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## Fathers' perceptions of co-parenting and contact with nonresidential children

The purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between divorced fathers' perceptions of the co-parenting relationship and their contact (i.e., talking with children, visiting with children, children's overnight stays) with their nonresidential children. A sample of fathers (n = 109) who had attended a court ordered divorce education program completed mailed surveys assessing various aspects of their co-parenting relationship with their ex-spouse. Co-parenting was measured using two scales consisting of 12 and 14 items respectively designed to measure perceived co-parenting strategies of each parent. Sample items are as follows: "I use our child to get back at my ex-wife," "My ex-wife uses our child to get back at me," and "I deliver messages to my ex-wife through our child rather than say them to her directly." Results showed that fathers' perceptions of their own co-parenting strategies as well as their perceptions of their ex-wives co-parenting strategies were significantly related to how often the children spent the night at their fathers' homes and to how often fathers visited with their children. Fathers' perceptions of their own co-parenting strategies, but not their perceptions of their ex-wives' co-parenting strategies, was significantly related to how often fathers talked to their child. The fathers' income and amount of child support paid per month were significantly related to all three types of contact (i.e., overnight stays, frequency of talking with child, and frequency of visits). In addition, the length of the father's marriage to his ex-wife was significantly related to how often the child spent the night. These results show the importance of fathers' perceptions of the co-parenting relationship quality on their reported contact with their nonresidential children. Implications will be drawn from this study for parent educators and others who work with divorced parents.