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# Family-Based Factors That Influence The Behavior Of Children

## Argument Research Final Draft

Child poverty is a growing national concern, but few are actually aware of the principle cause of the absence of married fathers in the child's home environment. We all know that children who are raised by two parents tend to be more successful in life, considering school, in the future job market, and even their own future marriages, than children raised by a single mom or dad. According to U.S. Census, "the poverty rate for single parents with children in the United States in 2009 was 37.1%. The rate of married couples with children was 6.8%." And from this, it can be concluded that marriage and two-parent households wields some outsized power over a child's life, where absence may create unstable and chaotic families.

It is brought to our attention from the Washington Post, Kimberly Howard and Richard V. Reeves say that one of the reasoning's for this issue arising is that a household with married parents on average have higher family incomes. This has such significance because it can even apply to households without children. It's simply easier to provide and maintain off of two paychecks rather than just one. In *Leaving Atlanta*, Octavia constantly complains about her clothes and how they fit her. Her mother makes sure they never fit her right whether its pants that are beyond too short and show the world her ankles, the baggy dresses that get passed down from her cousin in Macon, Georgia, or the moth-hole filled white girl shoes. One day she encounters a flashback to a year ago when her dad had come to see her. One summer she was at her grandmother's house and he brought her a surprise in a bag. Inside the bag was school supplies along with a sweater made out of a strange itchy material. Her father, who is married with a whole new family, is a professor at a surrounding college in a nice part of South Carolina while her mother works the eleven to seven night shift to try and make ends meet and provide for both her and Octavia that live across from projects. This goes to briefly support how money in marriage can play a large factor because due to Octavia's father's household, the nice things and better environment are more suitable than those of her mother.

Two parent households usually have more time which can spent engaging in homework help, bedtime reading, or just simply time well spent together. According to Aaron Hass's article, "Your time is precious to both you and your child. Your willingness to give your time sends a message: You are important." A parent who gives of themselves implicitly communicates their love and dear respect for their children. Referencing *Leaving Atlanta*, Octavia has very few encounters with her mother due to her mother's work shift. The only confrontation they have

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with each other is when Octavia gets home from school, but even during that time she spends most of it in her room by herself, or the slim chances that she is running late walking to school and her mother gets home before she leaves. Also, one day Octavia is late coming home from school and when actually making it home, her mother drastically slaps her across her face without taking the time to listen to Octavia. Quoting back to Hass, “And if you, the person your child respects most in the world, believe he is worthy of your undivided attention, your child will bask in the sense of his own importance.” The closer relationship you have with your children, the greater the opportunity for you to provide them with self-respect and self-acceptance, which Octavia crucially suffered with.

Despite the fact, few may think that either single-parent households have no harm or is better than a married household. An excerpt from The New York Times Sunday Review by Katie Roiphe states, “A Pew Research Center poll on family structures reports that nearly 7 in 10 Americans think single mothers are a ‘bad thing for society’.” This statistic comes from the country we live in, where 53% of the babies born to women under the age of thirty are born to unmarried mothers. One of her main beliefs was that if there was anything in a child’s world that would oppress them, it would be the idea of the way correct families are supposed to look or contain.

The reasoning of single mothers being reported irresponsible and dangerous to society are referred vaguely to studies performed. Roiphe is certainly not a fan of these studies because she believes they tend to collapse the complexness and implication of actual lived experience and people commonly lie to themselves and others. No family structure guarantees happiness nor ensures misery. Suffering is everywhere, and even happily married parents who are financially stable and incorporate time still raise screwed-up, alcoholic, lost children; just as single parents raise strong, healthy, A-student children. Lastly, Roiphe states “The real menace to America’s children is not single mothers, or unmarried or gay parents, but an economy that stokes an unconscionable divide between the rich and the not rich.”

In conclusion, that marriage and two-parent households wields some outsized power over a child’ life, where absence may create unstable and chaotic families. Children in married, two-parent households are generally born into more benefits and advantages for ways of living.

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