Is family complexity associated with child well-being?

What is family complexity?

The combination of family structure (presence and marital status of parents) and sibling composition (half, step, bio siblings) (Manning, Brown, and Stykes 2014)

2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), Wave 1

• Nationally representative panel survey with detailed demographic and relationship information

EXTRACURRICULAR OUTCOMES

Type of sibling, number of siblings, parents present in the home, poverty status, race/origin, and child’s age

Logistic Regression Results: Likelihood of Participating in Extracurricular Activities and School Experiences

Only statistically significant (p<0.05) results shown

Regression model includes: Type of sibling, number of siblings, parents present in the home, poverty status, race/origin, and child’s age

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation 2014, Wave 1

Yes, family complexity is associated with child well-being, even when controlling for race/origin and poverty.

Complex sibling arrangements are not uncommon in families today. However, children living with fewer siblings, only biological siblings, or with two parents had higher extracurricular involvement and more positive school experiences. Controlling for race and poverty narrowed this gap, but did not erase this relationship.


The 2014 SIPP has a more accurate estimate of half siblings, compared to previous SIPP data

Changes to the 2014 survey and editing process that affect these estimates:

• Full fertility history collected from men and women, including new multiple partner fertility questions, shows whether children have the same two parents

• In previous panels, a respondent identified the relationship between every person in the household

• This is now determined from fertility and demographic questions in the survey

Scan to see more info, including tables and references

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation 2014, Wave 1