

children ([Fergusson, Maughan, and Golding, 2008](#)). Grandparents on the noncustodial side are often kept from their grandchildren, whereas those on the custodial side may be overwhelmed by their adult child's return to the household with grandchildren.

Two other types of custody arrangements are divided custody and joint custody. Divided custody, or split custody, means that each parent is awarded custody of one or more of the children, thereby separating siblings. For example, sons might live with the father and daughters with the mother.

Joint custody takes one of two forms. In joint physical custody, the parents alternate the physical care and control of the children on an agreed-on basis while maintaining shared parenting responsibilities legally. This custody arrangement works well for families who live close to each other and whose occupations permit an active role in the care and rearing of the children. In joint legal custody, the children reside with one parent, but both parents are the children's legal guardians, and both participate in childrearing.

Co-parenting offers substantial benefits for the family. Children can be close to both parents, and life with each parent can be more normal (as opposed to having a disciplinarian mother and a recreational father). To be successful, parents in these arrangements must be highly committed to provide normal parenting and to separate their marital conflicts from their parenting roles. No matter what type of custody arrangement is awarded, the primary consideration is the welfare of the children.

Single Parenting

An individual may acquire single-parent status as a result of divorce, separation, death of a spouse, or birth or adoption of a child. In 2013, 35% of children younger than 18 years old lived in single-parent families, and the majority of single parents were women ([Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2015a](#); [Kreider and Elliott, 2009](#)). Although some women are single parents by choice, most never planned on being single parents, and many feel pressure to marry or remarry.

Managing shortages of money, time, and energy is often a concern for single parents. Studies repeatedly confirm the financial difficulties of single-parent families, particularly single mothers. In