New Parents Project (NPP)

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What is NPP

• A study of 182 dual-earner couples that became parents together for the first time in 2008-2009

• Recruited primarily from childbirth education classes, newspaper ads, and flyers at doctors’ offices

• Followed from the third trimester of pregnancy through their infant’s first 9 months of life
Original Research Questions

• (1) Does maternal gatekeeping behavior predict subsequent fathering behavior, and change in fathering behavior over time?
• (2) What are the antecedents of maternal gatekeeping in terms of mothers' characteristics (personality, beliefs, and preparation to accommodate the father's role)?
• (3) Does maternal gatekeeping behavior mediate relations between mother characteristics and fathering behavior?
• (4) Does maternal gatekeeping behavior moderate relations between father characteristics and fathering behavior?
But NPP contains so much more!

• Data on couple (romantic) relationship functioning across the transition to parenthood

• Measures of parent mental health and life satisfaction at all phases of the study

• Detailed measures on parents’ expectations for parenthood and adjustment to parenthood
Unique strengths of NPP data

• Data from fathers as well as mothers at all time points
• Prenatal measurements – better for claiming causality
• Observational as well as survey data on couple, coparenting, and parent-child relationships
• Flexible time diaries that can be used to create measures of activities from parenting to sleep to leisure time – more accurate, less biased than survey measures
Limitations of NPP data

• Targeted population was dual-earner couples expecting first child: thus, sample is not representative of all new parents (sample is low-risk: highly educated, relatively wealthy)

• Significantly more missing data at 6-month time point because of subject fatigue and data collected via phone (vs. in person)

• Some of the brief survey measures used (e.g., depression measure, measure of couple relationship satisfaction) have poor reliability

• 24-month follow up was incomplete because some children were too old for the Strange Situation attachment assessment before we received funding for the follow-up
*ns indicate the number of families who provided at least some data at that phase; amounts of missing data vary across measures