximately half of the AAFACT families ($n = 95$), the non-marital coparent participated in data collection, and it is these families, which are the focus of the current study. Reasons given for coparents not participating in the study typically included difficulty in negotiating schedules of multiple jobs, activities, and childcare activities for

both coparents to participate. There were no significant differences on demographic variables between families whose coparents participated in the study and those who did not, including mother household income [$t(188) = 1.30, p = n.s.$], mother age [$t(192) = .62, p = n.s.$], or adolescent age [$t(191) = .86, p = n.s.$].

Recruitment for AAFACT—Families were recruited from across central North Carolina through community agencies, public events, local advertisements, and word-of-mouth. Specifically, a community-liaison assisted with the coordination of meetings between the project staff and leaders in the community, including those who led neighborhood and after-school programs, ministers and other personnel in local churches, and business owners (e.g., hair salons), to discuss the project aims, eligibility criteria, and procedures. Project staff also left project flyers with community leaders, as well as posted flyers in community businesses (e.g., laundromats, grocery stores), public services (e.g., city bus stops), and neighborhoods (e.g., public housing activity centers). Interested families called project staff who conducted a brief phone screen to confirm eligibility and to set-up data collection.

Participants

The participants for the current analyses were the 95 families whose non-marital coparents participated in the AAFACT Project. As shown in Table 1, single mothers were on average 38 ($S.D. = 7.26$) years of age, the mean age for participating youth was 13 years ($SD = 1.65$; 59.6% girls), and the average income for families was \$28,045.22 ($SD = 16,551.22$). Of note, families in this study had a similar income average (\$28,045 compared to \$29,233) to African American single mothers in the United States, as well as similar rates of educational attainment (college or greater: 24.5% compared to 26.2%) relative to national data on all single mother families with children under the age of 18 (Shattuck & Kreider, 2013; US Census Bureau, 2011). Given the focus of this study on better understanding the characteristics of the individuals who serve in these non-marital coparenting roles, demographic information for the coparents is presented in the *Results*.

Procedures

Families in the AAFACT project completed assessments at a conveniently located community site or in their home, according to the family preference. Mothers completed consent for their own and their child's participation. Coparents completed consent and youth completed assent forms. Audio Computer-Assisted Self Interviewing (ACASI) software and separate laptop computers were used to collect data from each family member in order to decrease the potential for biased responses and to maximize confidentiality. The AAFACT interview assessed a range of variables related to psychosocial functioning, including the current study variables. AAFACT interviews took approximately 60 to 90 minutes; each family participant was compensated \$15 for their time. AAFACT procedures were reviewed, approved, and monitored by the Behavioral Institutional Review Board.

Measures

Demographic information—Each adult family member completed a demographic measure, including their age, annual household income, education, and place of residence.

Coparenting division of labor—Both mothers and coparents reported on the division of childrearing labor using the Coparenting Division of Labor Scale (CDLS), a measure adapted from the Child Caregiving Involvement scale (Wood & Repetti, 2004) for use with non-marital coparents of adolescent children. While the original instrument included 10 items developed for parents of elementary school children, the current 13-item measure includes additional questions pertaining to the division of labor regarding monitoring and discipline (e.g., “Monitoring the child's activities, including what friends he or she is hanging around with, what clothes he or she is wearing to school, and how he or she spends free time”); however, the majority of the questions are based on those from the original measure (e.g., “Making sure the child is prepared for school in the morning, such as getting out of bed on time”) (Wood & Repetti, 2004).

The same response options used by Wood and Repetti (2004) were utilized. Each mother and coparent reported the relative level of the mother's contribution and the coparent's contributions to each childrearing task using a 5-point Likert scale: (0) My coparent always does this; I never do; (1) My coparent does this more than me; I do it about 25% of the time; (2) We each do this about equally; I do it about 50% of the time; (3) I do this more than my co-parent; I do it about 75% of the time; and (4) I always do this, my coparent never does. Wood and Repetti (2004) reported high levels of internal consistency for the original measure. The alpha coefficient for the current sample was .90 for coparent-report and .90 for mother-report.

Co(Parent) warmth/support—The Interactive Behavior Questionnaire (IBQ; Prinz, Foster, Kent, & O'Leary, 1979) was used to assess the level of warmth/support in the (co)parent-youth relationship. Each caregiver completed the short form of the IBQ, which is comprised of the 20 true/false items with the highest phi coefficients and the highest item-to-total correlations with the original 75 items of the IBQ. Scores can range from 0 to 20, and higher scores indicate higher levels of warmth and support. Prinz and colleagues (1979) and Robin and Weiss (1980) have reported adequate internal consistency and discriminant validity and the IBQ has been utilized extensively in prior research with this population (e.g., Jones et al., 2003, 2005). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha was .93 for coparent-report and .91 for the mother-report.

(Co)parent monitoring of adolescent activities—Mothers and coparents reported their monitoring of adolescent behavior using the Monitoring Scale developed by Stattin and Kerr (2000). Mother-reported and coparent-reported awareness of the adolescent's whereabouts, activities, and relationships were each assessed by nine items. The items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from “Not at All” (0) to “Always” (4). This measure has demonstrated acceptable reliability data and good test-retest correlations (e.g., Stattin & Kerr, 2000). Higher scores indicated more coparent monitoring. For the current sample, the alpha coefficient for the mother-report and coparent-report version of the measure was .80 and .82, respectively.

(Co)parent depressive symptoms—The revised version of the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CESD-R; Radloff, 1977), which was developed to assess depressive symptomatology in community populations, was used to evaluate mother

and coparent depressive symptomatology. (Co)parents rated each of the 20 items on a scale from “Rarely” (0) to “Most of the Time” (3) relative to how often they experienced a particular symptom during the past week. Items were summed with higher scores indicating greater depressive symptom severity. Although intended as a screening rather than a diagnostic measure, a CESD-R cutoff score of 16 suggests clinically significant depressive symptomatology. The CESD-R has established validity and reliability in various ethnic populations (Perreira, Deeb-Sossa, & Harris, 2005). In the current sample, the alpha coefficient was .88 for mothers and .81 for coparents.

Coparent-mother conflict—Mother-coparent conflict over childrearing was assessed using the O’Leary-Porter Scale (OPS; Porter & O’Leary, 1980). The OPS is comprised of 10 items which mothers and coparents rate on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 = *Never* to 4 = *Very Often*, with higher scores indicating more conflict. The scale primarily measures the amount of verbal hostility, along with one item assessing physical aggression, between the mother and coparent observed by the adolescent (Porter & O’Leary, 1980). The OPS has demonstrated moderately high concurrent validity (Emery & O’Leary, 1982). When used with married couples, it has a test-retest reliability of .96 and an internal consistency of .86 (Porter & O’Leary, 1980). The alpha coefficient was .86 for mother-report and .78 for coparent-report.

Youth Externalizing Problems—Externalizing problems were assessed by combining the mother- and coparent-report of the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001) and by standardizing and averaging the aggression and rule breaking subscales. Each item was rated on a 3-point Likert-type scale (0 = “not true,” 1 = “somewhat true,” or 2 = “very true”). Reliability and validity of the CBCL is well established for the internalizing and externalizing dimensions (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001). As would be expected given this is a community sample, the vast majority (91.5%) of scores on the CBCL fell within the normal range (T-score < 65); however, 2.1 % of youth were in the clinical range (T-score 70) and 5.3 % were in the borderline clinical range (T-score 65 < 70). Moreover, as highlighted elsewhere, raw scores on the CBCL were utilized for statistical analyses to better capture variability in externalizing problems in community-based samples (Hudziak, Copeland, Stanger, & Wadsworth, 2004). The alpha coefficient for the CBCL externalizing problems broadband scale for the current study was .87 for mother-report, .91 for coparent-report.

Data Analytic Plan

As missing data were less than 5% overall for main study variables, missing data were treated as ignorable (missing at random) and multiple imputation in SPSS version 21.0 was used for inclusion of all available data. Analyses across the five imputed datasets were averaged and the pooled statistics are reported for all analyses. The demographic characteristics of non-marital coparents are reported first. With the aim of demonstrating that non-marital coparents have the potential to significantly impact childrearing and youth outcomes, coparent-responses were compared to maternal responses on all of the following primary study variables: (a) daily childrearing responsibilities (i.e., division of coparenting labor); and (b) the presence of modifiable risk (i.e., depression, mother-coparent conflict)

and protective factors (i.e., (co)parent-youth relationship quality, (co)parent monitoring of youth activities). Next, the current study compared the differences in the correlations of mother-reported variables (e.g., protective and risk factors) and youth externalizing problems to coparent-reported variables (e.g., protective and risk factors) and youth externalizing problems in order to delineate the potential similarities and differences of coparent and maternal involvement in relation to adolescent externalizing problems. For these set of comparisons, the study employed meta-analytic comparison by converting r to Fisher's z' and then using a paired t test to compare the two sets of coefficients (Rosenthal, 1991). Finally, two models are examined by utilizing hierarchical regression analyses, which enables the present study to assess how factors, beginning with those most distal to the adolescent and progressing to those most proximal to the youth, are related to externalizing problems: Block 1: Demographics; Block 2: (Co)Parent Depression; Block 3: Mother-Coparent Conflict; and Block 4: Parenting (warmth/support and monitoring/control). Separate regression models for mothers and coparents were analyzed in order to compare the patterns of associations.

Results

Who do African American Single Mothers Identify as Non-Marital Coparents?

As shown in Table 1, coparents were on average nearly 50 years of age ($M = 49.1$, $SD = 15.6$) and the majority (87.2%) of coparents were female. Most (70.3%) of the coparents completed at least some college, with far fewer coparents achieving less than a high school degree (10.6%) or high school degree or the equivalent (19.1%). The majority (63.2%) of coparents were also employed at least part time, with an average income of \$36,921 ($SD = \$25,437$). Coparents included the single mother's mother (i.e., youth's maternal grandmother; 38.3%), another maternal relative (e.g., aunt; 19.1%), or some other adult (e.g., maternal friend; 36.2%). Only one coparent was identified as the youth's biological father and two coparents were identified as the mother's father (i.e., youth's maternal grandfather).

The majority (75.8%) of coparents in this study reported that they did not live with the single mother and the target adolescent; however, most coparents' residences were fairly stable, with the average coparent residing in the same zip code for nearly 13 years ($M = 12.52$; $SD = 15.88$). On average, those coparents who did not live with the single mother and child reported that they made approximately 5 visits ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 6.08$) to the family's home each week.

Does Non-Marital Coparent Involvement Compare to Single Mother Involvement?

As demonstrated in Table 2, both coparents and mothers reported being engaged in a range of childrearing activities and at similar levels. Interestingly, mothers' reports of coparent involvement revealed that higher percentages of coparents were at least equally responsible as mothers for childrearing domains, such as transportation to school and other activities (28.5%), preparing meals (23.4%), laundry (21.3%), and monitoring activities (19%) relative to other childrearing domains (i.e., helping with homework and meeting with teachers/principals).

These findings were consistent with coparents' reports of their own involvement. In fact, twenty-percent of coparents reported that they are at least equally responsible as the single mother for the following childrearing domains with the target adolescent: discipline, transportation to school and other activities, preparing family meals, and monitoring of activities. Although certainly less frequently, some coparents also reported that they were also at least equally responsible for other childrearing domains, including homework (12.8%), supervising chores (14.9%), laundry (17%), provision/selecting clothes (19.2%), meeting with teachers (7.4%), and meeting with the Principal (7.4%).

Does Coparent Involvement Afford Similar Levels of Risk and Protection as Maternal Involvement?

Two risk processes were examined: Mother (and coparent) depressive symptomatology and mother-coparent conflict. Coparent scores on the CESD-R ranged from no depressive symptoms to severe symptomatology ($M = 10.13$; $SD = 8.12$; Range = 0 – 40). Of note, 18.3 percent of coparents scored at or above the cut-point of 16, suggestive of clinically significant depressive symptoms. Similar to the coparents' scores on the CESD-R, mothers' scores ranged from no depressive symptoms to severe symptomatology ($M = 10.11$; $SD = 7.32$; Range = 0 – 34) and 21.1 percent of mothers scored in the clinically significant range. The difference between mothers and coparents scores on the CESD-R was not statistically significant, $t(95) = -.03$, *n.s.*

Similar to the findings above, non-marital coparents reported levels of coparent-mother conflict on the OPS that were relatively similar to the levels reported by the mothers. In fact, coparents reported a mean of 3.14 ($SD = 3.55$), only slightly lower than the mean ($M = 3.85$; $SD = 4.76$) for mother-report on the same construct. Ranges also varied slightly with coparents' scores ranging between 0 to 17 compared to mothers' scores, which ranged from 0 to 21. As the authors expected, however, the difference between the mother and coparent report of the OPS was not statistically significant, $t(95) = 1.57$, *n.s.*

In addition to risk processes, two protective aspects of (co)parents' involvement were assessed: (co)parent warmth/support and (co)parent monitoring of youth activities. Coparents in the current study reported a level of warmth/support with the youth $M = 17.53$; $SD = 4.29$; Range 2-20) that was slightly higher, $t(95) = 2.14$, $p < .05$, than mother's reports of their own relationships with the youth ($M = 16.21$; $SD = 4.66$; Range 0-20). Yet, coparents reported engaging in lower levels, $t(95) = -7.62$, $p < .001$, of monitoring of adolescent activities ($M = 23.97$; $SD = 6.11$; Range 11-35) than mothers ($M = 30.13$, $SD = 4.76$; Range 9-36).

Does Coparent Involvement in Childrearing Explain Adolescent Externalizing Problems?

In addition to understanding the similarities and differences among African American single-mothers and their coparents, the present study attempts to unravel the potential influence of *both* maternal and coparent involvement with regard to externalizing problems in African American youth from single-mother homes. As described earlier, the current study compared the differences in the correlations of mother-reported variables (e.g., protective and risk factors) and youth externalizing problems to coparent-reported variables

(e.g., protective and risk factors) and youth externalizing problems. For example, is the difference between the correlations of coparent depression and youth externalizing problems and maternal depression and youth externalizing problems significantly different?

For the first set of analyses comparing the differences in correlations, the authors employed a meta-analytic comparison by converting r to Fisher's z' and then using a paired t test to compare the two sets of coefficients (Rosenthal, 1991). As noted above, the correlations of interest were coparent-report of protective (i.e., monitoring and relationship quality) and risk factors (i.e., depression and coparent-mother conflict) and youth externalizing problems to mother-report of protective (monitoring and relationship quality) and risk factors (depression and mother-coparent conflict) and youth externalizing problems. The comparison revealed that the difference between the correlations of mother- and coparent-report of depression [$t(92) = -1.58, p = n.s.$], conflict [$t(92) = 1.08, p = n.s.$], monitoring [$t(92) = -0.42, p = n.s.$], and relationship quality [$t(92) = 0.51, p = n.s.$] and youth externalizing problems were not significantly different.

Finally, a model of youth externalizing problems was tested. The model was conducted for mother-report of risk and protective factors, then coparent-report. Coparent and mother income, as well as maternal education, were associated with the outcome of interest; therefore, the authors controlled for these demographic variables in the following analyses. The predictor variables were entered beginning with those most distal to the child and progressing to those most proximal to the child (Jones, Foster et al., 2007; Sterrett, Jones, Forehand, & Garai, 2010): Block 1: coparent household income, mother household income, and mother education level; Block 2: maternal (or coparent) depression; Block 3: Mother-coparent conflict (or coparent-mother conflict); and Block 4: Maternal-youth (or coparent-youth) relationship quality and maternal (or coparent) monitoring of youth activities.

As shown in Table 4, maternal depression, $\beta = .25, p < .01$, and mother-coparent conflict, $\beta = .18, p < .05$, were associated with youth externalizing problems in the block in which each variable was entered. More depressive symptoms were associated with more youth externalizing problems, as was also the case with mother-coparent conflict. However, the present study did not find that mother-youth relationship quality, $\beta = -.39, p = n.s.$, or maternal monitoring of adolescent activities, $\beta = .06, p = n.s.$, were significant predictors of youth externalizing problems when the other variables were in the model.

Using the same rationale for the model of maternal involvement, the predictor variables for the coparent model were entered in the following order: Block 1: coparent household income, mother household income, and maternal education level; Block 2: coparent depression; Block 3: Coparent-mother conflict; and Block 4: Coparent-youth relationship quality and coparent monitoring of youth activities.

As reported in Table 4, coparent depression, $\beta = .20, p < .05$, and coparent-mother conflict, $\beta = .27, p < .01$, were associated with youth externalizing problems in the block in which each variable was entered. Higher levels of depression in coparents and greater coparent-reported mother-coparent conflict were each associated with greater youth externalizing problems. Similar to the maternal involvement model, however, neither coparent monitoring, $\beta = -.13$,

n.s., nor coparent-report of coparent-youth relationship quality, $\beta = -.20$, *n.s.*, were associated with youth externalizing problems in the multivariate model.

Discussion

This study describes the experiences of non-marital coparents who participated in a study of African American single mother families with an 11 to 16 year old child, as well as the link between non-marital coparent involvement (relative to maternal involvement) and youth externalizing problems. Findings reveal that a range of family members and other adults actively participate in childrearing in African American single mother families and that coparent involvement influences youth adjustment in ways that are quite similar to our more established understanding of maternal involvement.

The majority of coparents who participated in the current study were female relatives or friends of the single mothers. The finding that maternal grandmothers are well represented among coparents is consistent with prior work with African American single mother families in poverty, as well as a growing literature regarding the role of grandmothers in coparenting (Jones, Zalot et al., 2007; Jones & Lindahl, 2011). Yet, the finding that only one coparent was a youth's biological father is different than findings from prior work with families in poverty in which 26% of coparents identified were biological fathers (Jones et al., 2003). As such, mothers with greater financial and educational resources may look to others with similar levels of resources to be coparenting partners, given that African American women are more likely to pursue and complete advanced education than African American men (e.g., Conger & Long, 2013; McDaniel, DiPrete, Buchman, & Shwed, 2011; Synder & Dillow, 2009). In addition, single mothers with greater financial and educational resources may be more likely to move away from the neighborhoods in which the youth's biological father resides, precluding the opportunity for fathers to be involved in "daily childrearing responsibilities" as we defined coparent in this study. Finally, mothers may have been more likely to identify fathers as the non-marital coparent when children were younger; however, non-resident African American fathers' involvement may wane over time (Pleck & Masciadrelli 2004).

It is interesting that the majority of coparents who participated in this study report that they do not reside with the single mother family. This fact may lead some to question the value or involvement of non-marital coparents in African American single mother families' daily lives. As a reminder, however, study inclusion criteria required mothers to identify the second most important person who was involved in daily childrearing responsibilities. Thus, although the majority of coparents did not live with the single mother and her child, single mothers conceptualized their coparents as integral childrearing partners. This is consistent with coparents reporting that their addresses are fairly stable (i.e., on average coparents reside at the same zip code for 13 years) and that they make an average of 5 visits to the single mother's home each week (i.e., most days of the week). During this time, coparents report that they are involved in a range of childrearing activities at a level that is equivalent in many cases to maternal involvement. For comparison, cross-national work indicates that regardless of household type (e.g., dual-earner family, single earner family) mothers in two-parent families did a significantly greater proportion of total household care, including

childcare, than fathers (Craig & Mullen, 2011). As such, non-marital coparents appear to have frequent opportunities to impact youth adjustment through a range of childrearing responsibilities.

With regard to the specific risk factors, both bivariate and multivariate models suggest similar patterns in terms of levels of mother- and coparent-reported depressive symptoms and conflict, as well as the link between these risk factors and youth externalizing problems. As mentioned earlier, a robust literature highlights the implications of parental depression (see England & Sim, 2009, for a review) and interparental conflict (Kerig & Swanson, 2010, for a review) for youth adjustment, and the findings of the current study extend this literature by suggesting that more attention should be given to the risk factors conferred by non-marital coparent involvement in childrearing as well. Findings suggest, however, that parental depression, whether conferred by the mother or her coparent, may display more irritable affect and engage in more angry and hostile behavior towards the youth and/or spillover into the parent's relationship with the child and, in turn, exacerbate youth vulnerability for externalizing problems. Finally, although limitations in power preclude examination, it is likely that these processes are bidirectional and cyclical. That is, we are proposing one direction of association, risk factors among mothers and coparenting influencing youth outcomes, but it is likely that youth outcomes influence maternal and coparent depressive symptomatology and conflict as well (Cummings et al., 2005).

Differences emerged, however, in the levels of protective factors reported by mothers and coparents. That is, coparents reported a higher level of relationship quality with the youth than mothers, while mothers reported greater monitoring of youth activities than coparents. Although non-marital coparents may be integrally involved in childrearing, single mothers may still bear the primary burden of childrearing, particularly those childrearing responsibilities that may be more stressful as youth transition into adolescence, such as monitoring the youth's activities. In turn, coparents may then have the luxury of focusing more exclusively than mothers on building and maintaining a relationship with the youth.

Despite the differences in levels of protective factors, however, analyses revealed that the association between maternal and coparent warmth/support with youth externalizing problems were not significantly different. These results mirrored analyses involving monitoring, such that the correlation between maternal monitoring and youth externalizing problems was not significantly different than the association between coparent monitoring and youth externalizing problems. Such findings suggest that mothers and their non-marital coparents may not be bringing the same level of protective factors to the relationship with the youth, but at the bivariate level the potential impact of these protective factors is the same. Yet, contrary to our prediction, neither warmth/support nor monitoring of the youths' activities was associated with externalizing problems in either the maternal or coparent involvement multivariate models.

This null finding was surprising given the robust literature highlighting the importance of both of these constructs for a host of youth adjustment outcomes, including youth externalizing problems (See Morris et al., 2013 for a review). One possibility, particularly given that there were associations at the bivariate level, is that our measurement strategy

(i.e., self-report) was not nuanced enough to pick up on the variability in these constructs that would be necessary to detect an association between these two domains of positive parenting and youth outcomes in a multivariate model. For example, we utilized the Stattin and Kerr (2000) Monitoring Scale, which actually assesses parental awareness of youth whereabouts and activities. Some have argued, however, that a measure of knowledge (what information does a parent have) may be a very different construct than monitoring (how does a parent get that knowledge) and may, in fact, reflect relationship quality (i.e., youth are more likely to tell parents about their whereabouts and activities in warm and supportive relationships) (Kerr, Stattin, & Ozdemir, 2012). In turn, our measure of monitoring may not be accounting for any additional variance in our theoretical model over and above our measure of parent-child relationship quality or warmth/support. Another possibility, however, may stem from research stemming from the origins of social exchange theory (Homans, 1958), which suggests that “not being nasty matters more than being nice” or that negative or conflictual aspects of relationships may have more of an impact of health and well-being than positive aspects such as support (Ewart, Taylor, Kraemer, & Agras, 1991, p. 155; Jones et al., 2005; Verhofstadt, Buysse, Devoldre, & De Corte, 2007). This line of research suggests in the current study that the detrimental effect of depressive symptoms and conflict between mothers and coparents may outweigh any potential direct protective effects of positive parenting behaviors for youth outcomes.

As with all research, this study has limitations. First, it is cross-sectional, which prohibits analysis of the stability of coparents in families over time or the extent to which their involvement waxes or wanes or simply changes over time and with youth development. In addition, this study included only families for whom single mothers identified a non-marital coparent yielding a potentially biased sample; however, even in families considered the most vulnerable, those living in poverty, 97% of African American single mothers identified a non-marital coparent (Jones et al., 2003). Third, although other approaches, such as path analysis, may have afforded a more powerful and parsimonious analysis of the contributions of mothers and non-marital coparents within a single model, limitations in sample size (i.e., sample size of 200 is recommended for path analyses to reduce the probability of Type II Errors; Norman & Streiner, 2003) led us to rely on two regression models, one for mothers and one for coparents. Ideally, one model would examine the main and interactive effects of both mothers and their non-marital coparents; however, we agree with other precedents in the field that the strengths of this approach as an initial step in the literature outweigh the limitations of a literature that does not include these individuals at all (Cumming, Davies, & Schacht, 2009; Sanders, Dittman, Keown, Farruggia, & Rose, 2010). Fourth, only approximately half of families participating in the broader study had coparents who were also willing/able to participate. While it is certainly true that participation rates of fathers in even intact families is disappointing (see Phares, Lopez, Fields, Kamboukos, & Duhig, 2005, for a review), future work would benefit from a higher coparent participation rate in order to increase potential variability in the sample, but also to increase the sample size and power for analyses. Fifth, as highlighted by the T-scores on the CBCL, this is a community-based sample and the generalizability of the findings to families in a clinical setting is unknown. That said, it is important to note that African American families are less likely to seek clinical services for youth, yet African American youth are more likely to experience

consequences (e.g., suspension from school, arrests, juvenile justice) for even low levels of externalizing behavior than European American youth (Teplin, Abram, McClelland, Dulcan, & Mericle, 2002). As such, a community-based sample is an important target of family-focused research on externalizing problems. Finally, due to the small sample size and limited power, the present study was unable to examine the extent to which coparent and/or child gender (or gender match between the coparent and child) influenced the relationships among major study variables. Currently, there is relatively little known about how the gender of the child or coparent shape the impact of the coparenting relationship and findings that are available are somewhat inconsistent and focus primarily on intact, mother-father coparent families (Riina & McHale, 2012; Stright & Bales, 2003); yet, such work is critical to understanding the specific dynamics of childrearing relations in African American single mother families and the relevant impact on youth outcomes. For example, related literatures suggest that a positive coparenting relationship between the single mother and the child's biological father (or father-figure) may be particularly adaptive for boys given the availability of a model for a healthy interpersonal relationship, as well as male role model (e.g., Holub, Tisak, & Mullins, 2008; Lahlah, Van der Knaap, Bogaerts, & Kim, 2013; Tucker, 2012).

This study also has strengths. Importantly, rather than focus on maternal marital status or father presence or absence alone, we allowed single mothers to tell us with whom she coordinated her childrearing responsibilities. There are, of course, literatures that focus on father involvement, as well as grandmother involvement, in particular; however, we believe that our strategy offers the added advantage of allowing single mothers to define the lens through which their families are defined. As such, this study utilized a culturally-sensitive family-focused contextual framework for externalizing problems among African American youth from single mother homes than models that utilize maternal marital status as a proxy for family vulnerability or examine maternal risk and protective processes alone. In addition, much of the research on African American single mothers, including research on non-marital coparenting (e.g., Jones et al., 2005; Jones, et al., 2003; Shook, Jones, Forehand, Dorsey, & Brody, 2010), focuses exclusively on very low-income families. Such an approach limits the generalizability of findings to only the most vulnerable youth and families, affording less information regarding the broader cohort of African American youth being raised in single mother homes. Accordingly, the current analyses utilized data from a sample, which reflected a broader income range among African American single mother families and, in turn, is more representative of national statistics on single mothers in the United States (Shattuck & Kreider, 2013; US Census Bureau, 2011). In fact, never-married single individuals constitute a rapidly growing segment of the African American middle class (Marsh, Darity, Cohen, Casper, & Salters, 2007) and it is critically important that family-focused research reflect this diversity. Although the small sample size and power limitations prevented the current study from analyzing income in a meaningful way, the broader literature on race and ethnicity has emphasized the need to disentangle the role of race and income regarding their influences within the family in future research (see Pinderhughes & Le, 2008, for an introduction to a special issue). Third, this study focused on African American single mother families with an 11 to 16 year old child. As noted earlier, this is an age range during which parenting and coparenting are critical to a safe

adolescent transition and the prevention of risky behaviors and outcomes (Tragesser et al., 2007). Finally, this study is the first that we know of to provide a window into the lives of the non-marital coparents in African American single mother families. Such findings suggest the importance of further attention to non-marital coparents in both basic and applied research with African American single mother families.

The potential policy and preventive implications of this study are important to consider. As highlighted by numerous reviews on the topic, substantive policy and prevention efforts have been directed to serving unmarried parents (see Carlson & Hognas, 2011; Cowan, Cowan Pruett, Pruett, & Wong, 2009; McAllister, Burgess, Kato, & Barker, 2012; McHale et al., 2012; Pruett & Donsky, 2011, for reviews). Most relevant to the current study, some preventive work has focused on improving the quality of the coparenting relationship between mothers and fathers in particular, programs such as Family Foundations (Brown, Gosling, & Feinberg, 2012) and the Pre-Birth Co-Parenting Program (Fagan, 2008) for example. Yet, far less attention has been devoted to preventive interventions to support non-marital coparenting alliances, a gap in the literature that also limits opportunities to inform policies regarding social service systems and resources (see Gleeson, Strozier, & Littlewood, 2011, for a review).

Although defining the specific content of such programming is an important direction for future work, the current findings provide some clues. First, the current findings suggest that mothers and coparents may bring a similar level of risk in particular to the family context in terms of depressive symptoms and also seem to be viewing the quality of the mother-coparent relationship the same way in terms of level of conflict, variables that also impact youth adjustment. One preventive intervention possibility then for families at-risk for externalizing problems among youth in particular would be to focus on the dyadic relationship of the single mother and her non-marital coparent (e.g., improve relationship quality, assist in conflict resolution, improve communication, etc.), an approach that may indirectly have an impact on youth outcomes as well. There is a well-established literature on the positive association between poor marital relationship quality and depression (Beach, Katz, Kim, & Brody, 2003; see Weinstock, & Tolejko, 2006, for a review) and intervention techniques that derive from this literature (e.g., Beach, Jones, Franklin, 2009; Beach & Whisman, 2012; Whisman, Johnson, Be, & Li, 2012) may provide a platform for increasing relationship quality and decreasing depressive symptomatology among non-marital coparents as well. A second approach would suggest approaching the problem from the opposite direction. That is, family-focused interventions for youth externalizing problems suggest improvement in maternal depressive symptoms as well (Gross, Shaw, Moilanen, Dishion, & Wilson, 2008; Valdez, Mill, Barrueco, Leis, Reilly, 2011). Given research to suggest that the impact of family-focused interventions may be improved by including the multiple caregivers involved in the child's life (e.g., Lundahl Tollefson, Risser, & Lovejoy, 2007; McMahan & Forehand, 2003), there is the possibility that a more triadic approach to the prevention of externalizing problems, including the mother, coparent, and youth and focusing on interactions between and among these family members may have benefits at multiple levels of child and family functioning as well.

In order to best understand how public policy and intervention work can best serve African American single mother families, more research in the area of coparenting within these families is warranted. Indeed, many questions still remain unanswered, questions such as: how do diverse coparenting alliances impact youth development over time; how does the role of coparents interact with broader contextual factors that research has identified to be pertinent to youth development (e.g., neighborhood context, academic performance, etc.); does the identity of the coparent (e.g., grandmother, biological father, sister), as well as the coparent's gender, influence the parent-coparent relationship and/or the coparent-youth relationship and, if so, how; and, finally, what is the role that the child's gender plays with regard to coparenting and its impact. Accordingly, the current study represents one next step in an unfolding subfield of research that will better inform culturally sensitive models of adjustment for the African American youth raised in single mother homes at some point during childhood or adolescence, as well as enhance consideration of tailored preventive interventions targeting multiple levels of family relations to optimize youth outcomes.

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Table 1

Sample Demographics (n = 95) for the Overall Sample.

| Variable | Coparent | | | Mother | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|------|----------|----------|------|
| | M | SD | % | M | SD | % |
| Age (years) | 49.11 | 15.60 | -- | 37.75 | 7.26 | -- |
| Gender | | | | | | |
| % Female | -- | -- | 87.2 | -- | -- | 100 |
| % Male | -- | -- | 12.8 | -- | -- | 0 |
| Residence of coparent | | | | | | |
| Living with mother (coparent) | -- | -- | 24.2 | -- | -- | -- |
| Not Living with mother (coparent) | -- | -- | 75.8 | -- | -- | -- |
| Education | | | | | | |
| Less than high school | -- | -- | 2.1 | -- | -- | 1.1 |
| Some high school | -- | -- | 8.5 | -- | -- | 7.4 |
| High school or GED | -- | -- | 19.1 | -- | -- | 8.4 |
| Some college | -- | -- | 35.1 | -- | -- | 47.4 |
| College degree | -- | -- | 24.5 | -- | -- | 21.1 |
| Some graduate school | -- | -- | 6.4 | -- | -- | 4.2 |
| Graduate school | -- | -- | 4.3 | -- | -- | 10.5 |
| Employment Status ^a | | | | | | |
| Annual Income | \$36,921 | \$25,437 | -- | \$28,045 | \$16,551 | -- |

Note:

^a Percent employed.

Table 2

Percent of Coparent Involvement in Daily Childrearing Responsibilities

| Activity | Mother-Report | | | | | Coparent-Report | | | | |
|--|---------------|------|------|-----|-----|-----------------|------|------|-----|-----|
| | 0 | 25 | 50 | 75 | 100 | 0 | 25 | 50 | 75 | 100 |
| Discipline | 48.4 | 40.0 | 8.4 | 3.2 | 0.0 | 31.9 | 44.7 | 20.2 | 1.1 | 2.1 |
| Preparing meals | 43.6 | 33.0 | 14.9 | 8.5 | 0.0 | 15.2 | 52.3 | 22.8 | 7.6 | 2.2 |
| Prepare for school | 69.1 | 10.1 | 7.4 | 3.2 | 2.1 | 63.4 | 21.5 | 10.8 | 3.2 | 1.1 |
| Homework | 55.3 | 31.9 | 8.5 | 3.2 | 1.1 | 47.9 | 39.4 | 10.6 | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| Supervising chores | 61.7 | 23.4 | 8.5 | 6.4 | 0.0 | 53.2 | 31.9 | 11.7 | 1.1 | 2.1 |
| Laundry | 63.8 | 14.9 | 11.7 | 4.3 | 5.2 | 61.7 | 21.3 | 10.6 | 4.3 | 2.1 |
| Provision/selecting clothes | 50.5 | 32.6 | 13.7 | 2.1 | 1.1 | 43.6 | 37.2 | 16.0 | 2.1 | 1.1 |
| Transportation to school | 45.7 | 25.5 | 18.1 | 7.4 | 3.2 | 43.5 | 34.8 | 13.0 | 5.4 | 3.3 |
| Transportation to community activities | 35.1 | 36.2 | 17.0 | 9.6 | 2.1 | 17.4 | 56.5 | 17.4 | 7.6 | 1.1 |
| Transportation to social activities | 40.9 | 33.3 | 12.9 | 8.6 | 4.3 | 41.9 | 37.6 | 12.9 | 6.5 | 1.1 |
| Monitoring child's activities | 51.6 | 29.5 | 18.6 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 35.1 | 43.6 | 20.2 | 0 | 1.1 |
| Meeting with teachers | 80.0 | 10.5 | 6.3 | 2.1 | 1.1 | 71.3 | 21.3 | 5.3 | 0 | 2.1 |
| Meeting with Principal | 81.9 | 9.6 | 4.3 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 79.8 | 12.8 | 5.3 | 0 | 2.1 |

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Main Study Variables

| Variables | M (SD) | Range | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|------|-------|------|-------|--------|------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1 Conflict (C) | 3.14 (3.47) | 0-17 | -- | .48** | .25* | -.06 | -.33** | -.16 | .08 | .12 | .17 | -.04 | .31** |
| 2 Conflict (M) | 3.85 (4.76) | 0-21 | -- | -- | .27* | -.25* | -.11 | -.15 | -.04 | .03 | .04 | .13 | .20 |
| 3 CDLS (C) | 9.94(7.75) | 0-52 | -- | -- | -- | .35** | -.04 | -.04 | -.04 | .05 | -.02 | .09 | .16 |
| 4 CDLS (M) | 42.99 (8.27) | 13-52 | -- | -- | -- | -- | .02 | .22* | -.11 | .43** | .02 | -.07 | -.13 |
| 5 Youth-Coparent Rel ^a | 17.60 (4.15) | 2-20 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | .26* | .29* | .07 | -.37** | -.13 | -.45** |
| 6 Youth-Mother Rel ^a | 16.23 (4.64) | 0-20 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | .04 | .36** | -.15 | -.39** | -.51** |
| 7 Coparent Monitoring | 23.97 (6.13) | 11-35 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | .03 | -.003 | -.07 | -.33** |
| 8 Maternal Monitoring | 30.13 (4.76) | 9-36 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -.07 | -.30** | -.27* |
| 9 Coparent Depression | 10.26 (8.46) | 0-40 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | .03 | .17 |
| 10 Maternal Depression | 10.11 (7.32) | 0-34 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | .38** |
| 11 Externalizing (C/M) | .0003 (.17) | -.18-1.01 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 12. Coparent Income | \$35,711 (\$28,081) | \$0-\$120,000 | .01 | -.13 | -.03 | .30* | .21 | .07 | .18 | .29** | -.08 | -.17 | -.39** |
| 13. Maternal Income | \$27,527 (\$16,873) | \$0-\$85,000 | -.01 | .05 | -.10 | .19 | .22 | .14 | .34** | .27** | .06 | -.22* | .51* |
| 14. Maternal Education | -- | -- | -.10 | -.10 | -.22 | .31** | .13 | .20 | .28* | .26** | .06 | -.23* | -.46** |

p < .05

(C) Coparent-report; (M) Mother-report

^aYouth-coparent and youth-mother relationship quality variables positively skewed, resulting in a standard deviation that yields scores that exceed the range of the measure. Given that these variables were independent variables, assumptions for regression do not require normality.

** p < .01

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Youth Externalizing Problems

| | R ² | β | 95% CI | t |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---------|--------------------|--------|
| Mother-Report Model | | | | |
| Block 1 | | | | |
| Mother Household Income | .32 | -.34 | -.000006--.0000004 | -2.37* |
| Coparent Household Income | -- | -.18 | -.000002--.0000003 | -1.55 |
| Mother Education | -- | -.17 | -.06-.01 | -1.42 |
| Block 2 | | | | |
| Maternal Depression | .06 | .25 | .002 - .01 | 2.67** |
| Block 3 | | | | |
| Mother-Coparent Conflict | .03 | .18 | .001 - .01 | 2.13* |
| Block 4 | | | | |
| Maternal Monitoring | .22 | .06 | -.004 - .009 | -0.73 |
| Youth-Mother Relationship | -- | -.39 | -.021 - .008 | -4.41 |
| Coparent-Report Model | | | | |
| Block 1 | | | | |
| Mother Household Income | .32 | -.34 | -.000006--.0000004 | -2.37* |
| Coparent Household Income | -- | -.18 | -.000002--.0000003 | -1.55 |
| Mother Education | -- | -.17 | -.06-.01 | -1.42 |
| Block 2 | | | | |
| Coparent Depression | .04 | .20 | .000- .008 | 2.17* |
| Block 3 | | | | |
| Coparent-Mother Conflict | .07 | .27 | .005 - .02 | 3.06** |
| Block 4 | | | | |
| Coparent Monitoring | .06 | -.13 | -.009 - .002 | -1.30 |
| Youth-Coparent Relationship | -- | -.20 | -.02- .001 | -1.75 |

Note:

*
p < .05**
p < .01