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Child Support Payments Benefit Children in Non-Economic as Well As Economic Ways

Research Fact Sheet

In addition to improving children's economic well-being, child support brings non-material advantages, such as higher academic achievement, to the children who receive it.

- Child support improves young children's cognitive development even after controlling for family income and other socio-economic family-background characteristics. The effects are strongest for African-American children in separated/divorced homes and white children whose parents are not married.¹
- Young girls often experience academic difficulties when their parents separate. Receipt of child support ameliorates these negative academic affects.²
- Receipt of child support also has a positive effect on the academic achievement of older children. Those who receive child support obtain significantly more schooling, are more likely to finish high school, and are more likely to attend college than those who do not receive support.³
- There is also evidence that fathers who pay child support are more involved with their children, providing them with emotional as well as financial support.⁴

¹ Argys, L., Peters, E., Brooks-Gunn, J., & Smith, J. (1998). The Impact of Child Support on Cognitive Outcomes of Young Children. *Demography*, 35(2), 159-173.

² Badar, N., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (1994). The Dynamics of Child Support and Its Consequences for Children. In I. Garfinkel, S. McLanahan, & P. Robins (Eds.), *Child Support and Child Well-Being* (pp. 257-284). Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.

³ Knox, V. (1996). The Effects of Child Support Payments on Developmental Outcomes for Elementary School-age Children. *Journal of Human Resources*, 31(4), 816-840; Graham, J., Beller, A., & Hernandez, P. (1994). The Effects of Child Support on Educational Attainment. In I. Garfinkel, S. McLanahan, & P. Robins (Eds.), *Child Support and Child Well-Being* (pp.317-354); Knox, V., & Bane, M.J. (1994). Child Support and Schooling. In I. Garfinkel, S. McLanahan, & P. Robins (Eds.), *Child Support and Child Well-Being* (pp. 285-316).

⁴ Seltzer, J., McLanahan, S., & Hanson, T. (1998). Will Child Support Enforcement Increase Father-Child Contact and Parental Conflict After Separation? In I. Garfinkel, S. McLanahan, D. Meyer, & J. Seltzer (Eds.), *Fathers Under Fire*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.