



Stepfamily Processes and Youth Adjustment: The Role of Perceived Neighborhood Collective Efficacy

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Healthy youth development is cultivated in numerous social environments. Families are generally considered the most proximal context in which such development unfolds (Cox & Paley, 1997; Lippold & Jensen, 2017). Yet, the United States has seen a proliferation of family structural transitions and complexity. This phenomenon is due, in part, to persistently high rates of relationship dissolution and repartnering, along with increasing rates of cohabitation, non-marital child-bearing, and multiple-partner fertility (Brown, Stykes, & Manning, 2016; Cherlin, 2010). As a result of these trends, youth experience an average of one family structural transition by age 13 (Brown et al., 2016). Family instability is even more prevalent among families who experience socioeconomic disadvantage (Manning, Brown, & Stykes, 2014).

The transition to stepfamily life is especially common (Teachman & Tedrow, 2008). Stepfamilies are formed when one or both adults in a new committed relationship bring a child or children from a previous relationship (Ganong & Coleman, 2017). Nearly one-third of all youth are estimated to reside in a stepfamily household at some point before reaching legal adulthood (Pew Research Center, 2011). Importantly, stepfamilies often grapple with coparental conflict, disagreements between parents and stepparents on parenting strategies, conflict between youth and new stepparents, declines in parent-child relationship quality, and other challenges (Coleman, Ganong, & Russell, 2013; Jensen & Shafer, 2013; Papernow, 2013). Consequently, youth in stepfamilies are at a heightened risk of experiencing maladjustment across indicators of psychological and behavioral well-being (Hoffman, 2002, 2006; Jeynes, 2006; Tillman, 2007). Thus, promoting youth adjustment in stepfamilies is an important focus of ongoing scholarly and clinical work.

Family processes have been widely identified as a primary mechanism by which complex family structures, such as stepfamilies, exert influence on youth adjustment (Coleman et al., 2013; Hetherington, Bridges, & Insabella, 1998). Extant research largely has focused on how biological parents, often resident mothers, exert influence on youth well-being via interactional and relational processes; however, youth in stepfamilies generally interface with numerous parental figures, including a resident parent, a resident stepparent, and a non-resident parent. Few extant studies have examined complex family structures holistically as

developmental contexts for youth, and important opportunities remain to assess how the quality of relationships across numerous parent-child dyads exerts influence on youth adjustment. A particular focus on the adolescent period in this line of research is also warranted on several fronts. For one, adolescent stepchildren tend to experience a greater amount of challenges in complex family structures relative to youth at earlier stages of development (Jensen & Howard, 2015). In addition, adolescence is a formative stage of development with significant brain plasticity, biological and social changes, and an ongoing sensitivity to social determinants of health (Sawyer et al., 2012).

Another glaring gap in the literature is research by which youth in stepfamilies are examined in the context of their larger social environments, such as neighborhoods. This gap is notable, as neighborhood quality has plausible implications for stepfamily functioning and youth well-being. Perceived neighborhood collective efficacy, or “social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good,” might be a particularly influential feature of stepfamilies’ neighborhood environment (Sampson et al., 1997, p. 918). Because stepfamilies often must navigate coparental relationships and legal custody arrangements—issues that transcend single households and environments—neighborhood quality might exert distinct influence on stepfamilies and their youth in comparison to biological nuclear families. Although shared custody arrangements following union dissolution have become increasingly common, mothers continue to retain sole, primary, or majority custody of their children (Cancian, Meyer, Brown, & Cook, 2014). Thus, the quality of mothers’ neighborhoods might be especially worthy of focus when examining links between perceived neighborhood quality, family relationship quality, and youth adjustment in mother-stepfather families—the makeup of nearly 80% of all stepfamilies (Kreider & Ellis, 2011).

Consistent with ecological theory, families operate in overlapping social contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The quality of these social contexts and the connections between them can influence the probability that families and youth will experience desirable outcomes over time (Mancini & Bowen, 2013). Indeed, individuals engage in ongoing transactional and “proximal processes” in and with their social environments, including neighborhoods and communities (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Consequently, researchers have been admonished to “put families into place” by overtly modeling various neighborhood effects (Mancini & Bowen, 2013; Noah, 2015).

The purpose of the current study was to examine three plausible functions of perceived neighborhood collective efficacy with respect to youth in stepfamilies: an ability to (a) *prevent* maladaptive patterns of stepfamily processes, (b) *promote* stepchildren’s adjustment beyond the influence of stepfamily processes, and (c) *protect* stepchildren’s adjustment when faced with maladaptive patterns of stepfamily processes (i.e., moderating influence). With respect to the first function, the term “prevent” is used loosely and not intended to imply causality. Figure 1 displays each of the three plausible functions. To begin, associations between key stepfamily processes and youth adjustment are highlighted. Then, a review of research and theory is presented to support the investigation of each of the three proposed functions of neighborhood collective efficacy summarized above.

Stepfamily Processes and Youth Adjustment

The literature highlights the primacy of at least four central dyadic relationships in stepfamilies: resident parent-child, stepparent-child, nonresident parent-child, and stepcouple relationships. Processes within each of these relationships have been linked to stepfamily functioning and youth well-being. With respect to youth and their resident parent, high-quality parent-child relationships can provide youth with a sense of stability and support in stepfamilies, reduce youths' stress, bolster youths' psychological well-being, and create a safe place from which to explore a relationship with a new stepparent (Jensen & Harris, 2017a; Jensen & Shafer, 2013; Jensen, Shafer, & Holmes, 2017).

Stepparent-child relationships are often viewed as the crux of stepfamily stability; however, these relationships are highly variable and take time to develop (Ganong, Coleman, & Jamison, 2011; Jensen & Howard, 2015; Papernow, 2013). When high-quality and mutually satisfying stepparent-child relationships are acquired, they can be very rewarding for stepparents and youth (Papernow, 2013). Close and affectionate stepparent-child relationships are also associated with fewer youth internalizing problems, externalizing problems, and physical health problems (Bzostek, 2008; Jensen & Harris, 2017a, 2017b; Jensen, Lippold, Mills-Koonce, & Fosco, 2018; King, 2006).

Youth well-being is also promoted when youth perceive high levels of closeness with a nonresident parent, often fathers (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999). Importantly, complications in nonresident parent-child relationships can arise in connection to legal custody arrangements and the quality of the coparental relationship (Sobolewski & King, 2005). Youth appear to fare best when all parental figures are cordial and avoid overt conflict (Dunn, O'Connor, & Cheng, 2005).

The quality of the stepcouple relationship is also central to establishing stepfamily stability and youth well-being. Conflictual stepcouple relationships have been linked to youth internalizing and externalizing problems (Dunn et al., 2005). Conversely, high-quality stepcouple relationships marked by infrequent conflict and agreement on parenting strategies have been linked to youth well-being and a greater willingness among youth to form a relationship with a new stepparent (Jensen & Harris, 2017a; Jensen & Shafer, 2013).

Although the importance of each of the dyadic relationship just reviewed has been acknowledged, relatively little is known about common patterns or constellations of dyadic relationship quality in stepfamilies. As a result, researchers have recently applied a holistic or person-oriented perspective to the investigation of central dyadic relationships in stepfamilies as a developmental context for youth. These investigations have yielded meaningful typologies that help capture the complex realities of stepfamily relationships (Amato, King, & Thorsen, 2015; Jensen, 2017). One recently identified typology highlighted four distinct patterns of relationship quality and interdependencies across mother-child, stepfather-child, nonresident father-child, and stepcouple relationships (see Jensen, 2017 and Table 1 for methodological details). The four patterns were *residence-centered*, *inclusive*, *unhappy couple*, and *parent-child disconnection*. The *residence-centered* pattern was marked by high-quality relationships across dyads in the residence; that is, mother-child, stepfather-

child, and stepcouple relationships. This pattern also yielded a positive correlation between the quality of the mother-child and stepfather-child relationships. The *inclusive* pattern was marked by high-quality relationships across all four dyads, with an especially high-quality relationship between youth and their nonresident fathers. Some residential relationships in this pattern were positively correlated (i.e., positive correlations between mother-child relationship quality and stepfather-child relationship quality and nonresident father-child relationship quality). The *unhappy couple* pattern was marked by a very low-quality stepcouple relationship and a negative correlation between nonresident father-child and stepcouple relationship quality. The *parent-child disconnection* pattern was marked by low quality parent-child relationships, with especially low-quality relationships between youth and their mothers and stepfathers. This pattern also yielded a negative correlation between the quality of mother-child and nonresident father-child relationship. Importantly, youth embedded in either the *unhappy couple* or *parent-child disconnection* patterns reported higher levels of depression, higher levels of delinquency, and lower levels of self-esteem concurrently and over time—from adolescence to young adulthood (Jensen, 2017; Jensen & Lippold, 2018). These four patterns are the focus of the current study, and Table 1 provides a detailed summary for each pattern.

Neighborhood Environments and Stepfamily Processes

The environmental-stress model posits that the quality of the neighborhood environment exerts influence on parenting and family processes (Noah, 2015). Perceptions of neighborhood collective efficacy, which comprises elements of both social control and social cohesion, might be particularly influential in shaping family processes. Consistent with this view, Mancini and Bowen (2013) highlight the concept of “family connections,” which posits that families are strengthened and supported when they have close ties to their neighbors and neighborhoods, or strong neighborhood social cohesion. Past research has linked perceptions of this component of neighborhood collective efficacy to indicators of family cohesion and functioning, lower levels of parent-child conflict, and parents’ ability to engage in supportive parenting (G. Bowen, N. Bowen, & Cook, 2000; N. Bowen, G. Bowen, & Ware, 2002; Deng et al., 2006; O’Neal, Mallette, & Mancini, 2018). Moreover, higher levels of perceived neighborhood social control and social cohesion (as captured in an index of neighborhood social capital) have been linked to lower levels of neglectful parenting, psychologically harsh parenting, and domestic violence (Zolotor & Runyan, 2006). Thus, perceived neighborhood collective efficacy can promote positive interactional processes within both parental and parent-child subsystems.

On the other hand, non-cohesive, instable, or negative neighborhood environments can exacerbate family stress, increase parental burden, stir up parental conflict, induce more negative exchanges between parents and their children, and prompt parents to reduce involvement with other external institutions—further diminishing social support (G. Bowen et al., 2000; Brodsky, 1996; Riina, Lippert, & Brooks-Gunn, 2016). Suboptimal neighborhood environments might also prompt parents to assert additional control over their adolescent children in an effort to protect them. This dynamic can generate additional family stress and parent-child conflict, as adolescents tend to strive for greater levels of autonomy (N. Bowen et al., 2002). Taken together, it was hypothesized that higher levels of perceived

collective efficacy would be associated with stepfamily-process constellations marked by higher-quality parent-child and couple relationships, such as those represented in the *residence-centered* and *inclusive* patterns reviewed earlier. Importantly, as shown in many of the studies just reviewed, individual *perceptions* of neighborhood characteristics can influence behavior and interactions in family contexts (N. Bowen et al., 2002). Thus, the current study emphasized parent and youth perceptions of neighborhood collective efficacy (although the utility of aggregated measures of neighborhood-level characteristics is also acknowledged).

Neighborhood Environments and Youth Adjustment

Social disorganization theory posits that youth adjustment and behavior are also influenced directly by the perceived characteristics of the neighborhood environment, such as features of collective efficacy (Furstenberg, & Hughes, 1997; Nash & Bowen, 1999; Sampson et al., 1997). For example, socially disorganized neighborhoods can (a) generate more opportunities for youth to engage in delinquent behaviors and (b) fail to effectively activate informal social control due to a lack of social cohesion and collective trust (Nash & Bowen, 1999; Sampson et al., 1997). Conversely, socially organized and cohesive neighborhoods can generate a social climate optimal for promoting youth behavioral health (Edwards & Bromfield, 2009). From a social capital perspective (J. Coleman, 1988), youth can accrue significant social capital from positive relationships in the neighborhood environment that serve to promote their psychological well-being, “above and beyond the effects of social capital within the family alone” (Derauf et al., 2016; N. Bowen et al., 2002, p.471). Consistent with this view, past research has linked higher levels of perceived neighborhood collective efficacy with higher levels of youth self-efficacy, lower levels of youth internalizing problems, and decreased risk for youth symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (Derauf et al., 2016; Dupéré, Leventhal, & Vitaro, 2012).

Moreover, the Search Institute has explicated key building blocks of healthy adolescent development, or developmental assets, that help youth grow up as healthy, caring, and responsible individuals (Search Institute, 2007). These assets include neighborhoods in which youth possess caring relationships with neighbors (i.e., caring neighborhood) and neighbors take responsibility for monitoring youth behavior (i.e., neighborhood boundaries; Search Institute, 2007)—core features of collective efficacy. In the context of complex and demanding family structures, such as stepfamilies, a high-quality neighborhood environment might be an especially salient resource for youth. Indeed, youth might benefit from the support and stability generated from informal social control and social cohesion in the neighborhood environment as they adjust to stepfamily life. High-quality neighborhood environments might confer upon youth significant adjustment benefits, independent of the influence of stepfamily processes. Thus, it was hypothesized that higher levels of perceived collective efficacy would exert positive and direct influence on youth adjustment, even beyond the influence of the various stepfamily-process constellations in which youth might be embedded.

Neighborhood Environments as a Moderating Influence

As families adjust to shifts in structure, the divorce-stress-adjustment perspective highlights factors that can attenuate (i.e., moderate) the extent to which stressful family processes exert negative influence on youth adjustment (Amato, 2000). Moderating factors include interpersonal resources, such as positive relationships with neighbors and members of the community. Thus, individuals embedded in neighborhoods with high levels of collective efficacy might be protected, in part, against the negative influence of maladaptive family processes. Indeed, research has shown that neighborhood involvement and social cohesion buffer the link between hostile parenting and youth externalizing problems (Silk, Sessa, Morris, Steinberg, & Avenevoli, 2004). Families in which interactional processes are negative, stressful, or demanding, might draw on resources external to the family to assist them in fulfilling key functions, such as caregiving responsibilities for youth (Patterson, 2002). Moreover, although dysfunctional families might be less able to monitor youth behavior and promote youth adjustment, being embedded in neighborhoods with high levels of social control and social cohesion might compensate and buffer negative outcomes for youth. Thus, it was hypothesized that higher levels of perceived neighborhood collective efficacy would buffer the negative influence of stepfamily-process constellations marked by low-quality and conflictual dyadic relationships (i.e., *unhappy couple* and *parent-child disconnection* patterns) on youth adjustment.

Current Study

Although a growing body of literature highlights the influential role of neighborhood contexts in shaping youth and family experiences, the current study fills gaps in the literature by taking this investigation into a fast-growing developmental context for youth: stepfamilies. Rooted in several theoretical perspectives and past research, it was hypothesized that higher levels of perceived neighborhood collective efficacy would (a) be associated with a greater likelihood of stepfamilies exhibiting higher-quality relationships in both parental and parent-child subsystems (such as features of the *residence-centered* or *inclusive* patterns; Path A in Figure 1), (b) exert positive and direct influence on youth adjustment, even beyond the influence of stepfamily processes (Path B in Figure 1), and (c) buffer the negative influence of the *unhappy couple* and *parent-child disconnection* patterns on youth adjustment (Path C in Figure 1). Importantly, various socio-demographic characteristics could potentially confound or obfuscate any one of these hypothesized associations. Moreover, youth in stepfamilies are embedded in other social environments beyond the neighborhood context. These additional environments include youths' peer groups and relationships with teachers and schools. Thus, the substantive associations in this study were examined net the influence of socio-demographic characteristics and youths' associations with peers, teachers, and schools.

Methods

Data and Sample

Data for this study came from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health; Harris et al., 2009). Information was used from in-home youth

interviews and parent questionnaires at Wave I (1994 to 1995), as well as youth in-home interviews at Wave II (1996; approximately one year later). Respondents for in-home interviews at Wave I were randomly selected from a nationally representative in-school sampling frame of adolescents. In-home interviews with youth ($N = 20,745$) incorporated laptop computers and included questions about youth peer relationships, family dynamics, neighborhood characteristics, health behaviors, and other indicators of development and well-being. In-home interviews with respondents at Wave II used similar interview procedures. Parent data at Wave I were collected using interviewer-assisted, op-scanned questionnaires that were issued primarily to resident mothers. Questionnaires included items about neighborhood quality, household income, education, employment, and parents' romantic relationships.

The analytical sample from which the four patterns of stepfamily processes were originally estimated consisted of adolescents who reported living primarily with their biological mother and a stepfather at Wave I, who had a living nonresident father, and who had valid sampling weights at Wave I to generate representative parameter estimates ($n = 1,182$; Jensen, 2017). This sample of adolescents had a mean age of 15.64 years ($SD = 1.70$). Nearly 53% of the sample was female and 74% of the parents indicated being married to the stepparent (as opposed to unmarried cohabitation or missing response). Nearly 62% of adolescents identified as non-Hispanic White, 19% as non-Hispanic Black, 3% as non-Hispanic Asian, 2% as non-Hispanic Other/Native American, and 14% as Hispanic. The average length of time the adolescent reported living in the same household as the stepfather was 6.72 years ($SD = 4.11$ years).

This original sample was used to examine concurrent associations between perceived neighborhood collective efficacy and patterns of stepfamily processes. A large subset of the original sample was also used to assess the longitudinal influence of neighborhood collective efficacy as a direct predictor of youth adjustment and as a moderator of associations between patterns of stepfamily processes and youth adjustment outcomes. Adolescents with adjustment information collected at Wave II, and who had valid sampling weights related to Waves I and II to generate representative parameter estimates, comprised the second analytical sample ($n = 881$; mean age = 15.41 years, $SD = 1.60$; 52% female; 62% non-Hispanic White). The cases necessarily omitted from the first analytical sample ($n = 301$) did not significantly differ from the second analytical sample ($n = 881$) with the exception of two demographic characteristics: the omitted cases possessed (a) a higher average age (16.32 years versus 15.41 years) and (b) a lower average household composition (3.49 household residents versus 3.86). See Table 2 for more details related to descriptive statistics for the cross-sectional and longitudinal samples.

Measures

Perceived Neighborhood Collective Efficacy.—Nine items were used to measure perceptions about the social control and social cohesion components of mothers' neighborhood collective efficacy (Duncan et al., 2003; Sampson et al., 1997). Four of the nine items came from parent reports, as follows: "If you saw a neighbor's child getting into trouble, would you tell your neighbor about it?", "If a neighbor saw your child getting into

trouble, would your neighbor tell you about it?”, “In this neighborhood, how big a problem is litter or trash on the streets and sidewalks?”, and “How much would you like to move away from this neighborhood?” The remaining five items came from youth reports, as follows: “You know most of the people in your neighborhood,” “In the past month, you have stopped on the street to talk with someone who lives in your neighborhood,” “People in this neighborhood look out for each other,” “On the whole, how happy are you with living in your neighborhood,” and “If, for any reason, you had to move from here to some other neighborhood, how happy or unhappy would you be?” For uniformity, and consistent with recent studies (Derauf et al., 2016), all items were recoded to have binary response options, such that respondents would be indicating either an affirmative or non-affirmative response to each of the nine items. Then, using an item response theory (IRT; Edwards, 2009) approach, a one-parameter logistic model was used to construct a continuous measure (i.e., latent scores as indicated by the model theta $[\theta]$) of neighborhood collective efficacy across the nine items (StataCorp, 2015). The more parsimonious one-parameter measure was favored over the two-parameter measure given the high correlation between the two measures (i.e., $r = .92$, $p < .001$) and the consistent substantive findings associated with both measures.

Patterns of Stepfamily Processes.—Another focal independent variable was membership within one of four patterns, representing distinct constellations of dyadic relationship quality in mother-stepfather families (summarized in the Introduction section and Table 1), labeled (a) *residence-centered*, (b) *inclusive*, (c) *unhappy couple*, and (d) *parent-child disconnection*. The patterns were originally estimated using factor mixture modeling with four latent factors representing mother-child, stepfather-child, nonresident father-child, and stepcouple relationship quality; each latent profile or pattern had unique inter-factor correlations (refer to Jensen, 2017 and Table 1 for details about the analysis and specific measurement items). Dummy-coded variables were produced to represent membership within any of the four stepfamily-process patterns (note that the original factor mixture model yielded relatively high levels of classification certainty and precision, as indicated by mean posterior probability values, which ranged from .83 to .89; Nagin & Odgers, 2010).

Depression.—Depression was a latent variable measured with nine items ($\alpha = .81$), collected at Wave II, from the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977). The items asked respondents to indicate along a four-point scale (0 = never or rarely, 3 = most or all of time) how frequently during the last week they (a) felt bothered by things that don’t usually bother them, (b) felt that they could not shake off the blues, (c) felt that they were as good as other people (reverse-coded), (d) had trouble keeping their mind on what they were doing, (e) felt depressed, (f) felt that they were too tired to do things, (g) enjoyed life (reverse-coded), (h) felt sad, and (i) felt that people disliked them. Higher values indicated higher levels of depression.

Self-Esteem.—Self-esteem was a latent variable measured with six items ($\alpha = .85$), collected at Wave II, that asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement along a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with respect to the following

statements: (a) you feel like you are doing everything just about right, (b) you feel loved and wanted, (c) you feel socially accepted, (d) you have a lot of good qualities, (e) you have a lot to be proud of, and (f) you like yourself just the way you are.

Delinquency.—Delinquency was measured at Wave II with seven items that asked respondents to indicate how often in the past 12 months they had (a) deliberately damaged property that didn't belong to them, (b) stole something worth more than \$50, (c) went into a house or building to steal something, (d) used or threatened to use a weapon to get something from someone, (e) sold marijuana or other drugs, (f) stole something worth less than \$50, or (g) took part in a group fight. Consistent with other recent studies (e.g., Amato et al., 2015), the seven items were dichotomized (0 = never, 1 = at least once) and summed to create a count index of delinquent behaviors (range: 0 – 7).

Covariates.—In all models, the following covariates from Wave I were included: youths' racial or ethnic identity (dummy-coded variables representing non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic White [reference], non-Hispanic Asian/Other, and Hispanic), youth age (continuous measure in years), youth sex (1 = female, 0 = male), mothers' education (dummy-coded variables representing less than high school, high school completion [reference], some college, and college degree or more), household composition (a continuous indicator of the number of household residents), and household income (continuous measure in thousand-dollar units; natural-logged to adjust for positive skew). To account for previous family transitions (e.g., Osborne & McLanahan, 2007), a continuous covariate from Wave I was included to indicate the number of mothers' relationships in the past 18 years (it is possible that some transitions in mothers' relationships occurred prior to the birth of the adolescent). Two items from Wave I that assessed the extent to which youth felt that their teachers and friends cared about them were also included as covariates; response options ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). Another school-related covariate at Wave I was included, school climate, which was a six-item scale ($\alpha = .71$) that asked youth to indicate the overall quality of the school environment (i.e., how close they felt to people at school, if they felt like they are a part of their school, whether students were prejudiced, whether they are happy to be at their school, whether teachers treat students fairly, and whether they feel safe at school). For models assessing Path A, an item from Wave I was included as a covariate that asked parents to indicate if they had grown up in the current neighborhood (1 = yes, 0 = no). For models assessing Paths B and C, an item from Wave II was included as a covariate that asked parents to indicate if they had moved since Wave I (1 = yes, 0 = no). Table 2 displays descriptive statistics associated with all study variables.

Data Analysis

The analyses were conducted in three steps. First, multinomial logistic regression was used to assess associations between perceived neighborhood collective efficacy and patterns of stepfamily processes (Path A in Figure 1). The multinomial logistic regression model was estimated three times with a different reference outcome category specified. The first model specified the parent-child disconnection pattern as the reference outcome category; the

second model specified the unhappy-couple pattern as the reference outcome category; and the third model specified the inclusive pattern as the reference outcome category.

Second, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to estimate associations between perceived neighborhood collective efficacy and youth adjustment (Path B in Figure 1), net the influence of covariates and stepfamily processes. Three sets of models were estimated at this step. The first set of models included a latent endogenous construct for depression at Wave II (Model 1). The second set of models included a latent endogenous construct for self-esteem at Wave II (Model 2). The third set of models included an observed endogenous variable for delinquency at Wave II (Model 3). All three sets of models compared results before and after including patterns of stepfamily processes to determine if perceived neighborhood collective efficacy retained its influence on youth adjustment. Because items used to measure depression and self-esteem were ordinal, a mean- and variance-adjusted weighted least squares (WLSMV) estimator and polychoric input correlation matrix were used for Models 1 and 2 (Bovaird & Koziol, 2012). Because delinquency was a count variable and significantly over-dispersed (per preliminary analyses), a negative-binomial specification and maximum likelihood estimator with robust standard errors (MLR) were used for Model 3.

For the third step, a series of multiple-group comparison analyses were conducted to assess perceived neighborhood collective efficacy as a moderator of the association between patterns of stepfamily processes and youth adjustment (Path C in Figure 1). Per preliminary assessments, perceived neighborhood collective efficacy was dichotomized such that individuals with below-average levels were coded as “low” and participants with average or above-average levels were coded as “high” (a three-group approach was also tested; with groups representing low, average, and high levels of perceived neighborhood collective efficacy; but this approach yielded model estimation problems). The dichotomized item was used as the grouping variable for moderation analyses, which included patterns of stepfamily processes as dummy-coded independent variables. Three models, one for each adjustment outcome, were estimated in the same manner as described in step-two of the analysis plan. Likelihood ratio tests and Wald tests were used to assess measurement and structural invariance, or whether measurement and structural parameters were significantly different between participants in the perceived low- and high-collective efficacy groups (Chou & Huh, 2012).

For models using the WLSMV estimator, the following criteria were indicative of acceptable model fit: Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) values greater than or equal to .90 (values at or above .95 were indicative of excellent fit), and a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) value less than or equal to .06 (with the upper bound of the 90% confidence interval less than or equal to .06; West, Taylor, & Wu, 2012). Each model accounted for potential within-school clustering among participants, and incorporated appropriate sampling weights to produce nationally representative estimates of youth in high school during Wave I who resided in mother-stepfather families. Preliminary calculations indicated that each model was over-identified and sufficiently powered for testing hypotheses about model fit (Lee, Cai, & MacCallum, 2012). Data management was conducted using Stata 14, and all multivariate modeling was conducted using Mplus 7.4.

There were relatively few missing values in both the sample of adolescents with data from Wave I and the sample of adolescents with data from Waves I and II, resulting from respondents opting not to respond. Results from Little's test provided evidence that missing observations were Missing Completely at Random (MCAR; Little, 1988; χ^2 distance = 78.96, $df=69$, $p=.19$ for the sample at Wave I; χ^2 distance = 54.75, $df=50$, $p=.30$ for the sample at Waves I and II). Thus, missing data was handled using full information maximum likelihood estimation for the model using the MLR estimator (Enders, 2010); pairwise deletion was used for models using the WSLMV estimator.

Results

Perceived Neighborhood Collective Efficacy and Stepfamily Processes

Table 3 displays results from multinomial logistic regression models. Recall that associations between variables in these models were cross-sectional. Results indicated that higher levels of perceived neighborhood collective efficacy were associated with a greater likelihood that families would exhibit patterns of stepfamily processes marked by higher-quality dyadic relationships. Specifically, a one-unit increase in perceived neighborhood collective efficacy was associated with a 58% increase in the odds of stepfamilies exhibiting the *residence-centered* pattern versus the *unhappy couple* pattern ($RRR = 1.58$, $p < .05$), net the influence of covariates. A one-unit increase in perceived neighborhood collective efficacy was also associated with a 60% increase in the odds of stepfamilies exhibiting the *inclusive* pattern versus the *unhappy couple* pattern ($RRR = 1.60$, $p < .05$), net the influence of covariates.

Perceived Neighborhood Collective Efficacy and Youth Adjustment

Table 4 displays results from three models, each relating to a specific form of youth adjustment at Wave II. In terms of Model 1, results indicated that perceived neighborhood collective efficacy was not significantly associated with youth depression at Wave II, net the influence of covariates. Turning to Model 2, results indicated that higher levels of perceived neighborhood collective efficacy at Wave I were associated with higher levels of youth self-esteem at Wave II, even after including patterns of stepfamily processes in the model. Specifically, net the influence of covariates and stepfamily-process patterns, for youth that differed by one standard-deviation on perceived neighborhood collective efficacy, those youth higher on perceived neighborhood collective efficacy were expected to be .17 standard-deviation units higher in self-esteem at Wave II ($b = .16$, $p < .01$, $\beta = .17$). Interestingly, perceived neighborhood collective efficacy at Wave I was not significantly associated with youth delinquency at Wave II (Model 3), neither before nor after the inclusion of stepfamily-process patterns at Wave I.

Perceived Neighborhood Collective Efficacy as a Protective Factor

In the final set of analyses, recall that perceived neighborhood collective efficacy was specified as a grouping variable to assess whether low versus high levels of perceived neighborhood collective efficacy moderated associations between stepfamily-process patterns and youth adjustment. Results from multiple-group comparison analyses indicated both measurement and structural invariance between low and high levels of perceived

neighborhood collective efficacy (as indicated by likelihood ratio tests and Wald tests). Thus, levels of perceived neighborhood collective efficacy did not significantly moderate associations between patterns of stepfamily processes and youth adjustment at Wave II, and no results associated with these analyses are reported.

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to examine three plausible functions of perceived neighborhood collective efficacy with respect to stepfamilies and their youth: an ability to (a) *prevent* maladaptive patterns of stepfamily processes, (b) *promote* stepchildren's adjustment beyond the influence of stepfamily processes, and (c) *protect* stepchildren's adjustment when faced with maladaptive patterns of stepfamily processes (i.e., moderating influence). The first hypothesis was that higher levels of perceived neighborhood collective efficacy would be associated with a greater likelihood of stepfamilies exhibiting features of the *residence-centered* or *inclusive* patterns, representing high-quality and positively correlated parental and parent-child relationships. This hypothesis was supported. Stepfamilies who perceive higher levels of collective efficacy may experience reductions in parental burden and family stress, resulting in more adaptive and positive family processes. Indeed, neighbors providing support to one another and engaging in the monitoring of youth behavior might help ease tension in couple and parent-child relationships by distributing, at least in part, the load of child-rearing and other responsibilities (G. Bowen et al., 2000; N. Bowen et al., 2002; Deng et al., 2006; O'Neal et al., 2018).

From an environmental-stress perspective, stepfamilies who perceive high-quality relationships with neighbors might also worry less about the welfare of their children in the larger environment and ease control over the behavior of adolescent youth (Noah, 2015). This could result in more positive parenting and family processes, such as those exhibited by the *residence-centered* and *inclusive* patterns. Moreover, a socially cohesive neighborhood might cultivate an environment in which nonresident parents are more inclined and able to re-enter when maintaining close connections to their children—features of the *inclusive* pattern. In all, adapting a term from Mancini and Bowen (2013), the results of the current study support the concept of “[step]family connections,” or the notion that stepfamilies can be strengthened when they perceive close ties to their neighbors and neighborhoods. Importantly, the possibility remains that the association between neighborhood quality and positive stepfamily processes is bidirectional. That is, it is equally plausible that higher quality stepfamily relationships could enable stepfamilies to engage in the process of cultivating a socially supportive and cohesive neighborhood environment. Given the high potential for this bidirectional association between stepfamily processes and the neighborhood context, conclusions should be drawn with some caution.

The second hypothesis was that higher levels of perceived collective efficacy would exert positive and direct influence on youth adjustment, even beyond the influence of stepfamily processes. This hypothesis was partially supported. Across youth adjustment outcomes, perceived neighborhood collective efficacy was only positively associated with youth self-esteem over time, net the influence of stepfamily-process patterns and covariates. From a social capital perspective (J. Coleman, 1988), youth might accrue significant social capital

from positive relationships in the neighborhood environment that serve to promote their psychological well-being in the form of self-esteem. This finding is consistent with a past study in which perceived neighborhood quality was positively associated with youth self-efficacy, a concept parallel to self-esteem (Dupéré et al., 2012).

A lack of significant associations between perceived neighborhood collective efficacy and youth depression and delinquency over time was surprising. Indeed, past research has emphasized the role of social organization (i.e., informal social control and social cohesion) in curbing youth externalizing problems, such as delinquency (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). It is interesting to note that across all three adjustment outcomes, youth perceiving the presence of caring teachers in their lives reported higher levels of adjustment. School climate also emerged as a significant covariate in models assessing youth self-esteem and delinquency. Perhaps during adolescence, and among youth residing in complex family structures such as stepfamilies, connections with teachers and schools become particularly salient with respect to internalizing and externalizing problems (Hetherington & Elmore, 2003). There is some evidence of this in the literature. Indeed, caring teachers can take on parent-like responsibility for vulnerable youth, provide mentorship, facilitate healing spaces or offer refuge, engage in advocacy, and express positive regard, among other things (Brooks, 2006; Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012). The role of teachers and schools in the lives of stepchildren should be explored in greater depth moving forward.

The third and final hypothesis was that higher levels of perceived collective efficacy would buffer the negative influence of the *unhappy couple* and *parent-child disconnection* patterns on youth adjustment. This hypothesis was not supported. Perhaps the one-year time delay between measures of stepfamily processes and youth adjustment diminished the influence of perceived neighborhood collective efficacy as a moderator. It might be worth exploring the moderating influence of neighborhood quality cross-sectionally, such that reports about stepfamily processes, neighborhood quality, and youth adjustment temporally overlap. In the current study, it was important to provide a sense of temporal order between constructs, so longitudinal data were prioritized. Youth spending some time with nonresident parents (in different neighborhoods) might also attenuate the protective influence of high-quality neighborhood environments in which the primary residence is embedded. In other words, youth bouncing back and forth between households might limit the protective influence of neighborhood collective efficacy in the mother-stepfather residence or neighborhood. Because youth were residing primarily with the mother and stepfather, however, it is reasonable to assume that youth received the most neighborhood exposure in the context of their primary residence. In all, these issues should be explored further, and future studies should attempt to include information about neighborhood quality with respect to both biological parents. Future studies should also consider treating perceived neighborhood collective efficacy as a continuous moderator using analytic techniques other than those used in the current study.

The conclusions of the current study should be tempered by some limitations. For one, the sample used in the current study only included stepfamilies near the turn of the century. Thus, results might not generalize to newly forming stepfamilies. Family norms and sociodemographic trends are dynamic, and have undoubtedly shifted since the turn of the

century. Thus, although the Add Health data provide a rich, longitudinal, and representative view of youth in the United States, conclusions related to this study should be drawn with some caution given the time that has elapsed since data were first collected. Study findings also might not generalize to stepfamilies headed by fathers and stepmothers or same-sex couples. Importantly, nearly 80% of all stepfamilies in the United States are headed by a mother and stepfather (Kreider & Ellis, 2011), so this study serves as a reasonable starting point.

As alluded to earlier, another study limitation is that associations between neighborhood collective efficacy and patterns of stepfamily processes were necessarily cross-sectional. As a result, the temporal order of these constructs is ambiguous and causal inferences should be avoided; however, theory and past research were used to hypothesize the direction of associations and the findings appear to cohere predictably with the hypotheses. This study also emphasized individual perceptions of neighborhood collective efficacy. Future work could incorporate aggregated measures of collective efficacy that reflect neighborhood-level characteristics, which might reveal different findings with respect to the hypotheses in the current study.

The unavailability of information about nonresident fathers' neighborhood is also a limitation. As noted earlier, youth resided primarily with their mother and stepfather; however, some youth might spend a notable amount of time with their nonresident father (particularly youth embedded within the *inclusive* and *unhappy couple* patterns of stepfamily processes). Thus, for some youth, perceptions about their nonresident father's neighborhood might exert influence on stepfamily processes and youth adjustment. Future research in this area should strive to incorporate information about all neighborhoods with which youth and stepfamilies interface.

Despite limitations, this is one of the first studies to explicitly examine associations between perceived neighborhood collective efficacy, stepfamily processes, and youth adjustment over time. The findings should encourage ongoing exploration of contextual influences in shaping youth development and stepfamily experiences. Indeed, researchers should continue to put "[step]families into place" in an effort to expand understanding of stepfamilies as an important and increasingly common development context for youth (Noah, 2015).

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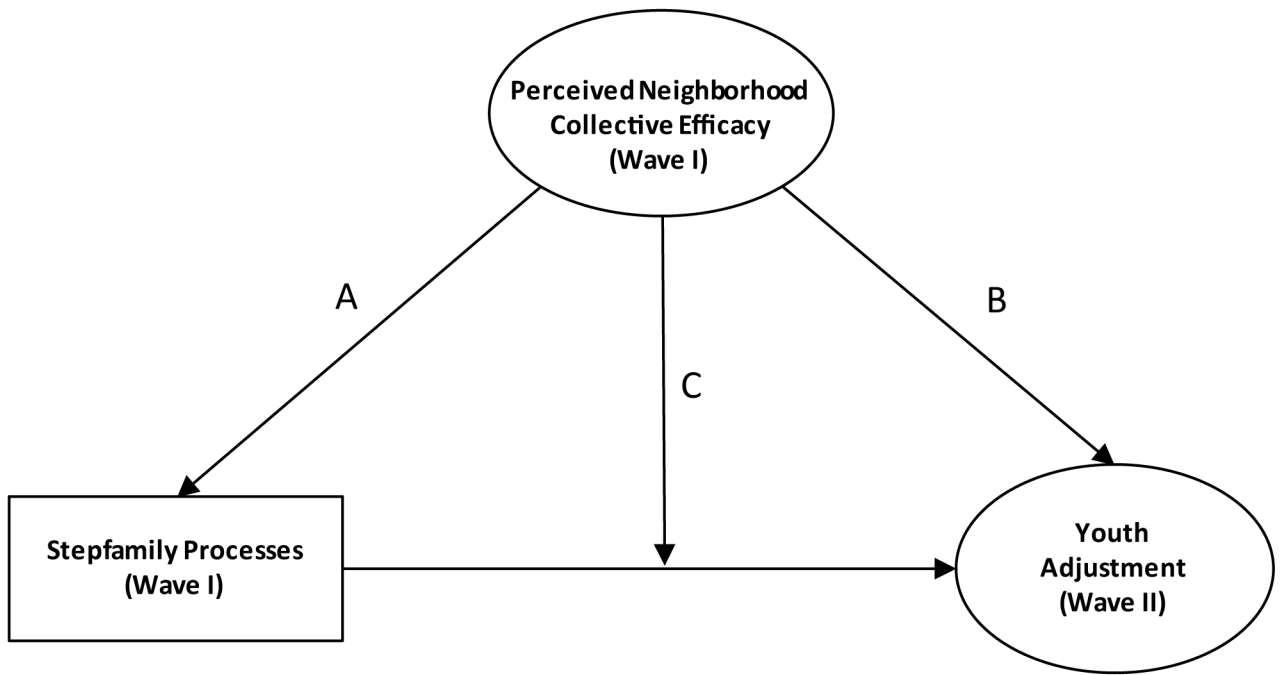


Figure 1.
Hypothesized Functions of Perceived Neighborhood Collective Efficacy

Patterns of Stepfamily Processes

Table 1.

Patterns	Mother-child closeness (youth report)	Stepfather-child closeness (youth report)	Nonresident father-child involvement (youth report)	Stepcouple relationship quality (mother report)	Positive correlations	Negative correlations
1 Residence-centered	Above average	Above average	Below average	Above average	MC and SFC	
2 Inclusive	Above average	Above average	Very above average	Above average	MC and SFC MC and NFC	
3 Unhappy couple	Above average	Average	Average	Very below average	MC and SFC	NFC and S
4 Parent-child disconnection	Very below average	Very below average	Below average	Average	MC and SFC	MC and NFC

Note: MC = mother-child relationship; in the original analysis ($n = 1,182$), mother-child closeness was a latent factor measured from the youths' perspective with five items ($\alpha = .85$). The first two items asked participants to indicate how close they felt to their mother and how much they thought their mother cared about them. Response options for these two items ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). The remaining three items asked participants to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements: "Most of the time, your mother is warm and loving toward you," "You are satisfied with the way your mother and you communicate with each other," and "Overall, you are satisfied with your relationship with your mother." Response options for these items ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), and were reverse coded such that higher values indicated a closer relationship.

SFC = stepfather-child relationship; in the original analysis, stepfather-child closeness was a latent factor measured from the youths' perspective with the same five items ($\alpha = .90$) used to measure mother-child closeness. Each item was worded such that youth were asked about features of the stepfather-child relationship. Higher values indicated a closer relationship.

NFC = nonresident father-child relationship; in the original analysis, nonresident father-child involvement was a latent factor measured from the youth's perspective with three items ($\alpha = .83$). The first item asked youth how close they felt to their biological father; response options ranged from 1 (not close at all) to 5 (extremely close). The remaining two items asked youth how often in the last 12 months they stayed overnight with their nonresident biological father; and how often in the last 12 months they talked to him in person or on the telephone, or received a letter from him. Response options for these two items ranged from 0 (not at all) to 5 (more than once a week). Thus, higher values indicated a more involved relationship.

S = stepcouple relationship; in the original analysis, stepcouple relationship quality was a latent factor measured from the biological mother's perspective with the following two items: "How would you rate your relationship with your current (spouse/partner)?" and "How much do you fight or argue with your current (spouse/partner)?" Response options for the former ranged from 1 (completely unhappy) to 10 (completely happy), and response options for the latter ranged from 1 (a lot) to 4 (not at all). Higher values indicated a higher-quality relationship.

"Above average" indicates that relationship quality was more than one-fourth of a standard deviation above the sample mean; "below average" indicates that relationship quality was more than one-fourth a standard deviation below the sample mean; "average" indicates that relationship quality was within one-fourth a standard deviation above or below the sample mean; "very above average" indicates that relationship quality was at least one standard deviation above the mean; "very below average" indicates that relationship quality was at least one standard deviation below the mean. Methodological details associated with the generation of this pattern are available in Jensen (2017). Details related to links between stepfamily-process patterns and youth adjustment across the early life course are available in Jensen & Lippold (2018).

Table 2.

Variable Descriptives

	Adolescents in sample from Wave I (<i>n</i> = 1,182)			Adolescents in sample across Waves I and II (<i>n</i> = 881)		
	M or %	SD	% Missing ^d	M or %	SD	% Missing ^e
Perceived Neighborhood collective efficacy^a (Wave I)	0.00	0.75	0.0%	.02	0.74	0.0%
Patterns of Stepfamily Processes (Wave I)						
Residence-centered	25.5%		0.0%	27.1%		0.0%
Inclusive	26.0%		0.0%	24.9%		0.0%
Unhappy couple	29.6%		0.0%	28.5%		0.0%
Disconnected	18.9%		0.0%	19.5%		0.0%
Covariates						
Youth racial/ethnic identity (Wave I)						
Black	19.2%		0.0%	18.0%		0.0%
Hispanic	14.3%		0.0%	14.3%		0.0%
Asian/Native American/Other	4.5%		0.0%	4.9%		0.0%
White	61.6%		0.0%	62.3%		0.0%
Youth age (Wave I)	15.64	1.70	0.0%	15.41	1.60	0.0%
Youth is female (Wave I)	52.6%		0.0%	51.8%		0.0%
Mother's education (Wave I)						
Less than high school	12.4%		0.0%	12.8%		0.0%
High school	27.0%		0.0%	27.6%		0.0%
Some college	31.2%		0.0%	30.6%		0.0%
College degree or more	14.7%		0.0%	15.1%		0.0%
Household composition (Wave I)	3.77	1.48	0.0%	3.86	1.52	0.0%
Mother's relationships in past 18 years (Wave I)	2.05	0.74	14.2%	2.07	0.76	12.9%
Household income (Wave I; in thousands)	50.02	45.84	23.0%	50.82	48.33	21.8%
Parent grew up in current neighborhood (Wave I)	17.0%		14.6%	17.9%		13.3%
Teachers caring ^b (Wave I)	3.50	0.98	0.7%	3.46	0.98	0.3%

	Adolescents in sample from Wave I (<i>n</i> = 1,182)				Adolescents in sample across Waves I and II (<i>n</i> = 881)			
	M or %	SD	% Missing ^d		M or %	SD	% Missing ^e	
Friends caring ^b (Wave I)	4.23	0.76	0.6%		4.21	0.77	0.3%	
School climate ^c (Wave I)	3.52	0.71	2.4%		3.52	0.71	2.3%	

Note:

^aContinuous measure of perceived neighborhood collective efficacy, stemming from the theta values from a one-parameter logistic item response theory model.

^bResponse options ranged from 1 = not at all to 5 = very much).

^cSix-item scale; response options ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

^dResults from Little's test of missing completely at random (MCAR) indicated missing data were MCAR ($\chi^2[69]=78.96, p = .19$).

^eResults from Little's test of MCAR indicated missing data were MCAR ($\chi^2[50]=54.75, p = .30$).

Table 3. Multinomial Logistic Regression With Patterns of Stepfamily Processes Regressed on Perceived Neighborhood Collective Efficacy ($N = 1,182$)

Variables	Residence-centered vs.			Inclusive vs.			Unhappy couple vs.					
	Parent-child disconnection ^a	Unhappy couple ^b	Inclusive ^c	Parent-child disconnection ^a	Unhappy couple ^b	Parent-child disconnection ^a	Unhappy couple ^b	Parent-child disconnection ^a				
	RRR	p-value	RRR	p-value	RRR	p-value	RRR	p-value				
Independent Variable												
Perceived neighborhood collective efficacy	1.44	0.137	1.58	0.027	.99	0.938	1.46	0.087	1.60	0.014	0.91	0.592
Covariates												
Youth racial/ethnic identity												
Black	1.18	0.690	1.07	0.825	1.50	0.315	0.79	0.524	0.71	0.173	1.10	0.783
Hispanic	1.58	0.378	0.93	0.852	1.45	0.456	1.09	0.854	0.64	0.122	1.69	0.248
Asian/Native American/ Other	4.63	0.238	3.02	0.231	6.12	0.156	0.76	0.648	0.49	0.145	1.54	0.591
White	<i>ref</i>											
Youth age	0.94	0.353	1.10	0.184	1.10	0.152	0.85	0.005	0.99	0.896	0.85	0.015
Youth is female	0.37	<0.001	1.05	0.831	1.17	0.564	0.31	<0.001	0.90	0.594	0.35	<0.001
Mother's education												
Less than high school	0.65	0.130	0.91	0.782	0.90	0.764	0.72	0.317	1.01	0.980	0.71	0.275
Some college	0.70	0.214	0.65	0.027	0.64	0.034	1.11	0.741	1.02	0.947	1.09	0.783
College degree or more	0.30	<0.001	0.43	<0.001	0.36	<0.001	0.83	0.602	1.18	0.631	0.70	0.285
High school	<i>ref</i>											
Household composition	1.05	0.546	1.11	0.235	1.03	0.680	1.02	0.834	1.08	0.364	0.95	0.501
Mother's relationships in past 18 years	0.87	0.313	1.29	0.154	0.99	0.932	0.88	0.442	1.31	0.101	0.68	0.004
Household income (logged)	1.17	0.486	1.29	0.244	0.96	0.837	1.22	0.390	1.34	0.119	0.91	0.609
Parent grew up in current neighborhood	0.53	0.018	1.10	0.764	1.02	0.957	0.52	0.004	1.08	0.776	0.48	0.001
Teachers caring	1.67	0.012	1.30	0.069	1.24	0.177	1.35	0.068	1.06	0.642	1.28	0.133
Friends caring	1.35	0.102	1.07	0.640	1.19	0.280	1.14	0.466	0.90	0.544	1.26	0.189
School climate	2.03	0.036	1.68	0.030	1.37	0.180	1.49	0.125	1.23	0.289	1.21	0.377

Variables	Residence-centered vs.		Inclusive vs.		Unhappy couple vs.	
	Parent-child disconnection ^a	Unhappy couple ^b	Parent-child disconnection ^a	Unhappy couple ^b	Parent-child disconnection ^a	Unhappy couple vs. Parent-child disconnection ^a
	RRR	<i>p</i> -value	RRR	<i>p</i> -value	RRR	<i>p</i> -value

Note: Bold font indicates significance at $p < .05$. RRR = relative risk ratio. The multinomial logistic regression model was estimated three times with a different reference outcome category specified. The first model specified the parent-child disconnection pattern as the reference outcome category; the second model specified the unhappy-couple pattern as the reference outcome category; and the third model specified the inclusive pattern as the reference outcome category. Parameters in columns with the same superscript letter were estimated in the same model.

Table 4.

Adolescent Adjustment Regressed on Perceived Neighborhood Collective Efficacy Before and After Including Patterns of Stepfamily Processes (*N* = 881)

Independent Variable	Model 1: Depression (Wave II) ^d			Model 2: Self-esteem (Wave II) ^d			Model 3: Delinquency (Wave II) ^b											
	Without patterns of stepfamily processes	With patterns of stepfamily processes	<i>p</i> -value	Without patterns of stepfamily processes	With patterns of stepfamily processes	<i>p</i> -value	Without patterns of stepfamily processes	With patterns of stepfamily processes	<i>p</i> -value									
Variables	b	<i>p</i> -value	β	b	<i>p</i> -value	β	b	<i>p</i> -value	exp(b)									
Perceived neighborhood collective efficacy	-0.09	0.087	-0.08	-0.05	0.323	-0.04	0.18	<0.001	0.20	0.16	0.002	-0.09	0.347	0.92	-0.07	0.425	0.93	
Patterns of Stepfamily Processes																		
Residence-centered				-0.57	<0.001	-				0.47	<0.001	-			-0.37	0.067	0.69	
Inclusive				-0.45	0.001	-				0.33	0.001	-			-0.26	0.151	0.77	
Unhappy couple				-0.22	0.124	-				0.29	0.001	-			-0.15	0.422	0.86	
Parent-child disconnection				<i>ref</i>														
Covariates																		
Youth racial/ethnic identity																		
Black	0.18	0.057	-	0.21	0.040	-	0.26	0.004	-	0.23	0.007	-	0.06	0.756	1.06	0.08	0.678	1.08
Hispanic	0.27	0.093	-	0.27	0.092	-	-0.05	0.606	-	-0.07	0.524	-	0.54	0.005	1.72	0.53	0.005	1.71
Asian/ Native American/Other	-0.05	0.857	-	0.06	0.829	-	-0.05	0.813	-	-0.11	0.592	-	-0.49	0.107	0.62	-0.42	0.163	0.66
White	<i>ref</i>																	
Youth age	0.01	0.815	0.01	-0.01	0.796	-0.01	0.00	0.810	-0.01	0.01	0.689	0.02	-0.15	0.003	0.86	-0.15	0.001	0.86
Youth is female	0.47	<0.001	-	0.43	<0.001	-	-0.14	0.032	-	-0.10	0.143	-	-0.75	<0.001	0.47	-0.79	<0.001	0.45
Mother's education																		
Less than high school	0.12	0.344	-	0.12	0.342	-	0.05	0.541	-	0.06	0.469	-	0.40	0.069	1.50	0.39	0.069	1.48
Some college	-0.09	0.357	-	-0.09	0.302	-	0.08	0.339	-	0.08	0.314	-	0.01	0.936	1.01	0.01	0.954	1.01
College degree or more	-0.23	0.117	-	-0.28	0.049	-	0.16	0.115	-	0.19	0.063	-	-0.08	0.730	0.93	-0.10	0.663	0.91

Variables	Model 1: Depression (Wave II) ^a						Model 2: Self-esteem (Wave II) ^a						Model 3: Delinquency (Wave II) ^b					
	Without patterns of stepfamily processes			With patterns of stepfamily processes			Without patterns of stepfamily processes			With patterns of stepfamily processes			Without patterns of stepfamily processes			With patterns of stepfamily processes		
	b	<i>p</i> -value	β	b	<i>p</i> -value	β	b	<i>p</i> -value	β	b	<i>p</i> -value	β	b	<i>p</i> -value	exp(b)	b	<i>p</i> -value	exp(b)
High school																		
Household composition	0.00	0.933	0.00	0.01	0.733	0.02	-0.01	0.633	-0.02	-0.01	0.514	-0.03	0.01	0.909	1.01	0.01	0.859	1.01
Mother's relationships in past 18 years	-0.05	0.214	-0.04	-0.06	0.132	-0.04	-0.03	0.502	-0.03	-0.03	0.523	-0.03	0.09	0.222	1.10	0.10	0.227	1.10
Household income (logged)	-0.07	0.218	-0.05	-0.06	0.334	-0.04	0.06	0.291	0.06	0.06	0.309	0.05	0.12	0.248	1.13	0.14	0.191	1.15
Moved since Wave I	0.30	0.007	-	0.27	0.021	-	-0.16	0.058	-	-0.12	0.139	-	-0.20	0.246	0.82	-0.21	0.223	0.81
Teachers caring	-0.17	0.001	-0.17	-0.15	0.001	-0.14	0.10	0.013	0.13	0.08	0.051	0.10	-0.08	0.281	0.92	-0.07	0.425	0.94
Friends caring	-0.11	0.073	-0.08	-0.09	0.114	-0.07	0.12	0.003	0.13	0.11	0.006	0.11	0.06	0.541	1.06	0.07	0.509	1.07
School climate	-0.08	0.139	-0.06	-0.05	0.340	-0.03	0.13	0.008	0.13	0.11	0.016	0.11	-0.43	<0.001	0.65	-0.41	<0.001	0.67
R-squared		0.17			0.20			0.16			0.19							
CFI		.92			.91			.94			.93							
TLI		.91			.90			.93			.91							
RMSEA (90% confidence interval)		.03 (.03, .04)			.03 (.02, .03)			.04 (.03, .04)			.04 (.03, .04)							

Note: Bold font indicates significance at $p < .05$.

^a Longitudinal SEM; WLSMV estimator used. Standardized coefficients are shown for continuous variables.

^b Negative-binomial model; MLR estimator used and model fit indices not applicable. exp(b) = incidence rate ratio values. CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.