

## PAA Poster Proposal

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### **Instability and its relationship to children's well-being: 2003**

This poster will provide a descriptive analysis exploring stability in the lives of children and its relationship to child well-being. Further, this analysis will link changes in the lives of parents to children's well-being as measured by school performance and attachment. Research suggests that major transitions in the lives of children have marked effects on children's well-being. For example, children who move or change schools are more likely to drop out of school (Teachman, Paasch, and Carver 1996). Changes such as parental divorce, parental job loss, income instability, and changes in health or disability are also associated with negative consequences for children (McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994; Kalil and Ziol-Guest, 2004; Wu, 1996). In the past, research has mainly focused on the static existence of a certain condition and its impact on child well-being. Reframing the analysis based on the existence of instability (i.e. a major change in circumstances) will broaden the current lens we use to understand the quality of children's lives.

The analysis will be based on children between the ages of 6 and 17 from the 2001 Panel of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). The SIPP provides core data on income, assets, program participation, employment and basic demographics as well as data from the child well-being, adult well-being, and functional limitations and disability

topical modules that we will utilize for this analysis. The sample will be restricted to parents and children who participated in both Wave 7 and Wave 8 of the 2001 SIPP Panel. Our main hypothesis is that children who experience instability in the past 12 months will have lower levels of academic performance and have lower levels of school attachment, compared to children who experienced stability during the past 12 months.

To measure child well-being we will use two measures. First, academic performance will be measured by parental reports of whether or not the child: is in any gifted classes, has repeated a grade, or has ever been suspended. Secondly, school attachment will be measured by parental reports of whether the child likes school, is interested in school and whether or not he or she works hard in school.

In this analysis, we consider the following transitions occurring in the past year to indicate instability: changing schools, change in parents' marital/cohabitation status, living away from the primary caregiver for one month or more, moving, changes in health or disability, and change in family income. Each indicator will be based on a retrospective question within the cross-sectional data set. Further, we will examine differences in the results based on age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, family structure and poverty status.

## References

Kalil, Ariel. and Kathleen M. Ziol-Guest. 2005. *Single Mothers' Employment Dynamics and Adolescent Well-Being*. Child Development, January/February 2005, Volume 76, Number 1, Pages 196 – 211

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Wu, Lawrence L. 1996. *Effects of Family Instability, Income, and Income Instability on the Risk of a Premarital Birth*. American Sociological Review, Vol. 61, No. 3. (Jun., 1996), pp. 386-406.