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A key aspect of life is the family, and when there are situations that can threaten something that so many people look forward to in life, there has got to be some relevance to the decisions being made every single day. This threat of single-parent homes is one that plagues families across the world, and the North American culture is finally able to work on a solution to this issue. The shift in mindset of an entire continent over the last few generations from relying on a dual head of household structure to being able to succeed and support one’s own family on their own account is revolutionary. Outlook on the situation at hand is crucial when going against the cultural norms of gender role, and without the enabling of a supportive society, this feat would likely not be possible. Allowing for anyone to support themselves opens up new opportunities for more gender norms to be left behind as new paths are taken by the pioneers of the culture. While the progress on the gender norms side of things is great in this context, the effects that the lifestyle of single-parent homes has on everyone involved is still in the formation as the children of these homes grow into adults, although the negatives seem to be few and far between.

For many generations, a household was always thought of as a mother and father providing for a handful of children, however in the culture of today, that is not necessarily the case. It is stated that “Married couples make up 68 percent of all families with children under age 18, compared to 93 percent in 1950” (Porter). All the while twenty-three percent of children under the age of eighteen are cared for by a single mother, leaving the remaining nine percent to be looked after by single fathers or some other combination of parents (Porter). This dramatic change of twenty-five percent of families shifting from two to one parent homes is a large component of a shift in gender roles over time. Taking into account the social ideals around gender in 1950, it was a rather male-oriented society, although women took over factory jobs during World War II just prior, it was still the norm for the father of a family to provide financially. However, women have proven capable to do what is necessary time and time again, which aids in the shift from a male reliant household to simply relying on overall income between the heads of a household. This shift in reality of the post-WWII era is a key stepping stone in the process of leaving the idea of the stay-at-home-mother in the past as it is becoming increasingly more common to see women providing for a household than ever before.

The culture-wide change in thoughts about gender norms truly opens the path that leads to a more gender equal society that allows both genders to care for themselves and their family. As single-parent households become more common, a rise in the awareness of common struggles women in these sorts of homes. As the amount of support grows, this enables a more positive outlook on the stressful situation that is parenting. With a more positive mindset on the possibilities of single-mother parenting, it allows for a much better chance at success. From the perspective of single-parent mother, this outlook is described as “there are all kinds of families that will appreciate having a ‘mother present’ instead of a ‘father absent’ perspective” (Wordlaw-Stinson, 193).

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