

Parental Visiting, Conflicting Allegiances, and Emotional and Behavioral Problems Among Foster Children*

Sonya J. Leathers**

This study tested the hypothesis that frequent parental visiting is associated with foster children's conflicting allegiances to foster families and biological parents among a random sample of 199 young adolescents placed in family foster care for longer than 1 year. Conflicting allegiances were expected to be associated with emotional and behavioral disturbance. Results are consistent with the hypothesis that frequent visitation is potentially difficult for foster children because of the loyalty conflicts that might accompany frequent visiting. These results suggest that interventions designed to reduce loyalty conflicts might improve the adaptation of high-risk foster children.

In 1999, an estimated 290,000 children were separated from their parents and placed in foster care. Foster homes and institutional settings provided care for more than 500,000 children in 1999 at any point in time (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000). For most children in substitute care, visiting with their parents is an essential aspect of the service plan. Visiting maintains children's relationships with their parents and increases their chances for returning home. In fact, frequency of parental visiting is a stronger predictor of reunification than parental characteristics, child characteristics, and the reason for child placement (Fanshel, 1982; Fanshel & Shinn, 1978; Mech, 1985; Milner, 1987). Several researchers and advocates also have suggested that parental visiting provides benefits other than reunification, such as improving children's adaptation to foster care and decreasing their emotional and behavioral problems (Cantos, Gries, & Slis, 1997; Fanshel & Shinn; Hess, 1988). Although children might exhibit behavior problems immediately after visits, maintaining relationships with their parents over time also might help foster children cope with feelings of abandonment and loss, develop realistic perceptions of their parents, and establish positive relationships with others (Colon, 1978; Littner, 1975; Tiddy, 1986).

Although most studies suggest a positive relationship between parental visiting and child well-being (e.g., Berridge & Cleaver, 1987; Cantos et al., 1997; Fanshel & Shinn, 1978; Millham, Bullock, Hosie, & Haak, 1986), research findings indicate that the influence of parental visitation on children's adaptation to foster care might be more complex than is generally understood (Fanshel & Shinn; Fanshel, Finch, & Grundy, 1990; Festinger, 1983; Millham et al.). How parental visiting affects a foster child's emotional and behavioral adaptation is likely to be determined by the frequency of visiting, as well as by the circumstances of visiting. Aspects of the child's relationship with the parent, the attitude of the foster parent toward visitation, the length of time that a child has been in care, and the frequency of the visits also might affect a child's reaction to visitation.

This study attempts to address these issues by considering the relationships between parental visitation, the nature of a child's ties to foster families and biological parents, and the emotional and behavioral problems of children in long-term family foster care. By examining the associations between visiting, allegiances to biological and foster parents, and children's emotional and behavioral problems, a more complete understanding of the relationship between parental visiting and child adjustment can be gained. Understanding these associations is vital, not only because of the importance of visiting for reunification but also because foster children are at high risk for emotional and behavioral problems (e.g., Glisson, 1996; Helfinger, Simpkins, & Combs-Orme, 2000).

Understanding how parental visiting and child well-being are related also is particularly relevant given the passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (PL 105-89) in 1997. This legislation mandates termination of parental rights for foster children within a limited time frame to ensure that children do not grow up in impermanent living situations. In most cases, a petition for the termination of rights must be filed after a child has remained in care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. Exceptions may be made to this provision when termination is not in the best interests of the child or when state agencies have failed to provide appropriate reunification services. In Illinois, a state with one of the largest substitute care populations, the influence of the Safe Families Act can be observed in the sharp increase in the percentage of children obtaining permanency through either adoption or subsidized guardianship. With subsidized guardianship, foster parents become the child's legal guardians and some parental rights (e.g., visitation) can be maintained (Testa & Rolock, 1999). These shifts raise questions about what is in the best interests of a child, particularly when a child is older and has enduring ties to biological parents. Understanding more about how to best serve children's best interests and, in particular, clarifying the potential effects of parental visiting for children in long-term family foster care might assist practitioners and policy makers in planning for the children and families they serve.

Review of Relevant Studies

Discrepancies in the findings of past studies suggest that the role of a child's relationships with substitute caregivers and biological parents should be considered when studying parental visiting. Significant, positive associations between parental visiting and children's adaptation are not consistently reported. Although some research has failed to find a relationship between visiting and children's emotional and behavioral outcomes, other research has detected significant relationships only among chil-

*This study was partially funded by the Children and Family Research Center of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign through a Faculty Development Grant and by the Office of the Research Director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. I would like to thank Irene Elkin and Joshua Levy for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.

**University of Illinois at Chicago, Jane Addams College of Social Work, 1040 W. Harrison Ave., Chicago, IL 60607 (SonyaL@aol.com).

Key Words: behavior problems, foster families, parent-child relationships, parental visitation.

dren placed in residential care. For example, among a sample of 277 young adults who had been emancipated from long-term substitute care, Festinger (1983) reported that greater parental contact late in care was correlated with a greater sense of well-being in adulthood, but only among children who were placed in residential settings. Visiting did not have an effect for children who were placed in family foster care. Similar discrepancies in findings are reported in other correlational studies (Borgman, 1985; Millham et al., 1986; Oyserman & Benbenishty, 1992); these results suggest that parental visitation might have a more uniform protective effect for children who are placed in residential settings than for those placed in family foster care.

Because many studies of parental visiting only report bivariate analyses, it also is possible that other factors are responsible for the correlations reported. For example, children who are visited more frequently might be children who have stronger relationships with their parents or fewer emotional and behavioral problems prior to placement. Only one well-designed, multivariate study (Fanshel & Shinn, 1978) has provided a definitive test of the effects of parental visiting over time. Unlike most other studies of foster children, Fanshel and Shinn followed a large, representative sample over time. Behavior problems were predicted in a model that controlled for antecedent variables (e.g., demographic variables, indices of developmental history, parental assessments, severity of behavior problems as assessed at the earlier point, number of placements, and frequency of visitation after 6–9 months). Longitudinal data on specific behavior problems were collected only from caseworkers, and differences in the effects for children placed in different types of care were not tested. Nonetheless, the results obtained suggest that more frequent parental visitation early in the child's placement is significantly associated with fewer behavior problems over time.

Although Fanshel and Shinn's (1978) study is the most frequently cited of those that support the positive effects of parental contact, its results did not show that children unequivocally benefit from parental contact. Children who remained in care for 5 years or longer and continued to be visited by their parents appeared to have experienced some negative effects. In multivariate models controlling for numerous other factors, including history of emotional problems and maternal psychological evaluation, children whose parents continued to visit after 5 years had more difficulty adapting to the foster care environment and seemed more strained than unvisited children. For these children, difficulties with ongoing, frequent visiting appeared after a prolonged stay in family foster care. They were rated by their caseworkers as both less embedded in their foster homes and less attached to their biological parents than children who were not visited.

In another multivariate study conducted in the late 1980s, Fanshel et al. (1990) also found an association between parental contact and children's negative behavioral outcomes. This study focused on a subsample of foster children who had experienced a greater than average number of placement disruptions while in care and had been placed in specialized foster homes. Those children who continued to see their parents regularly over time had more emotional and behavioral problems both in their foster homes and as young adults. Fanshel et al. hypothesized that because the children in this study were more disturbed, they also might have had more highly dysfunctional families than the children in their earlier study. By remaining in contact with their families, these more vulnerable children might have been drawn into the stressful events and difficulties in their parents' lives.

This hypothesis does not appear to be consistent with the

results of Fanshel and Shinn's (1978) work. In this earlier study, children with more parental contact had greater adjustment problems in their foster homes and weaker attachments even after controlling for the biological mother's emotional disturbance and capacity to function in a maternal role. This suggests that factors other than parental pathology could be responsible for these associations.

An alternative explanation is that the source of distress lies in the nature of the relationships between the biological parent, the foster parent, and the child. Some children in long-term foster care who continue to have some contact with their parents may be affected by the lack of resolution of their relationships with their biological parents. Biological parents who are visiting are not able to consistently care for their children, but they remain in their children's lives, leading to questions about their role in nurturing and providing as a parent. Under these circumstances, children may experience "boundary ambiguity" (Boss, 1993) because their biological parents continue to be psychologically present although they are not consistently physically present. Given the uncertainties in their relationships with each type of parent, children might be unable to establish a secure relationship with either parent figure without ambivalence and emotional distress. If children develop a close relationship with their foster families, they may feel that they have betrayed the psychologically present biological parent. If they retain a strong attachment to their biological parent, they may feel that they are betraying their foster parents, who provide daily care.

This hypothesis is supported by a study of 100 children in long-term foster care that examined the relationships between visiting, loyalty conflicts and allegiances to biological parents and foster parents (Poulin, 1985). Poulin found frequency of visitation to be associated indirectly with loyalty conflict through its influence on strong biological family allegiance, which was highly associated with loyalty conflict. Children who were visited frequently were more highly attached to their biological parents than less frequently visited children, and those who were more attached to biological parents experienced greater loyalty conflicts. Measurement of each variable involved rating single items using data from case records, which raises questions about the validity of the study's findings; although adequate interrater reliability was obtained for each item, caseworkers might have had systematic biases in their written reports. Given the strength of the associations reported, these results are consistent with the hypothesis that a process involving loyalty conflicts might help explain the apparently varying effects of visitation over time. Poulin did not include a measure of emotional or behavioral problems, so the relationship between loyalty conflict and emotional and behavioral problems is not known.

The findings of another study involving interviews with foster children provide additional support for the potential difficulties involved in maintaining contact with both foster and birth parents over time (Kufeldt, Armstrong, & Dorosh, 1995). In this study, foster children who had regular visits with their biological parents reported lower affective involvement with their foster parents than did children who had less frequent visits. In contrast, the inverse relationship was found between visitation and affective involvement with birth parents, with more frequent visiting associated with higher affective involvement with birth parents. These findings suggest that high involvement with both foster and birth parents might be difficult to maintain. Although contacts with families might be beneficial to children in care for short periods, under the common condition of long-term family

foster care, contact might lead to loyalty conflicts as children attempt to manage allegiances to multiple parents. If this is the case, differences in the relationship between visiting and adaptation for children placed in residential care and family foster care would be expected, because children in residential care do not have substitute parents who could potentially assume permanent parental roles. Loyalty conflict would be unlikely for children in residential care.

Understanding the relationship between parental visiting and emotional and behavioral disturbance is an essential step toward providing optimal services to foster children and their biological and foster families. Although the findings of previous research are consistent with the hypothesis that loyalty conflict might lead to difficulties for children who are placed in family foster care, this hypothesis has not been tested in a random sample of children. If loyalty conflict is associated with both frequent visiting and emotional and behavioral problems, interventions that seek to clarify the role of each type of parent and reduce loyalty conflict might decrease emotional and behavioral problems among children placed in family foster care who have contact with their parents.

The Present Study

This study addressed these questions by testing the associations between parental visiting, emotional and behavior problems, allegiances to foster and biological parents, and loyalty conflict in a random sample of young adolescents placed in nonrelative family foster care for at least a year. Three hypotheses were tested. The first is that children have difficulty maintaining strong relationships with both foster parents and biological parents. Children with a strong relationship with one type of parent were generally expected to have a weak relationship with the other type. However, some children were expected to have a relatively strong relationships with both foster and biological parents. It was hypothesized that these children would experience greater loyalty conflict than children who do not have strong relationships with both foster parents and biological parents, even after controlling for child characteristics and parental problems.

The second hypothesis is that frequent parental visiting is associated indirectly with loyalty conflict through its correlation with allegiance to biological parents. This hypothesis implies that frequent visitation is likely to increase biological family allegiance which, in turn, increases loyalty conflict. Thus, in the loyalty conflict model, the correlation between frequent visiting and loyalty conflict was expected to be mediated by maternal allegiance. Child characteristics and parental problems were included as potentially moderating variables, but no significant relationships between these variables and loyalty conflict were expected.

The third hypothesis tested is that loyalty conflict and children's emotional and behavioral disturbance are correlated, supporting the notion that when visitation leads to loyalty conflicts, emotional and behavioral problems may accompany these difficulties in maintaining relationships with both biological and foster parents. Consistent with the findings of previous studies, severity of emotional and behavioral problems was not expected to be positively or negatively associated with current frequency of visiting. However, loyalty conflict was hypothesized to have a direct association with emotional and behavioral problems even after controlling for child characteristics and parental problems.

The indicators of parental problems (maternal substance abuse and maternal mental health problems) were included in this model as moderating variables to test the potential role of maternal difficulties in accounting for any detected associations between loyalty conflict and emotional and behavioral disturbance. If these variables account for bivariate associations detected between loyalty conflict and emotional and behavioral disturbance, the role of parental problems in leading to difficulty for children will be supported.

The results of some studies (Fanshel et al., 1990; Fanshel & Shinn, 1978) also suggest that children who have spent more time in care may have more difficulty with parental visiting than children who have spent less time in care. To address this possibility, the significance of interactions between length of time in care and parental visiting was tested in the multivariate models. However, hypotheses regarding differences in the effects of parental visiting over time could not be addressed adequately because the sample was restricted to children who had been in care at least a year.

Methods

Sample

The sample consisted of 199 boys and girls who were 12 or 13 years old at the time of selection. These children were selected randomly from all children who had been in nonrelative substitute care for at least 1 year, but no more than 8 years, in a large, urban area of a state with a large foster care population. The area from which the sample was selected includes 75% of the children placed in foster care statewide. Children who had been in care less than a year could not be included because of Institutional Review Board restrictions and difficulties with obtaining consent for participation from biological parents of children under temporary custody of the state. The sample was limited to nonrelative foster parents, because ties between a child, his or her biological parents, and a substitute caregiver are likely to be different in a relative foster care home than in a nonrelative home. Children who were severely or profoundly mentally retarded also were excluded, as were children placed with non-English-speaking foster parents.

Demographic data were available through electronic data files maintained by the state, so differences between the sample and the population of children meeting selection criteria could be tested. Children selected were no different from those in the sampling frame in terms of age, sex, race, and placement history.

Data Collection

Data collection involved three sources: (a) foster parents (almost always foster mothers) of selected children, (b) caseworkers of selected children, and (c) administrative data files maintained by the state child welfare agency.

Telephone interviews were used to collect data at a single point from foster parents and caseworkers. Interviews were conducted by the author and three second-year, female social work master's students who were trained for 3 days in basic telephone survey techniques. One interview was conducted with the foster parent and the caseworker of each child, with all interviews occurring between July 1997 and March 1998. The interviews were used to collect information about children's behavioral disturbance, visitation with parents, parental substance abuse and psychiatric problems, strength of relationships with caregivers, and

loyalty conflicts. Electronic data files maintained by the state were used to collect demographic information, time in care, and the number of previous placements experienced.

Measures

Children's emotional and behavioral disturbance. Emotional and behavioral disturbance was measured using questions assessing the severity of depression, anxiety, oppositional defiant, and conduct disorder symptomatology from the Children's Symptom Inventory (CSI; Gadow & Sprafkin, 1997). The CSI is a symptom checklist designed to measure children's symptom severity using caregivers as informants; therefore, the foster parent's CSI rating of the child in placement was used. Questions were based on symptoms of disorders as defined in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, fourth edition (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). For example, items included "In the past 3 months, would you say that the child is depressed for most of the day 'never,' 'sometimes,' 'often,' or 'very often'?" and "In the past 3 months, would you say that the child starts physical fights 'never,' 'sometimes,' 'often,' or 'very often'?" Each of the four subscales of the CSI that were used has adequate reliability and validity (Gadow & Sprafkin, 1997). The range of values for each item is 0–3, with 0 representing a response of *never* and 3 representing a response of *very often*. As used in this study, each of the subscales had moderate to high internal consistency; the Cronbach's alpha for depression was .76; for anxiety, .68; for conduct disorder, .78; and for oppositional defiant, .88.

Parental visiting. Information about parental visitation during the past 6 months was collected during the telephone interviews with both foster parents and caseworkers. Both caseworkers and foster parent were asked if the child currently had any visits with his or her family members. They were then asked to list all visiting family members and the frequency that visits occurred with each family member. For example, if the caseworker stated that visits occurred with the child's biological mother, the interviewer would ask, "How often does the child see her?". Open-ended follow up questions included, "Where do these visits occur?" and "Are these visits supervised?" If visits with biological parents were not described, additional follow-up questions were used to understand why and when visitation had stopped. Caseworkers and foster parents also were asked if they observed the visits themselves or heard about them from someone else.

Unexpectedly, caseworkers and foster parents often did not agree on the frequency of parental visiting, so coding parental visiting from interviewer notes and the follow-up questions was necessary. Differences were generally due to one informant (most often, the caseworker) reporting the frequency of visits specified in the service plan rather than the actual number of visits that occurred. Because determining the number of visits that actually occurred required some judgment, independent coding decisions for visiting with mothers and visiting with fathers were made by two raters for 40 cases to assess interrater reliability. Excellent correspondence between the two raters was obtained, with minor discrepancies in ratings occurring for only three cases for each variable, and the interrater Pearson's correlations and the intraclass correlations were greater than .99 for both variables.

Loyalty conflict. Loyalty conflict was measured using a question developed by Fanshel (1982) for routine use by caseworkers and modified for research purposes by Poulin (1985).

This question asked foster parents and caseworkers to choose from three statements that best described the amount of loyalty conflict that the child currently experienced in relationships with his or her foster family and biological family: "Child at peace with current arrangements and exhibits no distress about balance of relationships between own family and foster family," "Child shows occasional anxiety about current arrangements, but has made some adjustment to current situation," and "Child has conflicted feelings of loyalty between own family and foster family." *No distress* was coded 0, *occasional anxiety* was coded 1, and *conflicted feelings* was coded 2.

Neither Fanshel nor Poulin reported the interrater reliability or validity of this measure. In this study, the caseworker and foster parent ratings had a weak correlation ($r = .21, p < .01$), and the internal consistency of the two items is low ($\alpha = .35$). Rather than use just one of these items, it was decided to use the average of the two items, because either foster parents or caseworkers might have had the opportunity to observe behavior that indicates loyalty conflict. Foster parents and caseworkers were most likely to disagree less on the presence and more on the degree of loyalty conflict that the child experienced. For only 12.4% of the children did one informant report that a child experienced no distress due to loyalty conflict when the other reported that the child experienced conflicted feelings.

Allegiance to foster family. Allegiance to foster family also was measured using a question developed by Fanshel (1982) and modified by Poulin (1985). Although this question was conceptualized as a measure called *attachment* by both Poulin and Fanshel, in the present study it was referred to as a measure of *allegiance*, because the measure does not involve an in-person assessment needed to measure attachment as it is traditionally conceptualized (e.g., Bowlby, 1969). The question measuring allegiance to the foster family included two dimensions (child's perception of belonging in the foster home and probable reaction to being removed from the home), and so this item was split into two questions. These two questions were asked of both the foster parent and the caseworker. Each question required respondents to choose a statement that best described the child's relationship with his or her foster family. For example, the first question asked about the child's attachment and bond to the family. Responses ranged from *Child does not appear to feel like a part of the family* (0) to *Child is deeply integrated within the family and experiences foster parents as own family* (4), so high scores reflect a high level of allegiance.

The second question asked about the child's probable reaction to being removed from the foster home and also required the respondents to choose from five responses, with each statement describing a different level of distress due to separation. A score of 4 represents the highest level of distress at separation (i.e., *Placement somewhere else would be extremely upsetting for a long time*).

Ultimately, only three items were used to create the allegiance to foster family measure: one that was answered by the foster parent, and two that were answered by the caseworker. The item asking the foster parent about the child's probable reaction to being removed from the home was dropped, because it reduced the internal consistency of the measure considerably. The internal consistency of the three-item measure was .60, as measured by Cronbach's alpha.

Allegiance to biological parents. Fanshel's (1982) single item measuring attachment to biological family was divided into two items that reflect attachment to mother and attachment to

father. Each of these items was rated by caseworkers and foster parents, and then their responses were averaged to create separate measures of allegiance to biological mother and allegiance to biological father. As with foster family allegiance, these items reflect *allegiance* rather than *attachment*. The items used in each measure were formatted similarly to the foster family allegiance items and required respondents to choose from a series of descriptions. For example, the one statement read "The child appears to have no attachment to biological mother. Shows no sense of identification or rootedness in this relationship." The internal consistency of the allegiance to mother measure (i.e., the average of the caseworker and foster parent ratings) was .61; the internal consistency of the allegiance to father measure was .67. The Pearson's correlations for the items in each measure are .44 and .51, respectively.

Allegiance to both foster family and biological parents. To indicate the degree to which a child was attached to both a foster family and a biological mother, a variable was created by multiplying the foster family allegiance and allegiance to mother variables together. These two variables were multiplied together rather than added to reflect the expectation that as allegiance to each type of parent becomes greater, the risk for loyalty conflict is exponentially greater. A variable indicating allegiance to both a foster family and a biological father was created the same way.

Severity of maternal problems. A question developed specifically for this study was used in the caseworker interview to measure maternal mental illness. This item was dummy coded, with 1 indicating known maternal mental illness. Screening questions developed by Lish, Weissman, Adams, Hoven, and Bird (1995) as a part of the Family History Screen for Epidemiologic Studies were used to measure drug and alcohol abuse. The drug and alcohol abuse questions were found to have low sensitivity (42.1%) but high specificity (93.4%) when an adult informant reported on a related adult (Lish et al.). Although a caseworker's training and knowledge of the content of psychological reports might increase sensitivity in this study, the high percentage of parents whose whereabouts are unknown also is likely to decrease sensitivity. Follow-up questions about severity of drug and alcohol problems were developed for use in this study. To provide a single indicator of severity of maternal substance abuse problems, a maximum severity score of alcohol or drug abuse was created for each child's mother. For example, a child whose mother was reported to have mild alcohol abuse and severe drug abuse would be categorized as having a severe substance abuse problem; a child whose mother was reported to have moderate alcohol abuse and mild drug abuse would be categorized as having a moderate substance abuse problem.

Analyses

Bivariate Pearson's correlations and hierarchical ordinary least squares regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses. To test whether biological and foster parent allegiance have an inverse relationship, the bivariate correlations between foster family allegiance, allegiance to the biological mother, and allegiance to the biological father were examined. A probability level of .05, assuming a two-tailed test, was used to identify statistically significant relationships.

Hierarchical regression analyses were used to test whether having a high level of foster family and biological family allegiance is associated with greater loyalty conflict. In this model, all child characteristics (race, sex, age, time in care, number of previous placements) and maternal problems (maternal mental

health problems and maternal substance abuse) were entered in the first step of the equation. In the second step of the equation, allegiance to both foster family and biological mother was entered.

The second hypothesis (i.e., that parental visiting frequency is associated indirectly with loyalty conflict through maternal allegiance) was tested using bivariate correlations and a hierarchical regression analysis. Because Poulin (1985) presented bivariate correlations in his study, these analyses were repeated in an attempt to replicate his findings. In the regression analysis, the association between maternal visiting and loyalty conflict was tested in a model in which child characteristics, maternal problems, maternal visiting, and foster family allegiance were entered in the first step of an equation predicting loyalty conflict. Allegiance to foster family was included in the model because significant associations between foster family allegiance and many of the independent variables were detected in the bivariate analyses. In this model, maternal visiting was expected to be significantly associated with loyalty conflict. In the full model, maternal allegiance was entered into the model in a second step. After entering maternal allegiance, the association between maternal visiting was expected to be nonsignificant, indicating that maternal allegiance accounted for the relationship between maternal visiting and loyalty conflict.

Finally, the relationships between different types of emotional and behavioral disturbance and loyalty conflict were tested with regression analyses predicting each of the four types of emotional or behavioral disturbance. In these analyses, the set of control variables (child characteristics and parental problems) was entered on the first step, maternal visiting was entered in the second step, foster family allegiance and maternal allegiance were entered in the third step, and loyalty conflict was entered in the last step. To understand which sets of variables moderated the associations between different types of emotional and behavioral disturbance, models in which a set of variables (for example, parental problems) were not included were compared with the full model. If a significant association between loyalty conflict and a type of emotional and behavioral problem was found to be accounted for by parental problems, the role of parental problems rather than loyalty conflicts in leading to that type of emotional and behavioral problem was supported.

In the regression analyses, missing values for variables created using only information provided by the caseworker (maternal severity of substance abuse and known maternal mental illness) were filled with the variable's mean value. Missing values for variables that used information from both the caseworker and the foster parent were filled using all data available. For example, for the nine cases in which caseworker data were missing (4%), the allegiance to biological mother variable was created using only the foster parent's report. In the analyses, data were missing for fewer than 2% of cases for all but two variables, maternal substance abuse (missing 16%) and maternal mental illness (missing 7%). An analysis of the distribution of the missing data for each of these variables indicated that missing values were distributed randomly, however. Because the distribution of missing data was not significantly associated with any of the independent or dependent variables and logistic regression models predicting missing data were nonsignificant, substitution of missing data with mean values was decided to be an adequate method for dealing with missing data (Bourque & Clark, 1992).

To determine whether multicollinearity affected the significance of the beta coefficients obtained, squared variance inflation

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Sex (%)	
Male	50.8
Female	49.2
Race (%)	
African American	84.0
White	9.0
Hispanic	5.5
Other race	1.0
Age (%)	
12 years	58.3
13 years	41.7
Years in nonrelative foster care	
<i>M</i>	3.8
<i>SD</i>	1.8
Number of moves to new nonrelative placements	
<i>M</i>	3.5
<i>SD</i>	2.4

Note: $N = 199$.

indices and tolerance statistics were examined for each regression equation (Fox, 1991). Because the results obtained from regression analyses using small sample sizes also are vulnerable to the influence of a few highly influential observations, Cook's distance (D) statistic was used to detect anomalous observations that might be influential in the analyses (Fox). To address the possibility that parental visiting or another of the independent variables might have a nonlinear relationship with either loyalty conflict or emotional and behavioral disturbance, scatter plots of the regression residuals and each of the major predictors were examined. The results of these diagnostics are reported only when they indicated a problem with the analyses.

Because girls and boys have been shown to respond differently to disruptions in family relationships (e.g., Allison & Furstenberg, 1989; Hetherington, 1991), all analyses were conducted first with the entire sample and then repeated for boys and girls separately. When results were different for boys and girls, these differences were modeled with interaction terms.

Results

Response Rate and Sample Characteristics

Of the children selected for the study, 230 were found to be eligible, and 199 of the foster parents of these children completed interviews, resulting in a response rate of 86.5%. Among the 199 children with completed foster parent interviews, 9 (4.5%) did not have completed caseworker interviews. Children for whom interviews were completed were no different from the children who could not be included or from the entire population of children in the state who met selection criteria in terms of their age, race, gender, number of previous placements, and time in care. The sample was nearly evenly split between boys and girls. Demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1.

Preliminary Analyses: Frequency of Visiting, Loyalty Conflict, and Relationship Between Visiting and Emotional and Behavioral Disturbance

About half (48.2%) of the children had visited with their mothers at least once in the past 6 months, and 16% had visited

with their fathers. Among children who visited at least once with their mothers, the average number of visits was 13.1 ($SD = 16.7$) in 6 months. Among the entire sample, the average number of visits with mothers was 5.6 ($SD = 11.24$).

Among children who received visits with their fathers, visiting occurred about as frequently with fathers as with mothers ($M = 12.7$, $SD = 14.9$). Visiting with a father was moderately correlated with visiting with a mother ($r = .44$, $p < .001$), suggesting that visits with a father might be facilitated by greater maternal contact.

Most children were not reported to have a high level of loyalty conflict. The mean level of loyalty conflict was 1.71 ($SD = .62$) on a scale ranging from 1 to 3, with 3 indicating the highest level of loyalty conflict.

As expected, how often children had visited with their mothers was not related to the severity of their depression, anxiety, oppositional defiant behavior, or conduct problems. For each of these types of emotional or behavioral disturbance, the correlation with frequency of maternal visiting was less than .05, and these correlations were not statistically significant. Additionally, visiting with fathers was not significantly associated with emotional and behavioral disturbance.

First Hypothesis: A High Level of Allegiance to Both a Biological Parent and a Foster Family Is Associated With Loyalty Conflict

As expected, greater loyalty conflict was associated with having a strong allegiance to both a foster family and a biological mother. After controlling for parental problems and demographic characteristics, high allegiance to both foster family and biological mother accounted for 7% of the variation in loyalty conflict ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$, not shown).

Strength of allegiance to a foster family also had a weak, negative correlation with strength of allegiance to a biological mother ($r = -.18$, $p < .01$, see Table 2), suggesting that maintaining strong relationships with both a biological mother and a foster family might be difficult for some children. This association remained significant in a multivariate analysis ($\beta = -.17$, $p < .05$, not shown) and was not accounted for by parental problems or demographic characteristics. In both bivariate and multivariate analyses, however, this finding was stronger for girls than for boys. Among the subsample of girls, strong biological mother allegiance was a significant predictor of weaker foster family allegiance ($\beta = -.26$, $p < .05$, not shown), accounting for 6% of the variation in foster family allegiance after controlling for parental problems and demographic characteristics. In contrast, among the subsample of boys, allegiance to biological mother was a nonsignificant predictor of foster family allegiance ($\beta = -.10$, $p = .33$, not shown). When the significance of this gender difference was tested, the interaction term for boys was nonsignificant ($\beta = .26$, $p = .20$), but a problem with multicollinearity was apparent (tolerance statistic = .20). This indicates that the independent variables were highly correlated, resulting in difficulty in detecting a relationship between the interaction term and the dependent variable.

Second Hypothesis: There Are Significant Relationships Between Visiting, Allegiance to Biological Parents, and Loyalty Conflict

The results support the findings previously reported regarding the bivariate relationships between visiting, caregiver rela-

Table 2
Loyalty Conflict Hierarchical Regression Model

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Constant	2.63	.33		1.87	.37	
Sex (female = 1)	-.16	.08	-.13	-.13	.08	-.11
Race (African American = 1)	-.10	.12	-.06	-.17	.11	-.10
Time in care	<.01	<.01	-.11	-.04	.02	-.11
Number of placements	.01	.02	.03	.02	.02	.06
Maternal mental health problem	-.05	.10	-.03	-.02	.10	-.02
Maternal substance abuse problem	.09	.05	.14*	.12	.04	.18**
Maternal visits in 6 months	.01	<.01	.20**	.00	.00	.10
Foster family allegiance	-.23	.07	-.25*	-.18	.06	-.19**
Biological mother allegiance				.16	.04	.30**

Note: $N = 199$. $R^2 = .16$ for Model 1; $\Delta R^2 = .08$ for Model 2 ($ps < .001$).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

tionships, and loyalty conflict (Poulin, 1985). More frequent maternal visiting was significantly correlated with stronger maternal allegiance ($r = .36, p < .01$), and maternal allegiance was significantly associated with greater loyalty conflict ($r = .36, p < .01$). In addition, maternal visiting also had a significant bivariate association with loyalty conflict ($r = .24, p < .01$).

Foster family allegiance also was associated with both loyalty conflict and maternal visiting. Children with stronger relationships with their foster families were likely to be visited less frequently ($r = -.16, p < .05$) and to have fewer loyalty conflicts ($r = -.27, p < .01$). These results suggest that having more frequent visits and experiencing greater loyalty conflicts might inhibit the development of a strong allegiance to a foster family, perhaps through maternal allegiance (see Table 2).

Bivariate correlations revealed that loyalty conflict and paternal allegiance were only weakly correlated ($r = .16, p < .05$, not shown). Because of the low incidence of paternal visiting and the weak relationship between loyalty conflict and paternal allegiance, additional analyses with paternal visiting were not completed.

The results of the regression analyses support the hypothesis that the association between loyalty conflict and maternal visiting is mediated by maternal allegiance. In contrast, parental problems were not found to mediate the association between loyalty conflict and maternal visiting. As shown in Table 2, maternal visiting remained a significant predictor of loyalty conflict after controlling for child demographic characteristics, time in care, placement movement, maternal substance abuse, maternal mental health problems, and foster family allegiance. When maternal allegiance was included in the model, however, maternal visiting became nonsignificant, suggesting that maternal visiting may increase loyalty conflict through its positive effect on maternal allegiance. Unexpectedly, strong foster family allegiance was also a highly significant independent predictor of less loyalty conflict. Time in care did not interact with frequency of visiting ($\beta = .07, p < .53$, not shown), either before or after maternal allegiance was entered into the model, and no significant gender differences were detected.

Third Hypothesis: There Is a Significant Association Between Loyalty Conflict and Emotional and Behavioral Disturbance

Significant bivariate relationships were found between all four types of emotional and behavioral disturbance and greater loyalty conflict (see Table 3). Because these tests do not establish the direction of the relationships detected, whether these are causal relationships is not known. For example, it could be that maternal allegiance increases maternal visiting as well as loyalty conflict. These relationships also might be explained by parental problems, such as maternal substance abuse, or child characteristics, such as time in care. For example, maternal substance abuse might contribute to greater loyalty conflict and explain its association with emotional and behavioral problems. The hierarchical regression analyses addressed this question.

After controlling for parental problems and child characteristics, loyalty conflict remained significantly associated with both anxiety and oppositional defiant behavior (see Table 4). The association between conduct disorder and loyalty conflict was mediated by several different variables, including maternal drug abuse and foster family allegiance, such that it was nonsignificant in the full model.

The association between depression and loyalty conflict was mediated by foster family allegiance. When the model included all independent variables other than foster family allegiance, loyalty conflict was a significant predictor of depression ($\beta = .16, p < .05$, not shown). After foster family allegiance was included, loyalty conflict was nonsignificant (see Table 4), suggesting that loyalty conflict might increase depression through its effect on foster family allegiance.

These results are consistent with the hypothesis that visiting might indirectly affect foster children's adaptation by increasing maternal allegiance; maternal allegiance might increase loyalty conflict, which is associated with oppositional defiant behavior and anxiety.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that frequency of parental visiting is not directly related to the emotional and behavioral

Table 3
Pearson's Correlations of Dependent and Independent Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Sex (female = 1)	—													
2. Race (African American = 1)	-.06	—												
3. Time in care	.03	-.08	—											
4. Number of placements	-.04	-.02	.15*	—										
5. Maternal mental health problem	-.10	.09	<.01	.16*	—									
6. Maternal substance abuse problem	.11	-.22**	.14	-.01	-.23**	—								
7. Maternal visits in 6 months	.02	.16*	-.14*	.09	.07	-.19*	—							
8. Biological mother allegiance	-.05	-.02	-.12†	-.03	-.02	.36**	.36**	—						
9. Foster family allegiance	-.04	-.12†	.03	-.24**	-.07	-.16*	-.16*	.18**	—					
10. Loyalty conflict	-.11	.10	-.13	.09	-.01	.05	.24**	.36**	-.27**	—				
11. Oppositional defiant	-.01	.06	-.05	.16*	-.07	.07	.07	.12	-.19*	.26**	—			
12. Conduct problems	-.19*	-.03	.07	.20*	-.10	.17*	.09	.07	-.16*	.17*	.73**	—		
13. Anxiety	.04	.14	-.07	.12	.04	.02	.02	-.02	-.27**	.21**	.61**	.39**	—	
14. Depression	.13	.04	-.04	.17*	.12	.05	-.02	-.01	-.29**	.15*	.50**	.37**	.66**	—

† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

problems of young adolescents who have been placed in non-relative foster care longer than a year. These results are consistent with those of other studies that failed to detect either a positive or a negative association between parental visiting and the adaptation of children placed in family foster care (Millham et al., 1986; Oyserman & Benbenishty, 1992).

Although parental visiting was not directly related to emotional and behavioral disturbance, children had difficulty with maintaining strong relationships with both their biological mothers and their foster families. As hypothesized, children with a strong relationship with their biological mothers were likely to have relatively weak relationships with their foster families, and those who were reported to have strong relationships with both were more likely to experience greater loyalty conflict than others. In addition, involvement with a biological mother was related to the intensity of a child's loyalty conflict. Maternal visiting was associated with greater loyalty conflict through maternal allegiance, even after controlling for maternal problems and child demographic characteristics. These results are consistent with the idea that boundary ambiguity (Boss, 1993) might play a role in the difficulties that some children have with remaining in contact with their biological mothers while in long-term family foster care. Along with increasing the strength of children's relationships with their biological mothers, maternal visiting might raise questions for children about the possibility of their biological mothers assuming a primary caregiver role and increase their ambivalence about forming new relationships with their foster families.

Children who experienced greater loyalty conflict also exhibited greater emotional and behavioral problems. As discussed, this finding might be partially explained by preexisting emotional and behavioral problems. Children who had preexisting emotional and behavioral problems likely had a more difficult time negotiating their relationships with two sets of caregivers. To understand whether loyalty conflict predicts children's long-term adaptation because of its effect on emotional and behavioral disturbance, these associations will need to be tested in a longitudinal study that controls for preexisting emotional and behavioral disturbance. Because these associations were not explained by child characteristics or parental problems, the hypothesis was not supported that some children's difficulties with remaining in contact with parents over an extended period is due to children's involvement in their parents' difficulties. However, the possibility that the measures of substance abuse and mental illness that were used did not adequately measure parental difficulties should be considered. It is likely that most of the children's biological parents had significant difficulties of some sort, because their children remained in long-term foster care rather than returning home. To understand the role of parental difficulties in determining children's reactions to continued visiting over time will require additional research that examines in more depth how parental life circumstances affect foster children over time.

Although loyalty conflict did not account for a large proportion of any of the types of emotional or behavioral disturbance, loyalty conflict itself might constitute a type of distress that has long-term consequences for children. For example, although an association between loyalty conflict and foster family allegiance was not expected, the findings of this study suggest that loyalty conflict is associated with weaker foster family allegiance for both boys ($r = .23$, $p < .05$) and girls ($r = .32$, $p < .01$). This finding might initially appear counterintuitive, because children with strong allegiances to both their foster fami-

Table 4
Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Emotional and Behavioral Disturbances in Children

	Oppositional Defiant			Conduct Problems			Anxiety			Depression		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Constant	8.02	3.74		4.67	2.79		8.79	2.29		13.13	3.53	
Sex (female = 1)	<.01	.77	<.01	-1.81	.57	-.22*	.35	.47	.05	1.52	.73	.14*
Race (African American = 1)	-8.87	1.08	-.06	.37	.81	.03	-.95	.66	-.10	-.36	1.02	-.03
Time in care	<.01	<.01	-.04	<.01	<.01	.06	<.01	<.01	-.07	<.01	<.01	-.06
Number of placements	.33	.18	.14	.28	.13	.15*	.10	.11	.07	.25	.17	.11
Maternal mental health problem	-.97	.92	-.08	-1.10	.69	-.11	.16	.56	.02	1.39	.87	.11
Maternal substance abuse problem	.41	.43	.07	.72	.32	.17*	.14	.27	.04	.43	.41	.08
Maternal visits in 6 months	-.01	.03	-.03	.03	.02	.09	-.01	.02	-.05	-.03	.03	-.08
Foster family allegiance	-.88	.62	-.11	-.78	.47	-.12 ^a	-1.12	.38	-.22**	-1.92	.59	.24**
Biological mother allegiance	.24	.37	.05	.03	.28	.01	-.27	.23	-.09	-.20	.35	-.04
Loyalty conflict	1.72	.70	.20*	.56	.52	.08	.97	.43	.18*	.97	.66	.11
<i>R</i> ²	.11*			.16**			.13**			.15**		

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

lies and their biological families had greater loyalty conflict than those with relatively weak allegiances to both. These findings suggest that children who have strong allegiances to both their foster families and their mothers are likely experience loyalty conflict, but also that loyalty conflict might be associated with weaker foster family allegiance. The results of a post hoc multivariate regression analysis support this interpretation. A regression analysis predicting loyalty conflict that included allegiance to foster family and allegiance to both foster family and biological mother resulted in similar results: Stronger allegiance to foster family was associated with less loyalty conflict, whereas stronger allegiance to both types of parents predicted greater loyalty conflict.

Why foster family allegiance and loyalty conflict have this negative association cannot be determined from these data. Foster family allegiance might lessen or provide some sort of protection from the development of loyalty conflict after placement, or, consistent with a boundary ambiguity hypothesis, the continued psychological presence of a child's biological mother might result in loyalty conflict and difficulties with forming a strong relationship with a foster family. Either way, these results suggest that loyalty conflict is an important indicator of adjustment problems. Difficulty with becoming a part of a foster family might lead to placement disruption and other difficulties that are only partially reflected in children's level of emotional and behavioral disturbance. Practitioners and advocates have written about "foster care drift," proposing that a negative consequence of long-term foster care might be that children are unable to become attached to either their parents or their substitute caretakers until permanency has been obtained (Kufeldt & Allison, 1990; Palmer, 1995). Although child welfare practitioners might find that this description fits the experiences of their clients, the negative effects of long-term foster care have not been demonstrated (Fanshel & Shinn, 1978; Widom, 1991). Loyalty conflict might be a way to conceptualize and measure how some children are affected negatively by long-term foster care.

Study Limitations

Funding for this study resulted in several limitations in the data available to test the hypotheses. The design of the study was cross-sectional, and emotional and behavioral disturbance at

entry into care was not available for inclusion as a control variable. Multivariate analyses were used to address the possibility that parental problems, such as substance abuse and mental health problems, or child characteristics might account for the hypothesized associations. A measure of earlier child behavior problems could not be obtained retrospectively, however. (Case records were reviewed by caseworkers for indications of severity of behavioral problems at entry, but the poor quality of these records resulted in the collection of these data for too few children to be of use.) To address this limitation, a rough indicator of severity of behavioral difficulties (placement movement) was used as a control variable. In previous studies, placement movement consistently has been found to be associated with preexisting behavioral problems (Cooper, Peterson, & Meier, 1987; Fanshel et al., 1990; Proch & Taber, 1985; Widom, 1991). Although this variable may partly capture variation in any associations detected that are due to preexisting behavioral problems, the directionality of the study's results cannot be tested because of this limitation.

Another limitation is that foster parent and caseworker interviews were the source of data; foster children's perspectives were not included. Understanding children's perspectives is likely to be particularly important for some of the key constructs in this study, such as loyalty conflict and strength of relationships with foster families and biological parents. Interviewing children will be necessary in future studies to gain understanding of how they perceive their relationships and how these relationships affect them over time.

In addition, use of two items to create the measure of loyalty conflict is insufficient, particularly given the low correspondence between these assessments of loyalty conflict. The low correlation between the foster parents' and the caseworkers' assessments does not necessarily mean that the items are invalid, because individuals who play different roles in a child's life would be likely to have different perspectives. A child might hide his or her feelings about conflicted feelings from a foster parent, or these feelings might only be apparent during visits that are supervised by the caseworker. At a minimum, the use of a comprehensive, tested scale measuring loyalty conflict will be necessary to validate the results of this study.

Offsetting these limitations is the fact that the measures of

loyalty conflict and strength of relationships with foster families and biological parents were developed from questions designed for use as quick assessment instruments in everyday practice (Fanshel, 1982). Although additional research that tests the extent that caseworker and foster parent reports of children's relationships are similar to children's perceptions as needed, the use of brief, easily administered questions has advantages. If foster parent and caseworker's perceptions are related to increased risk, this information might be valuable in case planning. Brief measures of allegiance and loyalty conflict could be easily modified for use in practice and might provide caseworkers and supervisors with a way to assess an aspect of risk that might otherwise be ignored. Thus, although the low internal consistency and unknown validity of these measures limits interpretations of the findings, the findings are an important step toward understanding how caseworker and foster parent perceptions of foster children's relationships are related to parental visiting and children's emotional and behavioral disturbance.

Finally, it should be recognized that the measures of allegiance used here are less reflective of attachment as measured by a more in-depth assessment of attachment (e.g., Bowlby, 1969). If a child's enduring attachment orientation had been measured, the results of this study might vary.

Implications for Practice and Policy

Although these results are preliminary, several implications can be derived to inform practice and policy. First, the importance of understanding how parental visiting, strength of relationships, loyalty conflict, and emotional and behavioral disturbance are related is highlighted. Child welfare and other family social service agencies should support further research focused on clarifying the effects of parental visitation over time and how to assist children with maintaining contacts with their biological families while developing strong bonds with their foster families. Understanding more about the difficulties that children have in balancing their relationships with foster and biological parents might clarify the factors that should be considered in the implementation of the Adoption and Safe Families Act and allow practitioners to address these issues proactively. For example, if loyalty conflict is predictive of ongoing difficulties with foster home adaptation, a standardized measure of loyalty conflict could be used as a part of assessment and service planning.

The results of this study do not point toward a uniform policy regarding the termination or continuation of parental visitation among children in long-term family foster care. Instead, the potential for parental visiting to have both positive and negative effects is suggested. Previous research shows that parental visitation is a strong predictor of returning home, even after spending an extended period in foster care (Fanshel, 1982; Milner, 1987). However, the results of this study suggest that although visitation is associated with stronger ties to one's biological family, it might also lead to greater loyalty conflict and difficulty in developing strong ties to foster families. If additional research replicates these findings, interventions specifically designed to assist children with the complicated issues related to having two sets of parental figures should be developed and assessed.

Both family-level interventions focused on reducing loyalty conflict and innovative service programs could be designed. Practitioners suggest that promoting the integration of parents into children's lives as much as possible, so that children are not

torn between two sets of parents, is a way to support the maintenance of children's relationships with their parents while reducing loyalty conflict (Palmer, 1995). The tendency to focus on children's needs rather than parental needs once children are placed in substitute care (Kahkonen, 1997) is inconsistent with this type of inclusive practice. Instead, parents are likely to be denied access to their children by both formal and informal constraints (Hess, 1988; Millham et al., 1986). Concerns about child safety and foster parents' discomfort with biological parents sometimes leads to visiting policies that result in visitation in structured settings (e.g., agency offices) rather than the foster parent's home or a neutral setting with the foster parent present. Such practices further impede integration of parents into the child's experiences in the foster home and the development of a collaborative relationship between biological and foster parents.

Before testing the effects of new service approaches, longitudinal research is needed to establish whether the associations found in this study are explained by preexisting characteristics or conditions. In addition, these associations should be examined among children of different ages. If the relationships among parental visiting, caregiver relationships, and loyalty conflict reported here are replicated, the potential of targeted interventions and innovative visiting policies to lessen the loyalty conflicts that might accompany visitation should be further explored. By gaining knowledge of the processes that create difficulties for children in foster care, practitioners and policy makers will be better equipped to meet the needs of this vulnerable population.

References

- Allison, P. D., & Furstenberg, F. F., Jr. (1989). How marital dissolution affects children: Variations by age and sex. *Developmental Psychology*, 25, 540-549.
- American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, DSM-IV* (4th rev. ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Berridge, D. S., & Cleaver, H. (1987). *Foster home breakdown*. New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Borgman, R. (1985). The influence of family visiting upon boys' behavior in a juvenile correctional institution. *Child Welfare*, 64, 629-638.
- Boss, P. (1993). Boundary ambiguity: A block to cognitive coping. In A. P. Turnbull, J. M. Patterson, & S. K. Behr (Eds.), *Cognitive coping, families, and disability* (pp. 257-270). Baltimore: Brookes.
- Bourque, L. B., & Clark, V. A. (1992). *Processing data: The survey example*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss: Vol. I. Attachment*. New York: Basic Books.
- Cantos, A. L., Gries, L. T., & Slis, V. (1997). Behavioral correlates of parental visiting during family foster care. *Child Welfare*, 76, 309-329.
- Colon, F. (1978). Family ties and child placement. *Family Process*, 17, 289-312.
- Cooper, C. S., Peterson, N. L., & Meier, J. H. (1987). Variables associated with disrupted placement in a select sample of abused and neglected children. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 11, 75-86.
- Fanshel, D. (1982). *On the road to permanency*. New York: Child Welfare League of America.
- Fanshel, D., Finch, S. J., & Grundy, J. F. (1990). *Foster children in a life course perspective*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fanshel, D., & Shinn, E. B. (1978). *Children in foster care: A longitudinal investigation*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Festinger, T. (1983). *No one ever asked us . . . a postscript to foster care*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fox, J. (1991). *Regression diagnostics: An introduction*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Gadow, K. D., & Sprafkin, J. (1997). *Child Symptom Inventory—4 norms manual*. Stonybrook, NY: Checkmate Plus.
- Glisson, C. (1996). Judicial and service decisions for children entering state custody: The limited role of mental health. *Social Service Review*, 70, 257-281.
- Heflinger, C. A., Simpkins, C. G., & Combs-Orme, T. (2000). Using the CBCL to determine the clinical status of children in state custody. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 21, 55-73.

Hess, P. M. (1988). Case and context: Determinates of planned visit frequency in foster family care. *Child Welfare*, 67, 311-326.

Hetherington, E. M. (1991). The role of individual differences and family relationships in children's coping with divorce and remarriage. In P. A. Cowan & E. M. Hetherington (Eds.), *Family transitions* (pp. 165-194). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Kahkonen, P. (1997). From the child welfare trap to the foster care trap. *Child Welfare*, 76, 429-445.

Kufeldt, K., & Allison, J. (1990). Fostering children—fostering families. *Community Alternatives: International Journal of Family Care*, 2, 1-17.

Kufeldt, K., Armstrong, J., & Dorosh, M. (1995). How children in care view their own and their foster families: A research study. *Child Welfare*, 74, 695-715.

Lish, J. D., Weissman, M. M., Adams, P. B., Hoven, C. W., & Bird, H. (1995). Family psychiatric screening instrument for epidemiologic studies: Pilot testing version. *Psychiatry Research*, 57, 169-180.

Littner, N. (1975). The importance of the natural parents to the child in placement. *Child Welfare*, 54, 175-181.

Mech, E. V. (1985). Parental visiting and foster placement. *Child Welfare*, 64, 67-72.

Millham, S., Bullock, R., Hosie, K., & Haak, M. (1986). *Lost in care: The problem of maintaining links between children in care and their families*. Aldershot, England: Gower.

Milner, J. L. (1987). An ecological perspective on duration of foster care. *Child Welfare*, 66, 113-123.

Oyserman, D., & Benbenishty, R. (1992). Keeping in touch: Ecological factors related to foster care visitation. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 9, 541-554.

Palmer, S. E. (1995). *Maintaining family ties: Inclusive practice in foster care*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.

Poulin, J. E. (1985). Long term foster care, natural family attachment, and loyalty conflict. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 9, 17-29.

Proch, K., & Taber, M. A. (1985). Placement disruption: a review of research. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 7, 309-320.

Testa, M. F., & Rolock, N. (1999). Professional foster care: A future worth pursuing? *Child Welfare*, 78, 108-124.

Tiddy, S. G. (1986). Creative cooperation: Involving biological parents in long-term foster care. *Child Welfare*, 65, 53-62.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2000). *The AFCARS report*. Retrieved April 2, 2001, from <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/dis/af-cars/index.html>

Widom, C. S. (1991). The role of placement experiences in mediating the criminal consequences of early childhood victimization. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 61, 195-209.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (Required by 39 USC 3685)

1. Publication Title Family Relations	2. Publication Number 0 1 9 7 - 6 6 6 4	3. Filing Date 9/20/02
4. Issue Frequency Quarterly	5. Number of Issues Published Annually 4	6. Annual Subscription Price \$ 105.00
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and Zip+4) National Council on Family Relations, 3989 Central Ave. NE, Ste. 550 Minneapolis, MN 55421		8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer) National Council on Family Relations, 3989 Central Ave. NE, Ste. 550 Minneapolis, MN 55421
9. Full names and complete mailing addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank).		
Publisher (Name and complete mailing address) National Council on Family Relations, 3989 Central Ave. NE, Ste. 550 Minneapolis, MN 55421		
Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Kay Pasley, Ph.D. Human Development & Family Studies, 154 Stone Building, P.O. Box 26107, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC 27402-6170		
Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address)		
10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)		
Full Name	Complete Mailing Address	
National Council on Family Relations	3989 Central Ave. NE, Ste. 550, Minneapolis, MN 55421	
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None		
Full Name	Complete Mailing Address	
12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates) (Check one) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months <input type="checkbox"/> Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)		

PS Form 3526, September 1998 (See Instructions on Reverse) Computerized Facsimile

13. Publication Title Family Relations		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below July 01	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Actual No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		4400	4300
b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation	(1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions stated on Form 3541 (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies)	3368	3265
	(2) Paid In-County Subscriptions (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies)	0	0
	(3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution	392	377
	(4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	0	0
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b(1), (2), (3), and (4))		3761	3672
d. Free Distribution	(1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541	11	4
	(2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541	0	0
	(3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	72	70
e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)		1	1
f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d and 15e)		84	84
g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f)		3845	3756
h. Copies not Distributed		555	544
i. Total (Sum of 15g and h)		4400	4300
Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 15g times 100)		97.8	97.8
16. Publication of Statement of Ownership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publication required. Will be printed in the 58:1 issue of this publication. <input type="checkbox"/> Publication not required.			
17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner Date 9/10/02 Kus/Editor Assistant Publisher			

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

Instructions to Publishers

- Complete and file one copy of this form with your postmaster annually on or before October 1. Keep a copy of the completed form for your records.
- In cases where the stockholder or security holder is a trustee, include in items 10 and 11 the name of the person or corporation for whom the trustee is acting. Also include the names and addresses of individuals who are stockholders who own or hold 1 percent or more of the total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities of the publishing corporation. In item 11, if none, check the box. Use blank sheets if more space is required.
- Be sure to furnish all circulation information called for in item 15. Free circulation must be shown in items 15d, e, and f.
- Item 15b, Copies not Distributed, must include (1) newspaper copies originally stated on Form 3541, and returned to the publisher, (2) estimated returns from news agents, and (3) copies for office use, leftovers, spoiled, and all other copies not distributed.
- If the publication had Periodicals authorization as a general or requester publication, this Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation must be published; it must be printed in any issue in October or, if the publication is not published during October, the first issue printed after October.
- In item 16, indicate the date of the issue in which this Statement of Ownership will be published.
- Item 17 must be signed.

Failure to file or publish a statement of ownership may lead to suspension of second-class authorization.

PS Form 3526, September 1998 (Reverse)

Computerized Facsimile