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Child Support Awards: Differentials and  
Trends by Race and Marital Status

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FACULTY WORKING PAPER NO. 1124

College of Commerce and Business Administration

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign


March, 1985

Child Support Awards: Differentials and Trends  
by Race and Marital Status

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This research was supported in part by a grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development #1 RO1 HD19350-01. We wish to acknowledge the excellent computer programming assistance of John Boyd and research assistance of Kee-ok Kim Han and Edwin Sexton.



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## ABSTRACT

### Child Support Awards: Differentials and Trends

by Race and Marital Status

The purpose of this paper is to examine differentials in the award of child support by race and marital status. It also evaluates the impact of the child support enforcement program, begun in 1975, on the incidence of child support awards. The analysis is based upon data from the 1979 and 1982 March/April Match Files of the Current Population Survey. According to these data, never-married mothers are significantly less likely than ever-married mothers to have a child support award, but which of the never-married do cannot readily be explained by our model. Ever-disrupted black marriages were considerably less likely than nonblack marriages to result in a child support award, but this has been changing, especially since the passage of the child support enforcement program in 1975. Finally, we find that the value of neither new nor old awards is keeping up with the cost of living or with the increase in men's earnings.



Child Support Awards: Differentials and Trends  
by Race and Marital Status

Severe economic consequences are resulting from the rapid rise in single-parent families headed by women. These families typically have fewer resources and more restricted opportunities than two-parent families, and often have little choice but to rely upon the welfare system. As a result, public attention has turned to consider the extent to which absent fathers neglect to provide for the support of their children, leaving support instead to the woman and/or the state.

The numbers of single-parent families headed by women are growing rapidly. By 1981, over 15 percent of all families were headed by a woman only (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1982, Table 60). The probability that a marriage will end in divorce is high, and until 1982 had been rising. Increasing rates of illegitimacy among the never-married also account for considerable growth in the numbers of female-headed families. Recent estimates suggest that two-fifths of children born to married women will experience the disruption of their parent's marriage and will live for some time with only their mother (Bumpass, 1984).

The incidence of poverty among single-parent families headed by a woman is far greater and is growing more rapidly than among other types of families, causing concern over "the feminization of poverty." In 1980, the median income of female-headed families was \$10,830 compared to \$23,180 for married-couple families (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1982, Table 717). Of the 6.2 million families with incomes below the poverty level in that year, almost 3 million were female-headed (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1982, Table 735). Of the 7.1 million women with children from an absent father in 1979, about 2 million had incomes below the poverty level (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981).

AFDC payments as well as a large share of benefits from other public aid programs go to support these families.

Economic well-being of these families is higher if they are awarded child support. The poverty rate in 1978 for women awarded child support was 18 percent, while for those not awarded support it was 42 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981). Unfortunately, many eligible families do not have a child support award; in 1979 only 59 percent of mothers with children present from an absent father had an award. Nonblack mothers were more likely to have an award than black mothers, and ever-married mothers were more likely than never-married mothers. Among nonblack mothers 70 percent had an award, while among black mothers only 29 percent did. Around 78 percent of ever-divorced mothers and 45 percent of separated mothers had an award, but only 11 percent of never-married mothers did (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981). While the award rate remained unchanged between 1979 and 1982 for all mothers, it rose for black mothers from 29 to 34 percent and for never-married mothers from 11 to 14 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983).

The increase in the rate of child support awards among the black and never-married populations may be due to the success of recent efforts in the area of child support enforcement. In 1975, as Title IV-D of the Social Security Act, Congress passed a program to aid in the collection of child support from absent parents and thereby to reduce the burden on the welfare system. Under the IV-D program, state agencies engage in activities to locate absent parents, to establish paternity, to establish child support obligations, and to enforce such obligations. Since its inception the program has grown considerably; thus, the increases observed in the rate of child support awards among blacks and never-married mothers may possibly be the result of federal and state efforts in this area.

The primary purpose of this paper is to examine these differentials in the award of child support between black and nonblack and between never-married and ever-married mothers. One aspect of this involves explaining the upward trend over time in the likelihood of having a child support award among blacks. A second goal of this paper is to evaluate the impact of the child support enforcement program, begun in 1975, on the incidence of child support awards. And finally, for ever-married mothers only, we analyze factors affecting the amount of their child support awards and trends over time in these amounts, assessing the extent to which they keep up with the cost of living.

Empirical studies on the determinants of child support awards have been undertaken only recently; thus, relatively little conclusive evidence is available. Gaps in our knowledge include racial and marital status differences and the effects of legislation. Beller and Graham (1985) and Cassetty (1978) both found evidence to suggest significant racial differences in the determinants of child support. Moreover, previous studies of the economic well-being of female-headed families (Ross and Sawhill, 1975; Bradbury et al., 1979) emphasize the importance of race as a factor. We know little about whether the determinants of child support differ for never-married mothers, largely black and on AFDC, from those for ever-married mothers. Significant differences between the results of Sorenson and MacDonald (1983) for AFDC mothers and Beller and Graham (1985) for ever-married mothers suggest that this may be the case. Implications for whether child support enforcement can be uniformly successful in AFDC and non-AFDC populations may depend upon any such differences.

The source of the Census estimates discussed above and the data sets upon which our analysis is based are the 1979 and 1982 March/April Match Files

of the Current Population Survey (CPS). The special April supplements to the 1979 and 1982 CPS were designed to collect detailed data from all women 18 years of age and older on their marital status, divorce history, and the award and receipt of child support and alimony payments. These data were combined in a file with the income and demographic data from the March CPS. Combining these two years of data yields a sample of 7680 mothers with own children under 21 years of age present<sup>1</sup> from an absent father, of whom 4004 are divorced or separated, 2208 are remarried and 1468 are never-married. Out of all of these families, 1163 live with parents or other relatives.<sup>2</sup> There are 1868 black families.

As shown in Table 1, there are significant differences in the percentage of women awarded child support by race and marital status. Among all women, blacks are much less likely to have a child support award than nonblacks. Part of the reason is that blacks are more likely to be currently separated or never-married--marital status groups with lower probabilities of award than the ever-divorced. Black women comprise around 61 percent of never-married mothers; furthermore, while black women comprise 35 percent of currently separated women, they make up only 11 percent of ever-divorced women. The low proportion of blacks who divorce is reflected in the considerably longer period of separation of black than of white females, 10 as compared to 2 years (Espenshade, 1983). The numbers in parentheses in Table 1 show that blacks form an increasing proportion of separated mothers, the longer ago the year of separation. However, this disproportionate membership of blacks in groups with lower probabilities of award does not completely account for all racial differences in the award of child support. There are also significant racial differences within some marital status groups. Among the ever-divorced, 81.1 percent of nonblack mothers had an award but only

62.3 percent of black mothers did. Among currently separated mothers, 49.5 percent of nonblacks had an award, while only 33.6 percent of blacks did. However, among never-married mothers, there is no racial difference in the probability of an award.

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Table 1 about here

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Table 1 also shows trends by race in the likelihood of a child support award at divorce or separation.<sup>3</sup> In general, there has been an upward trend in the probability of a child support award both among the separated and the ever-divorced. The upward trend appears more pronounced for blacks than for nonblacks; among the separated the trend appears especially strong since 1975.

In this paper we will attempt to explain these racial and marital status differences in the award of child support and these trends over time. First, we estimate the determinants of the probability of having a child support award using maximum likelihood logit for the entire sample and for ever-married and never-married mothers separately. Then, for ever-married mothers only (since so few of the never-married are awarded support), we estimate the determinants of the amount of child support due in the year prior to the survey (1978 or 1981), using ordinary least squares (OLS). Both the probability and the amount of the award are estimated with essentially the same set of explanatory variables, although by necessity somewhat different variables appear in the never-married equation. In addition to race, the explanatory variables include a vector of characteristics for the needs of the mother and her children (mother's age or age at divorce, education, and the number of children), proxy variables for the financial ability of the absent

father to provide support (education and age of the mother), and proxy variables for the legal environment, to be discussed below. We also control for current marital status (separated or remarried) and length of the separation. A definition of variables is shown in the Appendix, Table A-1.

Variables that increase the mother's needs or the absent father's ability to pay should increase the likelihood and amount of an award. Although we do not expect remarried women to differ from other women in the award of child support since remarriage occurs after the award, we control for remarriage in the regression to test this hypothesis. As suggested in Table 1, separated women are less likely than divorced women to have a child support award. Among the currently separated, those separated long ago are less likely than those separated recently to have an award. This may be due to a rising trend in the probability of an award or to the fact that women who do not divorce shortly after (say, within two years of) separation are less likely ever to obtain a formal support award.

We measure the legal environment at the time of the disruption through the use of an historical trend line. We allow this trend in the award of child support to change after the passage of the child support enforcement program in 1975 with a second trend line beginning in that year. Since the program expanded over time, we expect change to be continuous rather than show one single improvement at the time of the law's passage. This formulation allows us to separate any historical upward trend in the award of child support from an upward trend due to Title IV-D. Geographic location measures should also help to capture regional variation in the award of child support.



## EMPIRICAL RESULTS

### Probability of a Child Support Award

All else equal black mothers are less likely to have a child support award than nonblack mothers. However, all else is not equal. Blacks are also more likely to be young, never-married, to live in central cities and to have less education than nonblacks--all characteristics which reduce their chances of being awarded child support. In this section we seek to determine how much of the large observed racial difference in award probabilities can be accounted for by these other factors. In addition we look at changes over time in the probability of a child support award.

The probability of having a child support award was estimated first for our entire sample of 7680 mothers. Let  $P$  be the probability that child support is awarded or agreed to. Then the logistic function

$$P = 1/(1 + e^{-\beta X - u})$$

was estimated by maximum likelihood methods, where  $X$  is a vector of independent variables and  $\beta$  a vector of coefficients to be estimated. Table 2 presents the estimated partial derivatives of  $P$  with respect to each variable, found by multiplying the estimated  $\beta$ 's by  $\bar{P}(1-\bar{P})$ , where  $\bar{P}$  is the mean of the dependent variable. Asymptotic t-ratios appear in parentheses.

In general, these results are consistent with earlier findings on the probability of award among ever-married mothers (Beller and Graham, 1985). Older and more educated mothers are more likely to have a child support award, but the impact of age and education appear nonlinear (EDUC is positive, but COLLGRAD is negative; AGE is positive, but AGESQ is negative). The greater the number of children (PATERNR), the more likely there is a child support award. Compared to women in the West, those in the Northeast (NEAST) are less likely and those in north central states (NCENTR) are more likely to

have an award. Women in central cities (CC) are less likely to have an award.

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Table 2 about here

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Among the strongest determinants of whether or not child support is awarded are marital status, race, and ethnicity. Ceteris paribus, compared to divorced mothers, never-married mothers are 73.2 percent less likely to have an award, separated mothers are 28.5 percent less likely and those separated for more than two years are an additional 10.3 percent less likely. In this equation, remarried women appear to be less likely to have an award than divorced women; however, when we include a time trend in the model (as in column 3), this effect becomes insignificant.<sup>4</sup> Blacks are 21.1 percent less likely (in 1979) than nonblacks and women of Spanish origin are 12.0 percent less likely than non-Hispanics to have an award. For all women together, there is no evidence that the probability of being awarded child support differed between the 1979 and 1982 samples (YEAR82 is insignificant), but for black women there is some evidence of a positive trend over time: BLYEAR82 is positive and significant, indicating that a randomly selected black woman from the 1982 CPS is 7.9 percent more likely than her counterpart from the 1979 CPS to have a child support award.

The large difference between the proportion of ever-married and never-married mothers with a child support award suggests it may be important to analyze determinants of awards for these two groups separately. Moreover, since there is no information in the data on when the never-married secured their child support award, while there is information on the date of marital disruption for ever-married mothers, trends in the award of child support can only be analyzed for the latter group. Results for the never-married mothers appear in column 2 and for the ever-married in column 3.

Our findings suggest that the never-married do differ significantly from the ever-married in the award of child support. The most surprising differences are that among the never-married, black mothers are no less likely than nonblack mothers to have an award, while Hispanic mothers are less likely than non-Hispanic mothers. Moreover, the number of children does not affect award probability among the never-married. In fact according to these logit estimates very little matters for the never-married. But, we do observe a positive time trend in the award of child support for them (YEAR82 is positive and significant at the 10% level), which might reflect improved methods and greater federal and state efforts to establish paternity under the child support enforcement program.

According to the results in column 3, the strongest determinants of whether or not ever-married mothers are awarded child support when they experience a marital disruption include race, whether or not the marriage ended in divorce, and date of the disruption. Among ever-married mothers with comparable characteristics, blacks were 13.8 percent less likely to have a child support award (in 1960 or before) than nonblacks. (Racial differences will be discussed further below.) Women separated two years or less (SEP) are 25.2 percent less likely than ever-divorced women to have secured a child support award. Women separated for more than two years (SEPGT2)--the average duration of separation for whites--are an additional 5.9 percent less likely to have an award. Among ever-divorced women, as expected, those who have remarried are neither more nor less likely than the currently divorced to have an award (REMAR is insignificant). The more recent the marital disruption (TIME), the more likely that it resulted in a child support award. This evidence on trends over time in the probability of child support awards will be discussed in detail below.

## Racial Differences

The regression results in Table 2 are consistent with the evidence in Table 1 that the proportion of black women with a child support award is well below that of nonblacks and that the size of this racial difference varies across marital status groups. Among the never-married, there exists virtually no racial difference in the likelihood of having a child support award, while among the ever-married (ever-divorced and currently separated) 48.8 percent of blacks have a child support award compared with 75.9 percent of nonblacks, for a gross differential of 27.1 percentage points. The regression coefficient on BLACK in column 3 of Table 2, -13.8, indicates that almost half of this gross racial differential among the ever-married can be attributed to differences in economic, demographic and legal factors, while the other half (13.8/27.1) remains unexplained.<sup>5</sup>

The question that remains to be answered is why, until at least fairly recently, ever-disrupted black marriages were so much less likely than nonblack marriages to result in a child support award. One obvious explanation is the lower ability to pay of black than of nonblack husbands due to their lower income and higher unemployment rate. For example, the ratio of weekly earnings of black men to white men rose from 69.5 percent in 1971 to 71.9 percent in 1981 (Beller and Blau, 1984). However, it is not obvious that a lower ability to pay should preclude any award, although it should clearly reduce the award amount. Moreover, the increase in black male earnings was small compared to the extent to which the racial gap in the probability of an award has narrowed.

Another possible explanation is that black women have less incentive to seek an award than nonblack women. If the expected award is small, then women may have little incentive to incur the costs of getting it. Moreover,

the perceived need of black mothers may be less than of nonblack mothers if the former place less stigma on going on welfare than the latter (for a discussion of welfare stigma, although not as it applies to race, see Moffitt, 1983). Because the relative income of black husbands and wives is closer than for nonblacks (the earnings of black women as a percent of black men's were 67.6 percent in 1981 as compared to 52.3 percent for whites [Beller and Blau, 1984]), when a marriage is disrupted, the loss in economic status is less for black women than for nonblack women and the potential gain from the husband is less, so the overall incentive to pursue an award is less.

Another set of possible explanations for racial differences in award center on legal considerations. It may be that the legal system discriminates against black wives in the award of child support and that recent changes in the system have reversed that tendency. It is also possible that blacks avoid using the courts and lawyers or that their ability to use them is less. A related factor is that blacks tend to have a longer period of separation than nonblacks. A longer separation may attenuate the bonds between the father and his child, making an award at divorce less likely. Among other things, the father may be more difficult to locate at this point. A related consideration is that in the case of separation the father may in fact be contributing to the support of his child, but this is not formalized into a legal award, nor is his continued presence acknowledged, so that his family maintains eligibility for welfare.

#### Trends Over Time

To what extent has the probability of securing a child support award been changing over time? As mentioned above, data limitations force us to restrict our attention to the ever-married sample in answering this question. As shown earlier in Table 1, the proportion of ever-married women awarded

child support has been increasing over time and this upward trend has been stronger for blacks than for nonblacks.

These general findings are confirmed by the regression results in Table 2, column 3. The coefficients on TIME and LAW indicate that between 1960 and 1975 the proportion of ever-married nonblack women obtaining a child support award increased by 1.3 percent per year, but since 1975 the proportion has actually declined slightly--by 0.4 percent per year. The pattern is different for black women. For them, the award rate rose more slowly, by 0.8 percent per year, between 1960 and 1975--although the difference (BLTIME) is statistically insignificant; however, since 1975, the proportion of black women awarded support, unlike that of nonblacks, not only continued to increase, but the annual rate of increase doubled to 1.6 percent per year. Thus, since the passage in 1975 of the child support enforcement program, the ceteris paribus racial difference in the probability of being awarded child support narrowed significantly. This occurred in part because of a small decline in award probabilities among nonblacks and in part because of a large increase in award probabilities among blacks.

One goal of the federal child support legislation enacted in 1975 was to increase the proportion of mothers awarded child support. Our results suggest that at least through 1981 this legislation was successful in achieving this goal only among blacks. Part of the reason for this may be that at least initially state IV-D agencies concentrated their efforts on obtaining and enforcing child support awards for AFDC families--families that are disproportionately black. According to the Office of Child Support Enforcement, as of the close of fiscal year 1979, 85 percent of the 4.9 million open cases of IV-D agencies were AFDC cases. By September 30, 1983, AFDC cases still represented 78 percent of the 7.5 million open cases (U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services, 1983, pp. 76-80). While this emphasis on AFDC cases may explain why, after the passage of Title IV-D, the trend in the probability of having a child support award among blacks accelerated, what remains unresolved is why the positive time trend among nonblacks ceased.

#### Amount of Child Support Due

The 3542 ever-divorced or currently separated women awarded child support and due it in either of the sample years (1978 and 1981) are analyzed together using ordinary least squares to estimate the impact of various economic and demographic factors on the amount of child support due. The results appear in Table 3, where the dependent variable is measured as the amount of child support due in 1978 dollars and coefficients for two almost identical sets of independent variables appear in the two columns. In general, the results confirm earlier findings based upon the 1979 data only (Beller and Graham, 1985): factors which increase the likelihood of an award also tend to increase the value of the award.

Blacks are awarded significantly less child support than nonblacks. The mean amount of child support due in constant 1978 dollars was \$1832; ceteris paribus, the average amount due was \$354 less if the mother was black, or about 20 percent less. This may be fully accounted for by the lower income of black husbands, but, it could also be caused by any of the other factors discussed above such as differential attitudes toward welfare, differential use of legal services, and/or discrimination by the courts.

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Table 3 about here

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Child support awards are not keeping up with the cost of living. In real dollars, according to the coefficient on YEAR82 in column 1, the average

amount due was \$392 less (about 21 percent less) in 1981 than in 1978, ceteris paribus. The real amount due women divorced in 1979 or after (DIVYRGE79 in column 2) is higher than that due women divorced before 1979, but not enough to make a statistically significant difference.

Awards made some time ago do not keep up with inflation because they typically do not have automatic adjustment clauses in them (Krause, 1980), but what about new awards? To assess this, we split our samples into individuals whose marriages were disrupted two years prior to the survey (new disruptions), i.e., in either 1977 or 1980, and those whose marriages were disrupted three or more years prior to the survey (old disruptions), i.e., in 1976 or earlier or in 1979 or earlier. When we compare these old disruptions from the two samples, we find that for marriages disrupted in 1957-1976 the average amount due in 1978 in current dollars was \$1230 per child, while for marriages disrupted in 1960-1979 the average amount due in 1981 in current dollars was \$1427 per child. Thus, for old marital disruptions, between 1978 and 1981, the average amount of child support due per child increased 16.0 percent. During this same period, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 39 percent and median male earnings rose 28 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1982, Table 671). For marriages disrupted in 1977, the average award was \$1473 per child whereas for those disrupted in 1980 the average award was \$1656 per child. Thus, among new disruptions, the average award amount per child went up by only 12.4 percent.<sup>7</sup> Surprisingly, the real value of new awards is decreasing more than the real value of old awards.

Thus, another important finding of this paper is that the value of neither new nor old child support awards is keeping up with the cost of living or with the increase in men's earnings. This is a surprising finding that has importance for the increasing immiseration of female-headed families. Even



women with child support awards are becoming less able to support their children. An important question for the courts is why their award formulas do not seem to change over time along with prices and earnings. Part of the reason that awards are not keeping up with the cost of living may be that as the probability of getting an award increases, the average ability to pay of those with obligations decreases.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study has analyzed data from combined 1979 and 1982 April supplements to the Current Population Survey to study differences in the award of child support by race and marital status. The following findings emerge from this study:

1. The percentage of women with children present from an absent father who are awarded child support varies greatly by race and marital status. Among all women, nonblacks are more than twice as likely as blacks to have a child support award and the ever-married are almost six times as likely as the never-married to have an award. Among the ever-married, currently separated women are approximately half as likely as the ever-divorced to have secured an award.
2. The lower probability of child support awards among blacks can be attributed in part to their disproportionate membership in marital status groups with lower award probabilities. Blacks are four and one-half times as likely as nonblacks to be among the never-married and almost twice as likely to be among the currently separated.
3. Racial differences in award probabilities exist within all marital status groups except never-married. Among the currently separated, blacks are one-third less likely than nonblacks to have an award. Among the

ever-divorced, blacks are almost one-fourth less likely than nonblacks to have an award.

4. Among the never-married, unlike the ever-married, virtually no statistically-significant socioeconomic characteristics appear to distinguish mothers who have a child support award from those who do not.
5. Among all women, 50 to 60 percent of the gross racial differential in award rates can be explained by observed differences in such economic and demographic characteristics such as marital status, educational attainment, age, place of residence, and number of children. Among the ever-married, 50 percent of the gross racial difference can be explained by these factors.
6. Among the ever-married, the likelihood of being awarded child support at marital disruption has increased over time, but this upward trend has been different for blacks and nonblacks. Among nonblacks, the proportion of women obtaining a child support award increased 1.3 percent per year between 1960 and 1975 and then declined 0.4 percent per year since then. Among blacks, the proportion increased 0.8 percent per year between 1960 and 1975 and then accelerated to 1.6 percent per year since then.
7. The overall impact of Title IV-D child support legislation on the probability of obtaining a child support award has been slight between 1975 and 1982. Only among blacks have award percentages increased. This can probably be attributed to the fact that most state IV-D agencies concentrated their resources on AFDC families--families that are disproportionately black.
8. Neither new nor old child support awards are keeping up with the cost of living or with the increase in men's earnings.

Several unresolved policy issues are raised by these findings. While our regression analysis demonstrates that part of the large racial difference in award rates can be attributed to differences in socioeconomic characteristics, a sizable difference remains unexplained. While part of this may be due to differences in taste, some may also be caused by differential access to the legal system or discrimination. Another, and perhaps related, issue raised by our analysis surrounds the dissimilar trend in award rates experienced by blacks and nonblacks since 1975. If state IV-D agencies begin to direct more of their efforts towards the non-AFDC population, as recent trends suggest they might, how will this affect the gains made by blacks? A final concern raised by our analysis is the declining real value of both new and old child support awards, an important factor contributing to the increasing feminization of poverty. Continued inflation requires that old awards be renegotiated more frequently and that new awards (including court guidelines that set them) be automatically tied to rising prices or earnings.

Note

1. Actually, not all of the children are under 21 years of age. Because of the way the Census asked the questions, if there was anyone present in the household under 21, they proceeded with the questions about child support. Thus, it might be that one child is under 21 and others are over or that someone else, such as a grandchild or a child from the present marriage, was under 21 and all children from the absent father were over 21. Mothers were not asked about their children only if there were no household members under 21 present. This is not very critical for the discussion of the award of child support, although it would be more so for its receipt. For further discussion, see Graham and Beller, 1984.
2. According to an economic analysis, families would choose to live as a subfamily in the household of a relative in order to share housing costs and to take advantage of the public goods aspects, the economies of scale, and the division of labor. These are lost when for example the intact household divides into two at divorce. The absence of a child support award may be one reason that female-headed families choose to live as subfamilies. But, since current living arrangements would clearly not influence past child support awards, we can thus combine subfamilies with family heads in our sample which is especially important for the never-married group, because 43 percent did not maintain their own households.
3. The data do not allow us to determine the year in which a child support award was obtained for never-married mothers. Thus, we are unable to examine trends in the award of child support for this group. All we know is that never-married women in the 1982 sample are more likely to have an award than those in the 1979 sample. For women who are currently

separated or ever-divorced, we assume that the year of the marital disruption is the year in which child support was awarded.

4. The reason is that remarried women are likely on the average to have been divorced longer ago than divorced women, when, as we will see, the probability of securing a child support award was lower. We cannot control for time in this equation since it includes the never-married.
5. A similar calculation can be made on the results in column 1 of Table 2 for all women, but it must be done separately for each sample year due to the inclusion of the variable YEAR82. In the 1979 CPS sample, 69.6 percent of nonblack mothers and 29.3 percent of black mothers had a child support award, for a gross differential of 40.3 percentage points. The regression coefficient on BLACK of 21.1 suggests that among women from the 1979 CPS sample (YEAR82 and BLYEAR82 equal zero), about 48 percent of the gross racial difference in award probabilities can be explained by differences in economic and demographic characteristics, while the other 52 percent ( $21.1/40.3$ ) remains to be accounted for by race. In the 1982 CPS sample, 69.4 percent of nonblacks and 33.5 percent of blacks had a child support award for a differential of 35.9 percentage points. In our regression, the relevant racial coefficient for these women is 13.2 ( $-21.1$  on BLACK plus 7.9 on BLYEAR82). This suggests that about 63 percent of the gross racial difference in award probabilities can be explained by other factors in the regression, while 37 percent ( $13.2/35.9$ ) remains to be accounted for by race.
6. This figure is obtained by adding the coefficients on TIME, BLTIME, LAW and BLLAW.
7. For old disruptions, the total amount due in 1978 was \$1998 for a sample of 1131; this increased in 1981 to \$2212 for a sample of 1318. The

percent increase was 10.7, smaller than the increase per child because the number of children per disruption declined. For new disruptions, the total amount due in 1978 was \$2623 for a sample of 198; this increased in 1981 to \$2836 for a sample of 254. The percent increase was 7.4.

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Table 1

Percentage of Women with Children Present from an Absent  
Father Awarded Child Support by Race, Marital  
Status and Year of Disruption

	All Races	Black	Nonblack
All Women	60.1% (7680)*	31.5% (1894)	69.5% (5786)
Never-Married	12.0 (1468)	12.0 (890)	11.9 (578)
Ever-Married	71.5 (6212)	48.8 (1004)	75.9 (5208)
Currently Separated	43.9 (1336)	33.6 (473)	49.5 (863)
Separation began:			
1979-82	50.7 (481)	48.0 (100)	51.4 (381)
1975-78	48.9 (448)	38.5 (148)	54.0 (300)
1971-74	29.7 (182)	24.0 (96)	36.0 (86)
1970 or before	30.7 (225)	24.0 (129)	39.6 (96)
Ever-Divorced	79.1 (4876)	62.3 (531)	81.1 (4345)
Divorced in:			
1979-82	81.3 (918)	71.6 (95)	82.4 (823)
1975-78	82.3 (1693)	63.7 (157)	84.2 (1536)
1971-74	80.8 (1098)	66.7 (120)	82.5 (978)
1967-70	76.0 (649)	61.0 (82)	78.1 (567)
1963-66	69.8 (298)	44.1 (34)	73.1 (264)
1962 or before	58.2 (220)	41.9 (43)	62.1 (177)

Source: Tabulations from the March/April Match Files of the 1979 and 1982 Current Population Surveys.

\*Number of women.

Table 2

Effect of Selected Factors on the Probability that Child Support is Awarded to Mothers, Age 18 or Over with Children Present from an Absent Father

Independent Variables	All Mothers	Never-Married Mothers	Ever-Married Mothers
EDUC	.029 (7.80)	-.001 (0.15)	.027 (8.14)
COLLGRAD	-.069 (2.05)	-.041 (0.60)	-.067 (2.22)
NEAST	-.055 (2.58)	-.032 (1.07)	-.042 (2.16)
NCENTR	.044 (2.13)	-.024 (0.87)	.047 (2.48)
SOUTH	-.031 (1.64)	-.012 (0.42)	-.029 (1.71)
SMSA	.038 (2.21)	.012 (0.47)	.028 (1.77)
CC	-.029 (1.47)	.029 (1.15)	-.033 (1.87)
PATERNR	.037 (4.66)	.012 (1.07)	.035 (4.83)
AGE	.007 (1.62)	-.002 (0.32)	...
AGESQ	-.0001 (2.19)	.00002 (0.15)	...
AGEDIV	...	...	.001 (0.81)
BLACK	-.211 (7.99)	-.016 (0.52)	-.138 (2.55)
SPANISH	-.120 (4.34)	-.106 (2.33)	-.075 (2.97)
YEAR82	-.007 (0.47)	.053 (1.87)	...
BLYEAR82	.079 (2.43)	-.016 (0.44)	...
NEVMAR	-.732 (28.09)	...	...

Table 2 (continued)

Independent Variables	All Mothers	Never-Married Mothers	Ever-Married Mothers
REMAR	-.040 (2.26)	...	-.013 (0.81)
SEP	-.285 (12.31)	...	-.252 (11.62)
SEPGT2	-.103 (3.60)	...	-.059 (2.17)
TIME	...	...	.013 (5.45)
LAW	...	...	-.017 (3.32)
BLTIME	...	...	-.005 (1.09)
BLLAW	...	...	.025 (2.29)
Likelihood Ratio Test	2755.45**	24.72*	958.68**
Sample Size	7680	1468	6094
Mean of Dependent Variable (AWARDCS)	.601	.120	.717

\*Significant at the 5% level.

\*\*Significant at the 1% level.

Table 3

Factors Determining Amount of Child Support Due  
for Ever-Divorced and Currently Separated  
Women Due Support in 1978 or 1981

Independent Variables	(1)	(2)
EDUC	124.66 (8.92)	125.89 (8.99)
NEAST	261.73 (2.79)	263.16 (2.80)
NCENTR	119.71 (1.42)	123.43 (1.47)
SOUTH	90.99 (1.10)	92.65 (1.12)
SMSA	239.95 (3.36)	240.63 (3.37)
CC	-53.61 (0.63)	-53.71 (0.63)
PATERNR	494.71 (14.00)	492.22 (13.91)
AGEDIV	18.08 (4.36)	18.04 (4.35)
YEARSDIV	-53.74 (6.45)	-48.68 (5.38)
NEWDIV	-459.89 (5.05)	-490.91 (5.24)
REMAR	8.14 (0.12)	15.42 (0.22)
BLACK	-353.50 (3.27)	-321.71 (2.60)
SPANISH	-136.90 (0.99)	-129.25 (0.93)
YEAR82	-391.99 (6.42)	-447.72 (6.16)
DIVYRGE79	...	156.66 (1.54)

Table 3 (continued)

Independent Variables	(1)	(2)
BDIVYRGE79	...	-130.18 (0.57)
CONSTANT	-714.69 (2.98)	-757.06 (3.14)
$\bar{R}^2$	.11	.11
Sample Size	3542	3542
Mean of Dependent Variable (CHSUPDUE)	\$1832.00	\$1832.00

## Table A-1

## Definition of Variables

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AWARDCS	= 1 if child support is awarded and 0 otherwise.
EDUC	= number of years of school completed by the woman.
COLLGRAD	= 1 if woman is a college graduate and 0 otherwise.
SPANISH	= 1 if woman is of Spanish origin and 0 otherwise.
NEAST	= 1 if woman lives in the Northeast and 0 otherwise.
NCENTR	= 1 if woman lives in northcentral states and 0 otherwise.
SOUTH	= 1 if woman lives in the South and 0 otherwise.
SMSA	= 1 if woman lives within an SMSA and 0 otherwise.
.CC	= 1 if woman lives within the central city of an SMSA and 0 otherwise.
PATERNR	= number of children under 21 fathered or adopted by ex-husband who are living with their mother (or from absent father for never-married).
REMAR	= 1 for remarried mothers and 0 otherwise.
NEVMAR	= 1 for never-married mothers and 0 otherwise.
AGEDIV	= woman's age at divorce or separation.
SEP	= 1 for currently separated women and 0 otherwise.
SEPGT2	= 1 for women currently separated more than two years.
BLACK	= 1 if woman is black and 0 otherwise.
YEARSDIV	= years since the divorce or separation.
NEWDIV	= 1 if the divorce or separation occurred during the year prior to the CPS survey.
AGE	= woman's current age.
AGESQ	= AGE squared.
CHSUPDUE	= dollars of child support due in 1978 or 1981.
DIVYRGE79	= 1 if the divorce or separation occurred in 1979 or later and 0 otherwise.
BDIVYRGE79	= BLACK*DIVYRGE79.

Table A-1 (continued)

YEAR82 = 1 if the observation is from the 1982 March/April match file, and  
0 otherwise.

BLYEAR82 = YEAR82\*BLACK.

TIME = last two digits of divorce or separation year minus 60, or 0 if  
year of marital disruption is before 1961.

LAW = last two digits of divorce or separation year minus 74, or 0 if  
year of marital disruption is before 1975.

BLLAW = BLACK\*LAW.

BLTIME = BLACK\*TIME.

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